

Religious freedom upheld by Malaysian High Court

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PRESS RELEASE



Freedom to believe and freedom to change religions is one's inalienable right, its guidance from Quran.

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Religious freedom upheld by Malaysian High Court
Washington, D.C., April 9, 2016 -- The American Muslim Institution welcomes the landmark ruling by a High Court in

[Malaysia](#) that recognized the freedom of religion as a fundamental [human right](#).

The right to follow one's conscience is the God given right of every human. We believe this right is well established in Islamic teachings.

The court struck down a decades-long government policy that had made it tough for Christian converts to renounce their former Islamic faith without the consent of an Islamic court. They had another great judgment in the case of Lina Joy.

The Association of Churches in Sarawak praised the decision "as a ratification of the fundamental right to freedom of religion in Malaysia," Herald Malaysia and Christian Today reported.

"This judgment reaffirms the supremacy of the Federal Constitution, which under Article 11 defends every Malaysian citizen's right to freedom of religion," the Association of Churches said.

High Court judge Yew Jen Kie of the Kuching High Court, Sarawak state granted the petition of Rooney Rebit asking judicial authorities to declare that his belief in Jesus Christ was a fundamental human right.

Rebit, 41, from a village in Sarawak, was born a Christian but was converted to Islam by his parents when he was about 10 years old and renamed Azmi Mohamad Azam. Judge Yew ruled that Rebit is now "free to exercise his right to freedom of religion and he chose Christianity."

Indeed, Mr. Rebit is free to exercise his right to freedom; the Quran says [2:256], "... Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error ..." This is Islam's unambiguous affirmation of freedom of faith, which also applies to changing of faith. The Qur'an illuminates for humanity the two paths [90:10], one of which leads to salvation. Islam is an invitation to the path toward salvation, but it is based on Freedom of Choice.

We applaud the ruling as it clarifies misconception held in some quarters that Islam compels Muslims

to stay in the Islamic fold through coercion and compulsion. While a few misguided Muslims over the course of history may have believed this, it is not based on true Islamic doctrine.

We appreciate the efforts of the Government of Malaysia to uphold the God-given inalienable rights of her citizens, which are inherently Islamic. We seek God's guidance in helping us to restore the pristine Islam of freedom, justice and mercy to mankind.

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