



## A representative of the Russian Orthodox Church took part in a press conference on anti-religious actions in Europe



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On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, the Rossiya Segodnya International Multimedia Press Centre held a press conference on the new wave of anti-religious actions in European countries. In particular, the recent acts of burning Qurans in Sweden and Denmark were discussed.

The event was organised by the Cultural Representation at the Iranian Embassy in Russia. Among its participants were Kazem Jalali, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic

of Iran to the Russian Federation, Damir Mukhetdinov, First Deputy Chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation, Alikber Alikberov, Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and Masoud Ahmadvand, Head of the Cultural Representation at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Russia.

With the blessing of the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Deacon Ilia Kashitsyn, Acting Secretary for Interreligious Relations of the DECR, took part in the press conference.

Journalists and members of the public were in attendance.

The aim of the event was to reflect on the causes and consequences of blasphemous actions from the perspective of religious and political figures and the expert community.

The participants noted the pronounced application of a policy of "double standards" in the reaction of the international community, individual countries and global organisations to the desecration of religious symbols under the guise of expressing the freedom of human choice. The good example of interethnic and interreligious relations in Russia, where such actions are unacceptable for the majority of the population, had been stated. In his speech, the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church drew attention to the fact that similar actions with burning of Christian holy books were practiced several years ago by the militants of the terrorist organisation "Islamic State" in the captured territories in Syria and Iraq (Salwan Momika, who committed the burning of the Quran at the Embassy of Iraq in Stockholm on 28 June 2023, is the native of Iraq.) Mentioning that the preconditions for the emergence and strengthening of terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa arose after foreign interference in the affairs of sovereign states, the conference participants recalled that it was the Russian Federation that was able to neutralise the terrorist threat in the region. In addition, speakers noted that attempts to offend the feelings of believers should be seen in the context of key developments on the world stage, such as the degradation of international law, the threat of a world war, attempts at cultural bans, and discrimination on national and religious grounds.

The representative of the Russian Orthodox Church also drew attention to the fact that long before the current events, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' had already warned of the threat to the very existence of mankind in the case of continued indulgence of any human desires and passions, the cultivation of a consumerist, self-centred and immoral way of life.

A full recording of the press conference is available **on the website of Rossiya Segodnya**.