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## Human Rights Council 53<sup>rd</sup> Session

**Urgent Debate to “discuss the alarming rise in premeditated and public acts of religious hatred as manifested by recurrent desecration of the Holy Quran in some European and other countries.”**

*NGO: World Jewish Congress*

*Representative delivering the statement: Mr. Leon Saltiel*

Thank you, Mr. President.

The World Jewish Congress strongly rejects provocative actions destined to disseminate hate and discrimination based on religious grounds. We have always advocated for the respect between all people and the fight against racism and discrimination of any kind.

We join our affiliate, the Official Council of the Swedish Jewish communities, in denouncing the heinous act of burning of religious books, and express our full solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters.

The burning of religious texts is an unmistakable act of hate and an attack against all individuals who adhere to any faith. Such public actions marginalize religious minorities and sow division across society.

Indeed, the World Jewish Congress has prioritized interfaith dialogue as a way to build bridges and counter stereotypes. We work closely with the Muslim World League as well as Christian churches to build strong and resilient societies, based on empathy and understanding.

Together with the UN University for Peace, the Muslim World League, the Lateran Pontifical University, and the World Jewish Congress are jointly sponsoring a master's program in Religion, Culture and Peace Studies, for young leaders from the three religions. These efforts are meant to support interfaith dialogue and help students meet, interact and learn from each other.

Mr President, the world doesn't need more burning of books. It needs more people to read books.

I thank you.

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