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SLAUGHTER BAN Has Belgium banned kosher and halal? What are the animal slaughter laws in the UK?

The issue has become an emotive one in the country with both Muslims and Jews claiming they are being discriminated against

By Tariq Tahir
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RITUAL slaughter of animals to satisfy the religious dietary requirements of Muslims and Jews is an emotive issue.

Belgium is home to about 500,000 Muslims and more than 30,000 Jews. Here's what you need to know about halal and kosher in the country.



New Laws make illegal for halal and kosher meat to be produced in most parts of Belgium

Has Belgium banned kosher and halal?

Hardline nationalist politicians in the Flanders region have driven through new laws which make it illegal to produce halal and kosher meat.

In Flanders, animals now have to be stunned electronically before they are killed - a law that will also be introduced in the southern French-speaking Wallonia region in September.

The laws - initiated by Flemish nationalist minister Ben Weyts - are seen as a crackdown on unregulated Muslim slaughterhouses.

But the region is home to Belgium's largest Jewish population and they have also been affected.

A kosher meat plant in Antwerp, which used to process 80,000 chickens a month, has been forced to close.

Only the Brussels region, which has a large Muslim population, escaped the ban.



Most butchers in Brussels sell only halal meat, a survey found

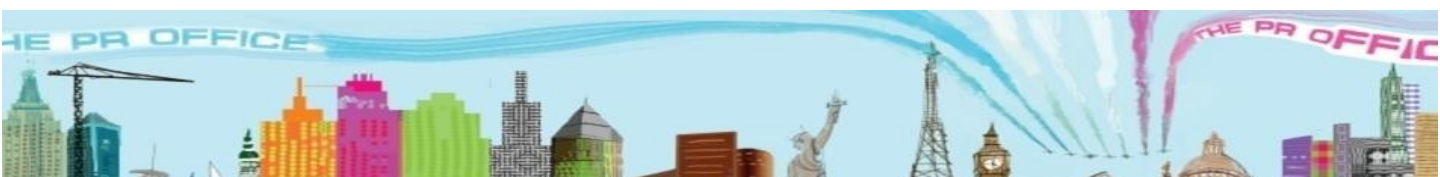
A survey last year found most butchers in the Belgian capital sell only halal meat.

Some have claimed that the ban amounts to nothing more than antisemitism and Islamophobia.

But animal rights campaigners have long asserted that the Jewish kosher and Muslim halal rituals are inhumane.

Islamic groups launched a failed court appeal against the ban, branding it an attack on "one of the most basic alimentary stipulations of the Muslim faith - the obligation that animals must be subjected to ritual slaughter".

Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis, said: "It is a





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sad day for religious freedom in Europe.

"We are in the midst of an attack on the freedom of religion."

What are the animal slaughter laws in the UK?

Slaughter houses must stun all animals before they are killed unless an animal is being religiously slaughtered for halal or kosher meat.

To perform shechita, Jewish religious slaughter, you must be a Jew and have a licence to perform it from the Rabbinical Commission for the Licensing of Shochetim, says the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

For both halal and kosher, cattle must be restrained upright in an approved restraining pen before being slaughtered.

Sheep or goats must be restrained individually using mechanical restraining equipment and only one animal can be killed at a time.

Animals can't be restrained by clamping or tying legs or feet, severing the spinal cord, immobilisation with electrical stunning equipment or suspending or hoisting.

The animal's throat must be quickly cut with a sharp knife while it is still conscious.

After bleeding any animal, including birds, and waiting the required amount of time, there must be checks that the animal is unconscious.

Cattle can't be moved before more than 30 seconds after they've been killed and 20 seconds for sheep or goats.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8159094/has-belgium-banned-kosher-and-halal-what-are-the-animal-slaughter-laws-in-the-uk/>

