

Pastor Reaches Settlement With UK Police Who Tried to Block Him from 'Comments on Religion'

A police force in the U.K. has admitted that their attempt to limit the free speech of a street preacher was "disproportionate" and are being forced to pay a settlement to the pastor.

Dia Moodley, a Bristol-based pastor and evangelist, was given a "Community Protection" notice by the Avon and Somerset Police Force to stop him from "passing comments on any other religion or comparing them to Christianity" and "passing comments on beliefs held by Atheists or those who believe in evolution," Alliance Defending Freedom UK reports.

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The non-profit legal group, along with the Free Speech Union, represented Moodley who claimed law enforcement's actions breached his free speech.

"It isn't for the police to decide which religions or worldviews can be free from criticism. When I preach, I am committed to speaking about the good news of Christianity in love, grace and truth – but that doesn't mean that I will never say something that others may disagree with. The nature of a free and democratic society is that we can speak publicly about our beliefs," Moodley said.

According to ADF UK, Moodley had reached out to the Avon & Sommerset Police Force after being the victim of several incidents of racial abuse.

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Officers began to regularly attend Moodley's public preaching to protect both the pastor and his congregation.

Then in 2021, Moodley arranged a meeting with the police force to maintain good working relations, but instead, officers served him with a warning notice, which Moodley refused to sign.

The notice forbid the street evangelist from criticizing religions other than Christianity and it banned him from "delivering a sermon or religious address at a time or place that has not had prior consent and approval of Avon & Somerset Constabulary."

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