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Swedish town that approved a mosque's calls to prayer did not reject church bells permit

A Swedish church which made headlines when it claimed requests for a permit to ring bells were denied never actually made a formal application to do so, it has emerged

Lee Roden

The Local (22.05.2018) - <https://bit.ly/2KLdmfl> - The [church in Växjö grabbed headlines with the claim](#) because it came against the backdrop of debate over a mosque in the same area, which was granted a permit to hold Friday calls to prayer provided they do not exceed 110 decibels outdoors.

Local newspaper Smålandsposten wrote that Catholic Sankt Mikael's church had twice been denied the right to ring church bells on the grounds that it would be disturbing to residents, citing parish priest Ingvar Fogelqvist.

But a number of other outlets subsequently reported that a written request for permission to ring the bells was never actually made. On Tuesday, Fogelqvist confirmed to The Local that was the case, and that the view in the church that permission had been denied stemmed from a discussion a previous priest had in 1993.

"There was verbal discouragement from one of the municipality's representatives in 1993. So the story hasn't changed in that regard: we got negative communication from the municipality to not continue with the application. So we let the whole thing go, and as a result there has been the view in the parish that the municipality gave a negative to bell-ringing," Fogelqvist said.

"It never went as far as a written rejection. We never applied, because we had received this message beforehand. It was a long time ago, but the priest who was here at the time clarified it."

The original story about a permit request being rejected in the same area where one was granted for a mosque gained international headlines, with populist sites in particular outraged about perceived hypocrisy from municipal decision makers.

Asked if he regrets how the saga has played out, Fogelqvist pointed out that he had not made a link between his original understanding of the situation and the granting of a permit to the mosque, but rather that media outlets were responsible for making that leap.

"We didn't go out with the story. Smålandsposten called after they had heard about it in some way. And we said to them that the municipality had given us a negative, from the knowledge we had. We weren't interested in making a big thing about it."

"We've even been in contact with Muslim groups here and explained we weren't interested in making this something negative about Muslims, we just answered a question from the information we had," he concluded.

Swedish Neo-Nazi group leader guilty of inciting hatred

The Nordic Resistance Movement targets gay people, Jews, Muslim refugees

CEP (04.01.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2CD3vc0> - The [Counter Extremism Project](#) (CEP) today released new resources on the violent neo-Nazi group the [Nordic Resistance Movement](#) (NRM) and extremism and counter-Extremism in [Sweden](#), following the conviction of NRM leader Simon Lindberg of "incitement to racial hatred."

The court found that during a speech at a 2017 Stockholm rally, Lindberg "spread and expressed contempt for groups based on their race, skin color, national or ethnic origin by shouting 'Sieg Heil' while raising his right arm upwards."

The NRM has been expanding in Sweden, Norway, and Finland, and is reportedly an inspiration for U.S.-based white nationalists. Formed by neo-Nazi nationalists in Sweden in 1997, the group seeks to merge all Nordic countries into a single, nationalist-socialist state. NRM members have carried attacks against gay people, Muslims asylum seekers, and ideological adversaries, using explosives, guns, and knives. Three deaths are tied to NRM members.

Sweden convicts neo-nazi leader of inciting hatred at rally

AFP (02.01.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2ISkpIf> - A Swedish court on Tuesday convicted the head of a neo-Nazi movement of "incitement to racial hatred" more than a year after he held a speech at a Stockholm rally that turned violent.

The Nordic Resistance Movement's leader Simon Lindberg, 34, held a speech which "spread and expressed contempt for groups based on their race, skin color, national or ethnic origin by shouting 'Sieg Heil' while raising his right arm upwards," the Stockholm district court said in its verdict, seen by AFP.

Five people were arrested and two were injured in clashes between police and anti-fascists at the November 2016 rally, organized by the group.

The court said Lindberg had never been convicted before and that his crime merited a punishment of one month in prison.

But because he had been speaking at a rally which had a permit the sentence was suspended and combined with an 800 krona (\$98) fine instead.

The Nordic Resistance Movement, founded in 1997, is described as the most violent Nazi organization in Sweden by Swedish anti-racism magazine Expo.

The group, which promotes an openly racist and anti-Semitic doctrine, has nearly 200 active members, according to the magazine.

A district court in Sweden's second largest city of Gothenburg in July sentenced three neo-Nazi activists for up to eight and a half years in prison over bomb attacks against refugee shelters that left one person seriously injured.

More about the Nordic Resistance Movement at

<https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/nordic-resistance-movement-nrm>