

Finnish politician's conviction sends warning to Christians

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Free speech and religious liberty have officially been obliterated in Finland after a member of its parliament was found guilty of “hate speech” for simply sharing her biblical views.

But if we're honest, the severe erosion of rights had been underway for years while Paivi Rasanen, the lawmaker in question, faced legal threats and mayhem prior to her conviction.

Ms. Rasanen, the nation's former minister of the interior, was criminally condemned over a 2004 pamphlet she wrote about traditional marriage, with the court convicting her for “making and keeping available to the public a text that insults a group.”

It's a case that should terrify not only the Finnish populace, but also every man, woman and child in the West, as those who love freedom must now contend with a narrow 3-2 court decision that flies in the face of justice.

Ms. Rasanen, who had spent years fighting in court for her basic rights of religious liberty and free expression, had already won two legal battles before ravenous prosecutors appealed her case to the high court. Her problems started June 17, 2019, when she took a simple yet public stand by tweeting the text of Romans 1:24-27, Scriptures that set moral parameters around homosexuality.

Ms. Rasanen expressed frustration at the time that the Evangelical Lutheran Church, her Christian denomination, had decided to support a Pride parade. The politician felt this move violated biblical truth, so she decided to speak out, a decision that sparked a legal firestorm.

In 2024, Ms. Rasanen told The Washington Times about the case's background.

“Some citizen made a criminal complaint and the police started to investigate the case,” she said, adding that the investigation initially seemed absurd. “At the beginning, I didn't believe it.”

But Ms. Rasanen, who as the former minister of the interior managed the nation's police force, was soon forced to confront the reality that she was in a legal quagmire. She was hauled before police, interrogated for 13 hours, and asked a series of questions about her biblical beliefs.

That was only the beginning, as the situation soon started to snowball. Before long, the 2004 pamphlet for which she was just found guilty also emerged, with prosecutors charging her not only over the Bible verse tweet but also the contents of the document.

Ms. Rasanen faced criminal charges at the time that could have landed her in jail — a remarkable element of the case that seemed almost otherworldly. Reflecting back on the origins of her legal battle, she said it was a “very absurd and very unreal situation.”

“It was like a dream,” Ms. Rasanen said. “I couldn’t believe that this happens in Finland, which has long roots in Christianity and good reputation in rule of law and so on.”

And yet those roots seem to have rotted away, as the politician was endlessly dragged through the courts on the grounds she had violated the law surrounding “agitation against minorities,” with hate speech regulations at the center of her plight.

Outside of the obvious horrors waged against Ms. Rasanen’s religious liberty and free speech, perhaps the most disturbing element of the case is the persistence with which prosecutors have targeted her.

Despite being acquitted in two previous cases involving a total of six judges who found no criminal activity in her writings, the Supreme Court took a different approach. Speaking to CBN News after her conviction, Ms. Rasanen expressed the stunning nature of her ordeal, explaining why she’s “disappointed.”

“It was a surprise and it was shocking,” she said. “I was not expecting to be convicted because I had two acquittals from the lower courts — from the district court and court of appeal — and they were unanimous.”

Ms. Rasanen now fully recognizes the overarching danger implicit in the results of her case.

“The most dangerous consequence is the order to destroy these writings, to censor these writings,” Ms. Rasanen said. “I have the order from the Supreme Court to destroy my writings and it means that, not only my writings are in danger, there are thousands of similar writings, or sermons, or discussions in TV and radio and in newspapers, Christian newspapers that now might be in danger that someone can make a criminal complaint about these writings.”

Ultimately, she realizes the conviction sets a precedent in Finland.

“I think that this is a very dangerous, dangerous decision,” Ms. Rasanen added.

She is working with her legal team to explore possible options, which could include exercising her last available legal maneuver: appealing to the European Court of Human Rights, which she might pursue in her effort to secure freedom.

Ms. Rasanen is right that her case is dangerous and deeply troubling. We must pray and continue fighting to protect religious liberty, as the forces that eroded her rights will certainly continue coming for others in Finland, the U.S. and beyond.



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