



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on March 26, 2026

Finnish Lawmaker Convicted of “Hate Speech” for Promoting Biblical View of Homosexuality

A Finnish lawmaker was convicted Wednesday of “hate speech” for reproducing on social media a pamphlet she wrote 22 years ago expressing the Lutheran Church’s long-standing beliefs that homosexuality and same-sex “marriage” are sinful.

The Supreme Court of Finland ruled 3-2 that parliamentarian Päivi Räsänen and Lutheran Bishop Juhana Pohjola were guilty under Finland’s code outlawing “war crimes and crimes against humanity,” according to [ADF International](#), which coordinated Räsänen’s defense.



Finnish Government/Wikimedia Commons
Päivi Räsänen

Pride Prosecution

[The New American](#) reported in 2022:

Räsänen, a medical doctor and mother of five who is married to a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), has been a member of the Finnish parliament since 1995 and previously served as interior minister and chairwoman of the Christian Democrats.

Her high standing, however, did her no good when, in 2019, she criticized on Facebook the ELCF’s participation in Helsinki’s LGBT Pride celebration, writing: “The Church of which I am a member has announced to be the official partner of ... Helsinki Pride 2019. How does the church’s doctrine, the Bible, fit together with the cause where shame and sin are raised as a topic of pride?” She also referenced Romans 1:24-27, which describes homosexual behavior as “dishonorable” and “shameless.”

Homosexuals being among those politically shielded from having their feelings hurt in Finland,

someone snitched to the cops about Räsänen’s “crime,” and before she knew it, she was being prosecuted on three counts, two of which were filed “after the police made strong recommendations not to continue the prosecution,” noted [ADF International](#).

One count stemmed from the original publication of the pamphlet, which, ADF International Executive Director Paul Coleman observed, occurred “before the law under which she has been convicted was even passed.” The second was related to her post concerning Helsinki Pride 2019. The third concerned her restatement of her beliefs in a 2019 radio debate.

Grilled but Not Cooked

Räsänen was tried twice, in 2022 and 2023. During those trials, ADF reported,



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the prosecution attacked core Christian teachings and cross-examined Räsänen and the Bishop on their theology.

Before the Court of Appeal, the Finnish State prosecutor, Anu Mantila, claimed that, “You can cite the Bible, but it is Räsänen’s interpretation and opinion about the Bible verses that are criminal.”

Räsänen’s legal team, meanwhile, contended that freedom of speech, even when it offends someone, enjoys strong protections in both Finnish and international law.

The lower courts unanimously acquitted Räsänen on all counts. Mantila appealed the pamphlet and social-media acquittals to the Supreme Court, but did not appeal the decision regarding the radio debate.

Convicted for Convictions

Wrote ADF:

The Court found Räsänen and the Bishop guilty for having “*made available to the public and kept available to the public opinions that insult homosexuals as a group on the basis of their sexual orientation.*” It held that: “it must be taken into account that the text forming the basis for the conviction did not contain incitement to violence or comparable threat-like fomenting of hatred. The conduct is therefore not particularly serious in terms of the nature of the offense.”

The pamphlet was authored by Räsänen in 2004. The Court convicted her on the basis that: “after a preliminary investigation into the matter was launched in 2019, Räsänen continued to share the article on her own internet and social media pages in 2019 and 2020.” [Emphasis in original.]

As to the social-media post regarding the pride event, the court found Räsänen not guilty because she had, among other things, “justified her opinion by citing a biblical text.” Of course, the pamphlet was based on the Bible too, so good luck making any sense of the court’s reasoning.

For Räsänen’s “not particularly serious” offense of restating 2,000 years’ worth of Christian teaching in a country with two established churches, “the Supreme Court has imposed criminal fines of several thousands of Euros and ruled that the impugned statements must be ‘*removed from public access and destroyed,*’” noted ADF. (Emphasis in original.)

Censuring the Censors

“I am shocked and profoundly disappointed that the court has failed to recognize my basic human right to freedom of expression,” Räsänen said after the decision. “I stand by the teachings of my Christian faith, and will continue to defend my and every person’s right to share their convictions in the public square.”

Coleman, similarly, called the ruling “an outrageous example of state censorship” that “will create a severe chilling effect for everyone’s right to speak freely.”

And Kristen Waggoner, ADF’s CEO, president, and chief counsel, said, “This ruling is a stark reminder



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that no democracy is immune from the erosion of fundamental freedoms. Punishing peaceful expression, especially when it is based on deeply held religious convictions, undermines the very foundation of free societies.”

Given that Räsänen’s offending words have been repeated in numerous articles and interviews and that nothing on the internet ever really disappears, the court is going to have a very difficult time enforcing its censorship order.

Making Räsänen cough up a hefty fine may not be easy, either. Having served in the Finnish government for decades, she is one tough cookie. She hasn’t backed down throughout this ordeal, and she says she is considering appealing to the European Court of Human Rights.

“This is not about my free speech alone, but that of every person in Finland,” she said. “A positive ruling would help to prevent other innocent people from experiencing the same ordeal for simply sharing their beliefs.”



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