



Written by [James Heiser](#) on April 8, 2011

Sweden Plans Deportation of Christian-Convert Imam

A former imam who converted to Christianity is facing extradition from Sweden to his native Iraq, where he may face imprisonment or death for his "apostasy" from Islam. According to an article at Dagen.se (translated by Google):

A former imam, who lives in Karlskoga and who converted to Christianity must be deported to Iraq, the Administrative Court of Appeal has decided.

Bengt Sjöberg, local politician from Filipstad and heavily involved in refugee issues, said that the former Imam [had] been baptized in the Baptist church in Karlskoga and openly share[d] [his] faith with others. "This is absolutely horrible. This is a genuine conversion and many of us can testify that there is a man who lives as a Christian."



Given the latitude which has been shown by Western nations for generations in extending protection to individuals claiming sanctuary from the tyranny which would confront them at home, the decision of Swedish authorities to deport a man whose conversion would make him a target seems reckless. The bloody persecution which has been inflicted on the Church in Iraq in the past few years [has driven much of the Christian remnant out of the country](#); even the [homes of Christians in Baghdad](#) were subjected to Jihadist attacks this past Christmas.

According to an entry ("Mänskliga rättigheter, asylsökande och dop/Human rights, asylum seekers and baptism") [on Mr. Sjöberg's website](#), the Church of Sweden is making the situation worse for converts because it is urging that those foreigners who become believers in Christianity should not be baptized, if there is a possibility they could be deported. As Mr. Sjöberg writes (again, via Google translation):

It's good that the Swedish Church declares that it is dangerous to be a Christian if you come from certain countries such as Afghanistan and Iran.

But [a] Swedish Church representative writes that "there is the church's argument that denying asylum seekers to be baptized. We are baptized into a Christian community and have the responsibility to become part of a congregation. If you do not stay in Sweden you are not taking part [in] the Community. "I do not think it is right to argue so. It is named first and foremost FOR JESUS CHRIST. Then, it is important to have a spiritual home, a church or cell group where you can get continuing education, support and assistance and may develop the spiritual gifts that God gives to all those who become disciples of Jesus. When the Evangelical church baptizes people such as children, they have no guarantee that children stay in Sweden in the home church. If



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anyone is deported, we try to find a suitable underground church or cell group where they can be received into a spiritual community. Thank God for the church of God all over the world and those who are baptized into Christ Jesus have always been a 'family' wherever he/she may come. In different ways we can support and help, in legal, spiritual and human terms. Nobody should be left alone in a difficult situation."

Certainly one of the most basic rights recognized in the West is the freedom of conscience in matters of religion. While Islamic nations threaten to execute those who "blaspheme" Islam, and [Jihadists murder the only Christian in the Pakistani government](#), the moral obligation of Western nations is to protect immigrants from such nations as would imprison or murder them for their religious beliefs, as we once offered a measure of protection to those who fled from the Communist nations.

It is not surprising that some of the recent émigrés from the Islam-dominated countries will come to the realization that they had previously been deceived regarding the nature of Christianity. Rev. Elijah Abraham, a former Muslim from Iraq who converted to Christianity, has a ministry, Living Oasis Ministries, which has as its goal bringing the Gospel to adherents of Islam. (Rev. Abraham was interviewed by *The New American* last year, and the first portion of that interview may be found [here](#).) Rev. Abraham explained that his life as a Muslim in Iraq was one which was filled with hatred:

I grew up with hatred: hatred toward Christianity. I had a lot of Christian neighbors and friends and I loved them, but the Christians I could not separate from Christianity because my community and Islam told me I could not separate America from Christianity ... England from Christianity ... colonialism from Christianity. So that was the hatred — hatred toward the West — imperialism, capitalism, etc. — and hatred toward the Jews, and Israel, and Zionism. Nobody told me why I needed to hate. The culture of hate is just a way of life, and not just hatred toward Christians and Jews, but also toward other factions within Islam. There is no peace. There is this constant struggle, on a personal, community, or national level. That's why it's a really great opportunity to share the Gospel with Muslims, because as human beings we always want to have peace of mind. We always want to be at rest and ease. That's the void that only God can fill. So it's a great opportunity when I witness to Muslims and give them that option. Yes, they will give me typical Muslim objections to the Gospel, but I'm prepared to answer those questions.

Such converts from Islam have a great deal to teach Christians in the West through their willingness to suffer for what they believe. As Sjoberg observes, "We never baptize someone who has not received proper training and if you come from a Muslim background you may be given a long time to think about the risks it entails to become a Christian and be baptized, [as you] may be deported to a country where capital punishment [is inflicted] on any converts. If you still stand fast in the desire to fully become a Christian, we can not deny anyone to make this powerful spiritual experience."

Photo: Christian church at Karlskoga, Sweden



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