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## **Malaysian state bans Muslims from entering churches**

[Christian Today](#) (07.04.2023) - A Malaysian state has issued a fatwa banning Muslims from entering churches and other non-Muslim places of worship.

The fatwa was passed on 15 March in the state of Selangor in western Malaysian and is believed to be a reaction to an event staged by Malaysia's Sports Minister for citizens to learn more about Christianity, Open Doors reports.

Selangor is the most populous state in Malaysia, which is a Muslim-majority country - 63.5 per cent of the country in 2020.

According to the country's constitution, Islam is Malaysia's state religion. The constitution also allows some restrictions on the proselytisation of Muslims.

Not all Muslims support the fatwa.

Muslim politician Syed Saddiq said in a video posted on social media: "How do we want our children to live in a harmonious society when they cannot understand the religion and culture of their own peers.

"What is the need to gatekeep Muslims in Selangor? Don't tell me that if you entered a church your faith would waver. Every other person of a different religion here hears the [Islamic] call to prayer five times a day."

Malaysia is ranked 43 on Open Doors' annual World Watch List of countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution.

Open Doors highlighted some of the practical consequences of the fatwa, which will prevent Muslims from attending weddings or other events held in churches, and affect the income of people event coordinators and wedding photographers.

A spokesperson for an Open Doors partner charity in Malaysia is concerned about the fatwa.

"It is alarming to see the rise in incidents like this, giving more and more control to the Islamic authority and restricting the rights of the minorities," she said.

"However, I do feel that there has been a shift of mentality among the minorities and even those within the Islamic community. People are getting sick of being controlled and they are speaking out."

*Photo: Getty/iStock*

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