

UNITED KINGDOM

Adam Smith-Connor: «Grateful to Vance for taking up my case»

WORLD

17_02_2025

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Who is **Adam Smith-Connor**, the “51-year-old physiotherapist and Army veteran”, that US vice president, JD Vance, name-checked in his address, at the 61st **Munich Security Conference** (MSC), in Germany? The *Daily Compass* knows him well. We were one of the

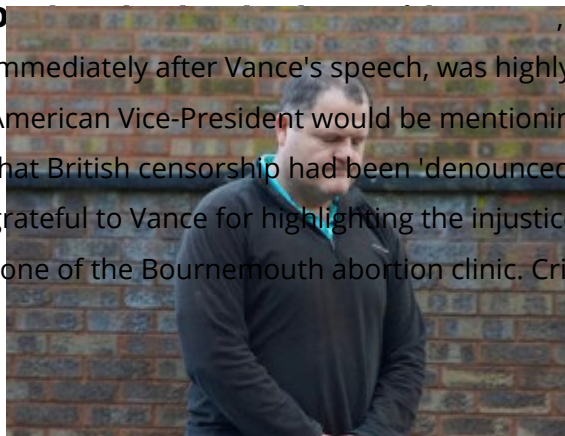
few media outlets to follow step by step the vicissitudes of Adam's case, twice stopped for praying silently near an abortion clinic; and last October convicted for the first thought crime in British history. Adam Smith-Connor was also a guest at the *Daily Compass* annual conference in 2023 ([watch his testimony here](#)). Presently he is preparing for a retrial of his case at Poole Magistrates' Court next July.

But thanks to the Vice President of the United States taking his case to the international stage, Adam Smith-Connor is front page news around the world. Vance mentioned his case in the context of a harsh harangue ([read full transcript](#)) against a Europe that is losing its civil liberties, citing a number of examples. The most "concerning case" of this backslide, he told the distinguished audience listening to him, was the United Kingdom. Here in particular, he said, the "basic liberties of religious Britons, in particular" are under threat, and he told the emotional story of an unfairly persecuted individual: precisely Adam Smith-Connor from Southampton.

700 attendees, some 50 Heads of State and Government, about 150 Ministers, and countless representatives of NGOs, think-tanks and businesses, listened impassively to Vance describe how a new law to regulate public order had essentially introduced thought crime in the UK: "A little over two years ago, the British government charged Adam Smith Conner with the heinous crime of standing 50 metres from an abortion clinic and silently praying for three minutes, not obstructing anyone, not interacting with anyone, just silently praying on his own. After British law enforcement spotted him and demanded to know what he was praying for, Adam replied simply, it was on behalf of his unborn son. He and his former girlfriend had aborted years before. Now the officers were not moved. Adam was found guilty of breaking the government's new Buffer Zones Law, which criminalises silent prayer and other actions that could influence a person's decision within 200 metres of an abortion facility. He was sentenced to pay thousands of pounds in legal costs to the prosecution", he said.

The European political elite listening did not take the speech well. "[This is unacceptable,](#)" said [German Defence Minister](#) Boris Pistorius, speaking on behalf of the assembly which then rewarded him with a protracted hearty applause.

O , whom the *Daily Compass* reached immediately after Vance's speech, was highly delighted. He didn't know that the American Vice-President would be mentioning his case and said he was 'deeply moved' that British censorship had been 'denounced on the world stage'. I am extremely grateful to Vance for highlighting the injustice of my conviction for praying in the buffer zone of the Bournemouth abortion clinic. Criminalising thought has no place in a society



that calls itself free and democratic, yet my conviction for silently praying for Jacob, my son who died from an abortion, highlights the way in which our rights and freedoms are being taken away,' he told the *Daily Compass*.

Coincidentally, Mr Smith-Connor and VP Vance are both veterans of overseas wars: the former in Afghanistan, the latter in the United States Marine Corps in Iraq. Adam's experience, which he referred to in an interview with the *Daily Compass* in 2023, is the real meaning of Vance's words: I fought for fundamental rights and democratic freedoms on the battlefield in Afghanistan, and see today those rights are being taken away on the streets of Britain," said Adam.

It is also important to remember that Adam is not the only case of police harassment for silent prayer in the UK, as the *Daily Compass* has extensively documented over the years. [Isabel Vaughan-Spruce](#), the first and most famous case ([also present at the annual Daily Compass Day in 2024](#)), was stopped again by two police officers just two weeks ago for praying silently near an abortion clinic in Birmingham. This was despite a judge ruling that there was no case to answer and the police [paying her compensation](#) in an out-of-court settlement when she sued them for an unjustified invasive search and arrest.

"It is disturbing," she told the Daily Compass, commenting on Vance's speech, "that Christians are increasingly feeling like second class citizens due to the discriminatory attitude of the police. I recently had police tell me that my mere presence constituted harassment- that because I hold pro-life beliefs I'm automatically a criminal in certain public spaces. (...) it is an international embarrassment. I am grateful that a world leader like JD Vance is noticing our plight", she said.

Given that the conference was about security, Vance touched on the most critical point when he said: "There is no security if you are afraid of the voices, opinions and consciences that guide your people. This is the crux of the matter that Europe must seriously consider.