

Christians Cringe as New Libya Embraces Shariah Law

After months of fighting an oppressive dictator, Libyans rejoiced in Moammar Gadhafi's death last week. The death, not just of the man but seemingly of the symbol of oppression, represented change and ultimately freedom.

But has freedom really come?

On Sunday, the nation's interim leader Mustafa Abdel Jalil announced in a speech that the country would defer from now on to Islamic Shariah law. Several sources report Jalil exclaiming, "Any law that violates Shariah is null and void legally."

An immediate change to the way Libya runs was the decision that "the law of divorce and marriage" would be altered, now allowing for polygamy with few guidelines.

An anonymous Middle East expert says this is the very tip of the iceberg. It's a steep downward slope from here.

"I think young revolutionaries again have kind of been duped where they thought they were getting rid of this terrible dictator but did not look down the line on what the potential was for the next leadership," explains our anonymous source. "What happened is they freed themselves from a dictator. [Gadhafi] was not a great guy, admittedly. But in the end, it's going to be far worse for them with Shariah law being implemented and hardline Islam taking over."

Some rebels have reported outrage at the announcement, but whether or not a decision made by a temporary government is legal hardly makes a difference, says our source.

"I don't know if it's legal, but when they establish Islamic

law over national law, then in their minds (the radicals)," he explains, "they can do just about anything they think. So even though it's not constitutional, it probably won't matter in the end."

Our source believes plans to utterly Islamicize Libya have been under way for a long time. Under Gadhafi, our source points out, the solution to Libya's problems was viewed as converting every Arab to Islam. Christians were under serious duress.

Under stricter Shariah law, though, it will get worse—and fast.

"My guess is they'll just ... start using Shariah law as the ultimate authority even over governmental law," observes our source. "Once that happens, it becomes just like Iran: a paranoid country with secret police following people, and morality police, causing problems for everyone that lives there."

Iran, however, has one of the fastest-growing churches in the world. Ironically, recent history has proven that as hardline Islam has taken over nations like Iran, Syria and Afghanistan, people have grown desperate for hope, peace and truth.

Christians will be persecuted, but many Muslims will come to Christians for guidance.

"As hard as it is and as difficult as it is for the church, it ends up growing the church," says our source, who firmly believes this will be the case in Libya. Even in these early stages, it is clear that hearts are open and searching.

The Libyan church is prepared to boldly stand their ground no matter what may come. Pray for believers in Libya to hold onto this courage, to cling to Christ, and to remain vibrant and passionate as they are. Pray for opportunities to abound in this otherwise daunting new era.