

Cases and rulings

Country Code	Year	Reference details title	Reference details URL	Hate Bias motivation	Court / Body	Key facts of the case	Results (sanctions, outcome) and key consequences or implications of the case	Main reasoning / argumentation	Key issues (concepts, interpretations) clarified by the case	Key quotation in original language and translated into English with reference details
Finland	2024	Finland / Parliamentary Ombudsman / EOAK/5453/2023		Religion	Parliamentary Ombudsman / Eduskunnan oikeusasiamies / Riksdagens ombudsman	A prison provides prisoners all daily meals, including special diets due to religious conviction. The prisoners also have a possibility to cook in their spare time in the ward's kitchen, using kitchen utensils provided by the prison. In Riihimäki prison, Muslim prisoners had had their own, separate frying pans which were not used by other prisoners to prepare meals containing pork. The prison administration decided to remove these frying pans. In their view, all prisoners can use the same pans, because the pans are washed after use. According to Muslim prisoners, their religion does not allow them to cook their meals on frying pans, which are also used to prepare pork.	The Parliamentary Ombudsman brought their opinion and decision to the attention of the Riihimäki prison administration and the Prison and Probation Service (Rikosseuraamuslaitos). No further action was taken.	The prison authorities maintained that while they had an obligation to provide meals to prisoners, there was no obligation to provide separate kitchen utensils to prisoners on the basis of the religion they practice. The Parliamentary Ombudsman found this view problematic. All prisoners had, in principle, an equal opportunity to prepare own meals in their spare time. However, Muslim prisoners were in fact in a differentiated position as compared to other prisoners. It was more difficult for Muslim prisoners to prepare their own meals, because their religious conviction was not taken into account when providing utensils to the prison ward's kitchen.	The Parliamentary Ombudsman highlighted that the prison authorities have a duty to treat all prisoners on an equal basis. Differential treatment is not discriminatory, if there is an objective and justifiable reason for it. In this case, the prison authorities had not presented any justifiable grounds for differential treatment of Muslim prisoners. In the Ombudsman's opinion, prisoners' religious conviction must be respected in full. This can mean that prisoners are provided with separate kitchen utensils for preparing their meals in case their religious conviction so requires.	"Näkemykseni on, että vankilan olisi tullut huomioida kantelijoiden uskonnollinen vakaumus ja sen vaikutus heidän mahdollisuuteensa käyttää ruoanvalmistusastioita. Kun näin ei ollut tehty, katson vankilan syrjineen kantelijoita." "In my opinion, the prison should have taken into account the complainants' religious conviction and its impact on their possibility to use kitchen utensils. This had not been done, and therefore, I find that the complainants have been subjected to discrimination by the prison."

DISCLAIMER The information presented here is collected under contract by the FRA's research network FRANET. The information and views contained do not necessarily reflect the views or the official position of the FRA.

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/databases/anti-muslim-hatred/>

Copyright © 2026 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights