

Toronto bans Christian music festival over the name of Jesus



TORONTO, October 29, 2015 ([LifeSiteNews](#)) -- The City of Toronto is refusing to grant a Christian group a permit to use a prominent downtown square for its annual musical festival next year, because the city has decided that singing the name of Jesus in the public venue contravenes city policy against 'proselytizing.'

[Voices of the Nations](#) (VON) has been using city property since 2006 for an annual 'multi denominational' event in which it celebrates Christianity through live music and dance. It has been using the Yonge-Dundas Square without issue for the past five years. This year's [August 1 event](#) attracted [19 different performance acts](#), including children's choirs and popular Christian bands, where well-known 'praise-and-worship' songs such as ['Days Of Elijah'](#) are performed.

When VON's Events Coordinator Leye Oyelani contacted the Square's Manager of Events Natalie Belman last week by phone to apply for next year's permit, he was told that a permit would not be issued and to look for a venue elsewhere.

'I've already advised Peter [Paresh, Director of VON] that we're not going to be permitting you guys this year for next year because of the proselytizing on the square, and that's a big issue for us,' said Belman in a transcript of the October 23 conversation obtained by LifeSiteNews.

A [volunteer Board of Management](#) appointed by Toronto City Council operates the Square. [Taxpayers contribute](#) about \$400,000 of the Square's annual \$2.3 million budget to help pay staff salaries and other costs.

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