

Pro-Life Activist Arrested for 'Praying Silently' Near Abortion Clinic

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The issue of abortion—pro-choice vs. pro-life—continues to escalate worldwide. It continues to divide people and has resulted in violence, hatred and incarceration.

Isabel Vaughan-Spruce, the Director of the UK March for life, discovered the latter when she was recently taken into custody when she told police she “might” be praying silently in front of BPAS Robert Clinic in Kings Norton, Birmingham.

Fox News reported that Birmingham authorities had established a “buffer zone” around abortion clinics, making it illegal for an individual to engage in any act or attempted act of disapproval as it relates to abortion. That includes “verbal or written means,” like “prayer or counseling.”

Alliance Defending Freedom reported that police approached Vaughan-Spruce after an onlooker complained she might be praying in a “censorship zone.”

The abortion issue has become one of such spiritual warfare that people believe they can read other’s minds.

“It’s abhorrently wrong that I was searched, arrested, interrogated by police and charged simply for praying in the privacy of my own mind,” Vaughan-Spruce told Alliance Defending Freedom following her arrest. “I was exercising my freedom of thought, my freedom of religion, inside the privacy of my own mind. Nobody should be criminalized for thinking and for praying, in a public space in the UK.

“My faith is a central part of who I am, so sometimes I’ll

stand or walk near an abortion facility and pray about this issue. This is something I've done pretty much every week for around the last 20 years of my life. I pray for my friends who have experienced abortion, and for the women who are thinking about going through it themselves."

Jeremiah Igunnubole, legal counsel for ADF UK, said Vaughan-Spruce's arrest was simply "wrong."

"It is truly astonishing that the law has granted local authorities such wide and unaccountable discretion, that now even thoughts deemed 'wrong' can lead to a humiliating arrest and a criminal charge," Igunnubole said. "A mature democracy should be able to differentiate between criminal conduct and the peaceful exercise of constitutionally protected rights."

"We are at serious risk of mindlessly sleepwalking into a society that accepts, normalizes and even promotes the 'tyranny of the majority.'"

Igunnubole described Vaughan-Spruce as a woman of "good character ... who has tirelessly served her community" through her charity work in assistance of women and children, but said she "has been treated no better than a violent criminal."

Fox News reported that "Parliamentarians in the UK are considering legislation to introduce similar censorship zones in other parts of England and Wales that would restrict pro-life volunteers from interfering with the ability to "access, provide or facilitate the provision of abortion services."

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