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## Top Jewish and Muslim Religious Leaders Urge European Court of Justice to Overturn Belgian Ban on Religious Slaughter



by Benjamin Kerstein



Illustrative. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Two top Jewish and Muslim leaders issued a joint statement calling on the European Court of Justice to rule against Belgian laws banning religious slaughter.

The prohibitions went into effect in January 2019, and forbid both Jewish kashrut and Muslim halal methods of slaughter for purported animal rights-related reasons, though some viewed it as an attempt to marginalize minorities.





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In the joint statement addressed to the European Court of Justice, which will hold a hearing on the legislation on Wednesday, Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt — president of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) — and H. E. Shiekh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa — secretary-general of the Muslim World League and president of Muslim Scholars Organization — said dietary laws were “a key tenet of our faiths.”

“Throughout history, bans on the religious slaughter of animals for food have been used to try to limit the migration of individuals from certain religious groups,” they noted.

“Today, Muslims are increasingly the targets of such legislation,” they added.

“Any such ban violates core principles of what Europe should stand for,” the statement asserted.

“While freedom of religion is inscribed as a fundamental right throughout the democracies of Europe, it is meaningless without allowing individuals and communities the freedom to practice their religions,” it continued. “Targeting the religious practices of minority groups in this way can only harm relations between communities and undermine social cohesion.”

“If the Belgian bans are upheld, the message that the Court is sending to minority religious communities in Europe is clear: They are not welcome,” the statement declared.

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