



DridhG Security International Private Limited

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Diplomatic Tensions and Repercussions on Sweden Due to Quran Burning July 22, 2023

Prepared for:

Business Enablers
School Principals and Administration

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Storming of the Swedish embassy in Baghdad on July 20, 2023; Courtesy: Al Jazeera YouTube Channel

Topics Covered in this Report:

- Developments post the incident of Quran Burning in Sweden
- Repercussion on Diplomatic Relation between the two countries
- Geopolitical Analysis
- Philosophical Analysis



Date	Development
22 July 2023	As per confirmed reports, the government of Iraq has expelled the Swedish ambassador in Baghdad following protests in Baghdad against Sweden following incidents of desecration of Quran, a holy book of the Muslims, a second time. Earlier in June 2023, a politically motivated Iraqi refugee had burned the Quran during a protest.
21 July 2023	Ericsson was trying to confirm the status of its work permit. Ericsson probes reported work permit suspension in Iraq.
21 July 2023	The Swedish embassy in Iraq was temporarily moved its operations to Stockholm for security reasons.
20 July 2023	Reportedly a planned protest took place outside the Iraqi embassy in Stockholm in which an Iraqi national in Sweden, Salwan Momika, kicked and partially destroyed a Quran and stepped on it and polished his shoes with a picture of the Iraqi flag. Sweden condemned this incident.
20 July 2023	Demonstrations were held at Swedish embassy in Baghdad in which protestors set a part of the perimeter of the embassy on fire. No one was injured as the embassy's staff had been evacuated a day before the planned protest.
20 July 2023	Iraq condemned the protest which took place at the Swedish embassy in Baghdad.



Recent Developments

Date	Development
20 July 2023	Sweden condemned Iraqi government to not be able to protest its diplomats on their soil. As per a press statement released by Sweden via email, "We (Sweden) condemn all attacks on diplomats and staff from international organizations. Attack on embassies and diplomats constitute a serious violation of the Vienna Convention. Iraqi authorities have the responsibility to protect diplomatic missions and diplomatic staff."
20 July 2023	Iraq also informed the Swedish government that "any recurrence of the incident involving the burning of the Holy Quran on Swedish soil would necessitate severing diplomatic relations."
20 July 2023	Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shai al-Sudani recalled Iraq's charge d'affaires in Sweden
20 July 2023	Iraq has also suspended services of Swedish company Ericsson following increased tensions between Sweden and Iraq. Ericsson's official did condemn the burning of the holy book.
20 July 2023	The Finnish embassy, which is adjacent to the Baghdad embassy, was also evacuated on July 19 and so, no one was subjected to bystander violence.
19 July 2023	The staff at the Swedish and the Finnish embassies were safely evacuated from Baghdad.



Geo political Analysis

The desecration of the Quran on July 20 is not an isolated incident. In June 2023, the same Iraqi national had burned a copy of the Quran in a planned protest in Sweden. This incident had also sparked outrage and protest amongst the Muslim nation states and the international community at large. However, it was inaction of the Swedish government and a strong action against such far right anti-Muslim groups which has led to a deterioration of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Some analysts believe that Baghdad is unlikely to take any further action on this issue, but will be wary of the repercussion of its decision to expel the Swedish ambassador, we at DridhG, have a different viewpoint.

One of the main problems is that although the Swedish police had rejected some applications this year for protests set to include Quran burning due to security reasons, the decision was overturned by Swedish courts. It was argued that such acts are protected by Sweden's far reaching freedom of speech laws. Although these laws are protected by the Swedish constitution and cannot be changed, it is possible that the Swedish government might consider legal changes that would allow police to stop public burnings in the name of Swedish's national security. Unless there is a change, the possibility of recurrence of such incidents cannot be ruled out.

Another problem Sweden faces is that besides outrage by governments of Muslim nations including Iraq, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Morocco, the incident of disrespect of Quran and by extension, disrespect of Islam, has sparked outrage amongst terrorist organizations too. Following the first in June, on July 12 as per a Tajik language poster, the Islamic state has called for lone wolf attacks in Sweden. Al Qaeda affiliate Al-Shabab too called on Muslims in Europe and Sweden to defend Quran, wage Jihad (righteous war) against non believers and kill their leaders.

The third concern Sweden should consider is the repercussion such incidents will have on their businesses which operate in Muslim nations. Work suspension of Ericsson in Iraq must raise red flags for Sweden. What had happened to Russia post the Russia Ukraine conflict should be reason enough merely from an economic standpoint to consider rectifying the issue and de-escalating the tensions.



Fourthly, The Russia Ukraine conflict has exposed Sweden's defence and military vulnerability. It seeks protection from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO.) At this juncture, Sweden needs Turkey's support, not condemnation. Quran burning has undermined its positioning with Turkey and also with NATO. On 12 July Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan had said it will ratify Sweden's NATO bid to the parliament but he expected Sweden to take some steps against terrorism in return of the approval.

Philosophical Analysis

Ultimately, the problem Sweden faces, is the one which many nations now face - nation states have failed to incorporate what is moral with what is legal and priority of one principle over another has led to a sorry state of affairs.

Case in point is the defacing of several temples in Canada over the past few years by Khalistani elements within Canada. This is despite Indian government's criticism of such actions on Canadian soil and their demand to take stern measures against such anti-social elements.

In India, which is a sovereign secular republic and runs on the principles of equality, liberty and justice, article 19(1)(a) of the Indian constitution does give Indian citizens freedom of speech. But not unrestricted as Article 19(2) does apply reasonable restricts on free speech in the interest of security and sovereignty of India, friendly relations with Foreign states, public order, decency or morality in the relation to the contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence. And while there are internal conflicts and problems due to religious animosities, there are very few incidents at a global level where India can be rightfully accused of disrespecting any religion or letting any such incident to continue to recur.

Given the manner in which incidents of disrespect of religion can have on the diplomatic ties and can also hamper national security, it is high time leaders evaluate the matter from an economic, philosophical, and socio-legal perspective.



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- Situational Reports



2. Post conducting a site survey, we prepare Risk Reports

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Level 3: Security Risk Assessment

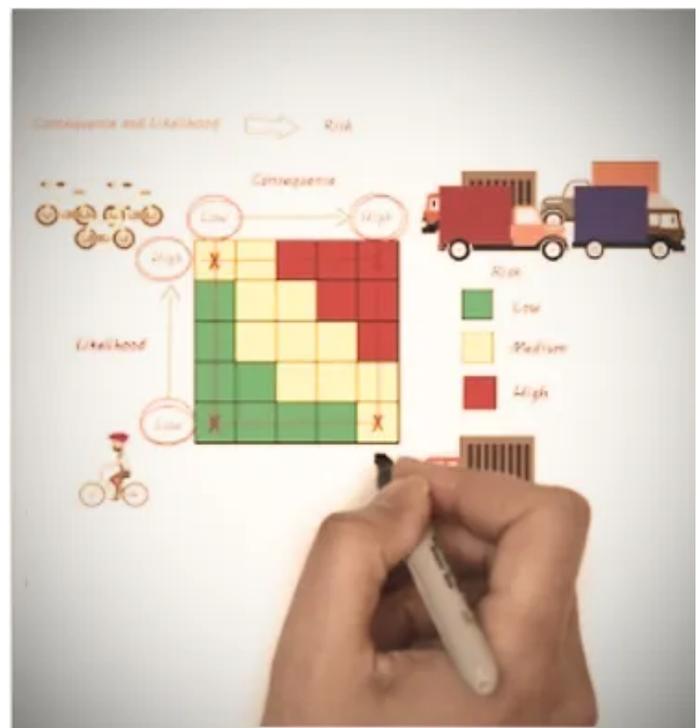
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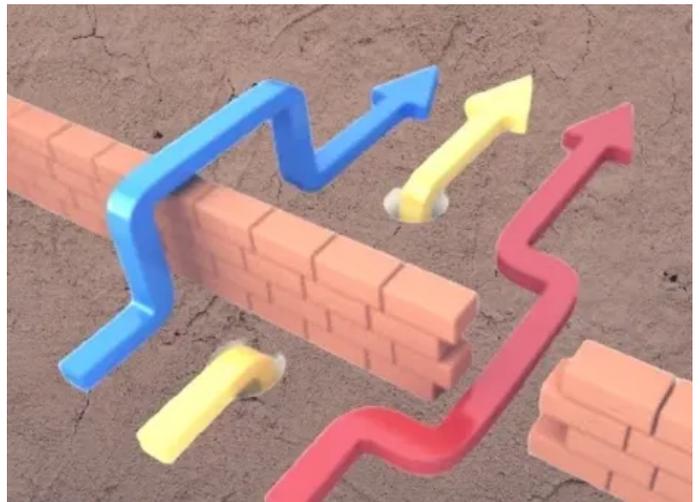


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