



Alliance of Former Muslims (Ireland) | Petition to Legalise Apostasy

Dear Deputy Pringle,

Throughout the Muslim world, those who renounce Islam are faced with persecution and death. According to the *2019 Freedom of Thought Report* of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, there are no less than twelve Muslim-majority countries in which apostasy is a capital offence. Such laws do not have to be implemented to be effective; rather, their very existence is enough to terrify ex-Muslims into silence – or indeed, to embolden Islamist lynch mobs to take the law into their own hands. Witness the case of university student Mashal Khan, murdered in April 2017 on the mere *suspicion* of apostasy.

The prescription of the death penalty for apostasy is derived from shari'ah – the legal code of Islam, which has remained fundamentally unalterable since the “closing of the gates” of inquiry (*ijtihad*) in the tenth century. In *Sunan an-Nasa'i*, the Prophet Muhammad plainly says, “Whoever changes his religion, kill him” (hadith 4061). Thus, all four Sunni law schools, as well as the primary Shi'a school of thought, demand the killing of apostates. In *The Reliance of the Traveller*, a classic text of Islamic jurisprudence, it is made explicitly clear that renouncing Islam is the worst sin that a Muslim can commit (page 595):

Leaving Islam is the ugliest form of unbelief (kufr) and the worst... When a person who has reached puberty and is sane voluntarily apostasizes from Islam, he deserves to be killed. In such a case it is obligatory...to ask him to repent and return to Islam. If he does it is accepted from him, but if he refuses, he is immediately killed. There is no indemnity for killing an apostate (or any expiation since it is killing someone who deserves to die).

Indeed, the implementation of shari'ah is so integral to Islam that it has emboldened Ali Selim, secretary-general of the Irish Council of Imams and spokesman for the Clonskeagh Mosque, to argue that shari'ah should rule in Ireland once there is a Muslim majority (*Irish Independent*, 23/09/2006). Selim thus condones the killing of apostates, making him no different from radical cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi – the spiritual father of the Muslim Brotherhood, who openly states that “If they [Muslims] had gotten rid of the punishment of death for apostasy, Islam would not exist today.” (*Shar'ia and Life*, 05/02/2013)

As ex-Muslims, we ask you to lend us your support in our struggle to legalise apostasy. In doing so, you will be helping the Muslim world achieve compliance with Article 18 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion – including the freedom to *change* one's religion or belief. Consistent with this, as an elected representative who is duty-bound to protect the freedom of conscience of Irish citizens (*Constitution of Ireland*, Article 44 °2.1), we further ask for your commitment to oppose any attempts to introduce shari'ah in the Republic of Ireland.

As a demonstration of this twin commitment, we would appreciate if you could attach your signature to this petition (see the box below) and email a photocopy of the signed petition to the following address:

enquiries@allianceofformermuslims.com

Thanks very much for your consideration.

Kareem Muhssin

Spokesperson, Alliance of Former Muslims (Ireland)



I support the legalisation of apostasy from Islam and pledge to oppose any attempts to introduce shari'ah in the Republic of Ireland.

Thomas Pringle T.D.

Signature: Thomas Pringle Date: 17/9/2020