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MEC/ HRWF (12.10.2022) - <https://bit.ly/3TaSRMV> - According to Middle East Concern, a young man, who converted to Christianity about four years ago, was arrested by militias and detained several times during the past few years. The authorities have tried to force him to recant his faith, but he has refused.

Libya has no law against apostasy, which means converts are usually tried for treason. However, this court based its decision on a law enacted by the General National Congress, the elected legislative body between 2012 and 2014. Under that law an apostate from Islam must be executed if they do not recant.

All the laws enacted by the General National Congress were cancelled by the current Tobruk-based parliament, elected in 2014.

However, as part of some continuing power struggle between the administrations based in Tripoli and Tobruk, the Supreme Court in Tripoli has declared the Tobruk-based parliament illegal. This allows courts to chose to still apply the cancelled laws.

The convert was required to publish the verdict in a local newspaper and on a local radio station, as well as display it outside his residence and the court. He did not have legal representation during the proceedings.

Places of worship

Although limited, there are a number of non-Islamic places of worship in the country. Most foreign Christians are sub-Saharan African migrants, Catholic Filipino foreign workers, some Coptic Egyptian migrants, and other foreign residents from Europe. There are a few Anglicans, as well as Greek and Russian Orthodox, and nondenominational Christians.

Most of the Jewish population left the country between 1948 and 1967. As of 2004, there were none left.

Recently, the Union Church in Tripoli (UCT) has received an order to vacate their building or forcibly be evicted.

With this eviction order, the UCT has lost use of the building where they (together with three other Protestant multi-national churches) have been worshipping for more than 50 years. Established by expatriate Christians in 1962, the UCT is one of five denominations recognised by the government.

When the church's previous land and premises were expropriated by the former Ghaddafi regime, the government gave the church a building to rent which had been expropriated from other people. Since 2011 a government committee has been returning such expropriated properties to their original owners. The heirs of the original owner of the building used by the UCT have regained ownership.

The Union Church had reached an agreement with the new owners to continue to rent the building for one year and then buy it. However the owners reneged on the agreement, claiming it is against their Islamic faith to rent for the purpose of non-Muslim worship. More than a year ago they filed a court case asking for an eviction order.
