

Woman Unjustly Charged for Silent Prayer Awarded Compensation

Isabel Vaughan-Spruce, a woman arrested twice for praying outside of an abortion clinic, is to receive £13,000 British pounds from the police, or nearly \$17,000 U.S. dollars.

Vaughan-Spruce filed a claim against the West Midlands Police for “two wrongful arrests and false imprisonments; assault and battery in relation to an intrusive search of her person; and for a breach of her human rights both in respect to the arrests, and to the onerous bail conditions imposed on her,” according to the Alliance Defending Freedom.

Vaughan-Spruce was first arrested in 2022 for praying in a “buffer zone,” an area that protects abortion providers by prohibiting any expression of approval or disapproval.

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The incident is thought to be the first “thoughtcrime” in 21st-century Britain.

While she was acquitted in February 2023, she was arrested weeks later for the same activity.

“Silent prayer is not a crime. Nobody should be arrested merely for the thoughts they have in their heads – yet this happened to me twice at the hands of the West Midlands Police, who explicitly told me that “prayer is an offence,” Vaughan-Spruce said. “There is no place for Orwell’s ‘thought police’ in 21st Century Britain, and thanks to legal support I received from ADF UK, I’m delighted that the settlement that I have received today acknowledges that. Yet despite this

victory, I am deeply concerned that this violation could be repeated at the hands of other police forces.”

She added that culture is “shifting towards a clamp down on viewpoint diversity, with Christian thought and prayer increasingly under threat of censorship.”

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“A ‘buffer zone’ policy is set to be rolled out by the government imminently – the language of which is inherently unclear, and will likely lead to further violations against the freedom to pray, or peacefully converse or offer help near abortion facilities.”

A similar incident occurred last year when a former British Army member faced charges for silently praying near an abortion clinic.

In a statement to MailOnline, Smith-Connor stated, “Nobody should be prosecuted for silent prayer,” he told MailOnline. “It is unfathomable that in an apparently free society, I am being criminalized on the basis of what I expressed silently, in the privacy of my own mind.”

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