

Franklin Graham Condemns This Country's Government for Persecuting Christian Politician, Bishop

A Christian politician in Finland faces six years in prison for sharing her biblical beliefs on sexuality and marriage, and that does not sit well with Evangelist Franklin Graham nor a group of conservative lawmakers in the U.S. Congress.

Parliament Member Päivi Räsänen has been charged by the Finnish government with three counts of agitation over statements expressing her Christian beliefs about marriage. In addition, Evangelical Lutheran Mission Bishop Juhana Pohjola, the bishop-elect of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland, has been charged with one count of ethnic agitation for publishing Räsänen's book.

Led by Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas), the group of six Republican House members sent a letter to Nadine Maenza, the chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, this week. The group argued that the prosecutions of Räsänen and Pohjola are "infringements on religious freedom."

Räsänen publicly voiced her opinion on marriage in a 2004 booklet on sexual ethics, describing marriage as between one man and one woman. She also expressed her views on a 2019 radio show and tweeted church leadership on the matter.

The group of six U.S. lawmakers argued that the prosecutions "are specific examples of the Finnish government's violation of religious freedom."

"The Finnish government is currently prosecuting well-known Christians for publicly supporting Christian doctrine," the

letter to Maenza reads.

Graham also condemned the Finish government's actions in this Facebook post:

If you're a follower of Jesus Christ—a Protestant, a Roman Catholic, a Lutheran, an evangelical, Orthodox, or whatever your confession of faith—this is an attack on you. Finland Parliament Member Päivi Räsänen is facing a threat of 6 years in prison for sharing her biblical beliefs on sexuality and marriage. I've met Päivi Räsänen, and she's a strong supporter of God's Word and truth. This is another example of LGBTQ activists not wanting us to just accept them, but trying to shut our mouths from speaking the truth. They want to force what they believe on the rest of the world.

Like other evangelical Christians, Päivi Räsänen doesn't hate them—she loves them enough to speak the truth. That isn't hate speech. We live in a world where people don't want to hear the truth if it makes them feel uncomfortable or doesn't line up with what they want. I appreciate the six Republican members of Congress who have written a letter in her defense to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). I hope Christians around the world will pray for Päivi Räsänen and for Evangelical Lutheran Mission Bishop Juhana Pohjola who published her booklet on the topic and is also being prosecuted.

Bishop Pohjola warned that his prosecution illustrates that "the Gospel of Christ is at stake." He's right—the freedom to preach and share the Word of God is ultimately at stake. As Christians, if we don't boldly stand against this kind of oppression and discrimination, the freedom to preach the truth of the Bible could be lost forever.

Your letters and calls to the USCIRF on this important issue can make an impact as well. Take time to write or call expressing your concern. Their address and phone number are in

this link at .” {eo}

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