

# Canada: Quebec to ban public sector employees from wearing religious symbols

By Frank Cranmer

Law & Religion UK (29.03.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2FZY05J> – Law and Religion UK (29.04.2019) – On 28 March, the Government of Quebec introduced Bill 21, **Loi sur la laïcité de l'État/ An Act respecting the laicity of the State**, which would ban public sector employees in the Province from wearing religious symbols during working hours. The ban would extend to teachers, judges and police officers, though the Bill exempts current government employees and civil servants.

The proposed law is opposed by the Federal Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, who told reporters in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Thursday that “It is unthinkable to me that in a free society we would legitimise discrimination against citizens based on their religion.” The Jewish advocacy group B’nai Brith called Bill 21 “an assault on the fundamental rights and freedoms of Quebecers”, while the National Council of Canadian Muslims said that it would make Muslims and other minorities “second-class citizens” and overwhelmingly affect Muslim women.

To shield the proposed legislation from legal challenge, the Quebec Government intends to invoke s.33 of the **Constitution Act, 1982**, which enables it to override the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms for up to five years. Under the so-called “notwithstanding clause” (Exception where express declaration):

“Parliament or the legislature of a province may expressly declare in an Act of Parliament or of the legislature, as the case may be, that the Act or a provision thereof shall operate notwithstanding a provision included in section 2 or sections

7 to 15 of this Charter.”

Though the exception lapses after five years, under s.33(4) it may be renewed by the *Assemblée Nationale* for successive five-year terms.

.....

**If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, click here for a free subscription to our newsletters!**

*Also:*

HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>  
List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>

---

## **CHINA: Burial site forcibly excavated for being “unattractive” (videos)**

*Authorities in the southeastern province of Fujian leveled nearly one thousand ancestral graves, severely injuring a woman in the process.*

By Lin Yijiang

In a new low for the Communist Party, authorities in Fujian recently clamped down on a burial site, which is located at the Niushan Mountain, next to the Changle International Airport serving the province's capital Fuzhou.

In a bid to beautify surroundings near the airport, the graves were not only excavated but leveled as well. It all started in mid-September when the villagers nearby received a notice to dig up the graves and remove the tombs buried at the site.

Ancestral graves are important for the Chinese since they are associated with filial respect and reverence for one's elders. For this reason, the graves are looked after meticulously. Even a blade of grass should not be plucked as it can have a bearing upon the fortunes and feng shui of the family of the deceased.

The locals felt that to obey the notice would be extremely disrespectful to the deceased and their families. They refused to oblige and made repeated visits to the village's Party committee, where they would try to reason with the officials.

However, the village chief was helpless too. "Officials saw the graves while aboard an airplane and said it affected the area's appearance," he said. "So, they demanded that the graves on the mountain be dug up. This is an order from above. I cannot do anything."

A month later, the local authorities dispatched public security officers and armed police to the mountain. They came

armed with electric batons and tools for the excavation. Some villagers stood on the top of the graves to block the work, but they were forcibly pushed aside.

Li Yu (pseudonym), one of the villagers, pleaded with the officers to allow her to see her father's grave for one last time. She was given a few minutes, and the excavator got to work on her father's grave again. In the process, a large rock fell on her right foot and broke it. Blood gushed out from her foot, and when she and her relatives cried for help, none of the few dozen officers on site came to help her.

VIDEO: Li Yu's right foot was smashed and broken. (Warning: This video contains disturbing footage.)

The diggings continued for several days, and by the end of it, authorities had their way: the villagers were forced to take away the excavated remains of the deceased.

VIDEO: The excavator forcibly digs up the graves.

Still grieving the loss of the burial site, a local resident said, "It is our parents who gave us life and raised us. Now we can't even protect the ashes of our ancestors. How can I let them down like this?"

Another villager said, "When the deceased are laid to rest, it brings comfort to the souls of the living. It is utterly heartless to dig up ancestral graves." An elderly man added

that it was a taboo to dig up graves, "Only the CCP is capable of such barbaric law enforcement."

.....

If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, click here for a free subscription to our newsletters!

*Also:*

HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>

List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>

---

**PAKISTAN: Asia Bibi's release day has finally come! Now what?**



BPCA (08.11.2018) – <https://bit.ly/20vhq4N> – Asia Bibi has been set free from her long-term home under captivity at Multan Jail and we confirmed this with media after news from her family. BPCA will not give any more details to media groups until given the express permission of the family.

Wilson Chowdhry has spoken with the family of Asia Bibi, at 6am UK time on 8th November and they expressed that it is of utmost importance that there be no further speculation on her whereabouts reported by either concerned groups or international media. Asia Bibi, her family and guardians all still face a real and present danger of being killed.

This article is to celebrate the release of Asia Bibi and though general steps brought forth by human rights activists any reports or comments therein about her possible location are not endorsed by BPCA.

Asia Bibi has now seen the light of day after ten years of incarceration, eight of which were on death row after she was falsely accused of blasphemy. The allegation arose after she

drank water from a well used by Muslims and offered some to her coworkers who believed she had ritually defiled the well as they considered Christians unclean. Those convicted under Pakistan's blasphemy laws are subject to harsh penalties such as life imprisonment and the death penalty.

Read the full article at <https://bit.ly/20vhq4N>

.....

**If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, click here for a free subscription to our newsletters!**

***Also:***

**HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>**

**List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>**