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## Belgium Bans Religious Slaughtering Practices in Favor of Animal Welfare

by Roxanne Libatique · 3 days ago

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**Belgium has banned Muslim and Jewish religious slaughtering practices as a solution to animal welfare concerns across Europe.**

The new law, which went into effect on New Year's Eve, is in line with the European Union's (EU) regulations that require animals to be stunned so they cannot feel pain before slaughter.

On the other hand, Muslim (Halal) and Jewish (Kosher) laws require animals to be fully conscious when slaughtered.

Both methods require the butchers to slit the animals' throat and drain the blood, but animal welfare advocates have been pushing for the stunning method, claiming that it is less harmful than killing animals while they are fully conscious.

"Unstunned slaughter is outdated," Ben Weyts, Regional Minister of Animal Welfare, told [Reuters](#).

"In a civilized society, it is our damn duty to avoid animal suffering where possible."

Finding the balance between animal welfare and religious slaughter has been a source of debate between animal welfare groups and religious groups.

Belgium's new law in favor of animal welfare has caused outrage from religious groups, being described as "bigotry under the guise of animal protection."

"It is impossible to know the true intentions of people," Yaakov David Schmahl, Senior Rabbi in Belgium, told [New York Times](#).

"Unless people state clearly what they have in mind, but most anti-Semites don't do that."

Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, also added: "We are in the midst of an attack on the freedom of religion."

"The European capital has, with its laws and lack of tolerance for minorities, proven that radical Islam has won."

Ann De Greef, Director of Global Action in the Interest of Animals, has answered the rabbis by stating that Belgium's law "is above religion."

"They want to keep living in the Middle Ages and continue to slaughter without stunning — as the technique didn't yet exist back then — without having to answer to the law."

"Well, I'm sorry, in Belgium the law is above religion and that will stay like that."

Belgium is joining other EU countries such as Denmark, Sweden, and Slovenia in banning religious slaughter practices.

Belgium's new animal welfare law has already been applied in the country's Flanders region and will be coming in full force in the country's Wallonia region in August.

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