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Peace Research

Bergsmo, Morten & Kishan Manocha, eds (2023) *Religion, Hateful Expression and Violence*. Brussels: Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher (TOAEP). 1146 pp.

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As someone from a region that witnesses every day the bloody face of hate speech by religionists undermining peace, I consider the dissemination of this book a good and timely endeavour, especially as it is freely available. Some examples of how the anthology tackles wide-ranging aspects of its chosen topic: Chapter 11 explains the restrictions to freedom of expression by referring to binding rules of international law, balancing this freedom with the dangers of incitement to violence or discrimination or rule of law. The analysis of the International Criminal Law's capacity in dealing with hate speech is particularly relevant. In addressing the universal problem of hateful expression in religious communities, their leaders can help from within, while outside actors can employ external measures such as the law: the book offers guidelines and examples of practical measures, formal and informal. The abuse of religion behind hate speech, among the topics of Chapter 21, endangers societies and causes civilian suffering, more so in poorer countries and polarized environments. This can stem from a careless handling of facts and language, as we learn in Chapters 4 and 31. Considering how nations throughout the world are confronted with these challenges, it is commendable that this book addresses the topic from many perspectives, opening with Part I on 'A Delicate Balancing of Values' and including case studies of three national contexts, discussions of theoretical and legal frameworks, insights on the motivations of those engaging in religious hate speech and violence, and the measures to address them. By doing so, this comprehensive anthology creates a kind of 'dialogue of civilizations' among the contributions of its 40 authors from different countries and creeds.