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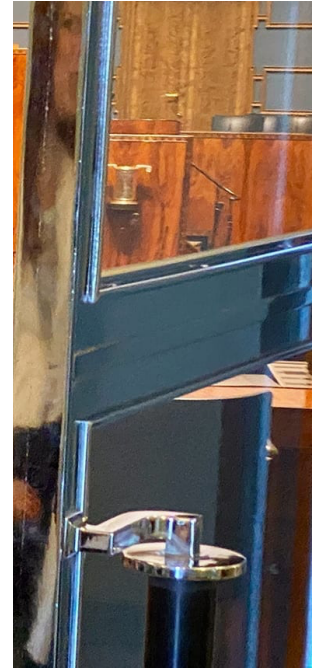
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“I will not be intimidated into hiding my faith” – free speech case concerning former Finnish minister continues

News | Published on 25 Aug 2020



Summary

- **Former Minister of the Interior summoned again to a police interrogation**
- **Investigated for voicing her deeply held beliefs during a radio talk show over one and a half years ago**

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HELSINKI/VIENNA (25 August 2020) – On 25 August, former Minister of the Interior and serving Member of the Finnish Parliament, Päivi Räsänen, faces her third police interrogation in recent months. The reason for the summoning of the medical doctor, mother of five and grandmother of six: she publicly voiced her opinion on family and marriage. Therefore, the Finnish Prosecutor General suspects her of “ethnic agitation”, a crime punishable with up to two years of imprisonment.

“These police investigations have to do with whether it is legal to publicly confess and teach Bible-based views on man’s relationship with God,” said Päivi Räsänen. “I will defend my right to confess my faith, so that no one else would be deprived of their right to freedom of religion and speech. I hold on to the view that my expressions are legal and they should not be censored. I will not back down from my views. I will not be intimidated into hiding my faith.”

Investigation ordered by Prosecutor General

The interrogation is part of a pre-trial investigation ordered by the Prosecutor General for views Räsänen stated in a program by the YlePuhe [The Finnish Broadcasting Corporation, Talk Show] series with host Ruben Stiller on the topic “What would Jesus think about homosexuals?” This was broadcast on 20 December 2019.

“In a free society, everyone should be allowed to share their beliefs without fear of censorship. This is the foundation of every free and democratic society. Criminalizing speech through so-called ‘hate-speech’ laws shuts down important public debates and poses a grave threat to our democracies. These sorts of cases create a culture of fear and censorship and are becoming all too common throughout Europe,” said Paul Coleman, Executive Director of ADF International and author of *[Censored: How European Hate Speech Laws are Threatening Freedom of Speech](#)*. Listen to him addressing this case and free speech in general on an [episode of the Brendan O’Neill Show](#).

Investigation of speech in Finland

Finland Free Speech case



The ongoing legal harassment of Räsänen started in June 2019, when Räsänen directed a tweet at the leadership of her church and questioned its official sponsorship of the LGBT event "Pride 2019", accompanied by an image of a bible text. Räsänen has already attended two lengthy police interviews about the tweet as well as a pamphlet she wrote 16 years ago on human sexuality for a Christian foundation. ADF International is supporting the defence of Mrs. Räsänen.

In addition to this investigation concerning the radio interview, and investigations concerning the Tweet and pamphlet, Räsänen is also facing an investigation for comments made on a TV show in 2018. In the show, "Yökylässä Maria Veitola" (Maria Veitola, Overnight visit), the presenter came to Räsänen's home and stayed overnight. They discussed religious matters, including Räsänen's personal beliefs.

Mrs. Räsänen has served as a Finnish Member of Parliament since 1995, was chair of the Christian Democrats from 2004-2015, and from 2011-2015 she was the Minister of the Interior, during which she held responsibility for church affairs in Finland.

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