

The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler and the Bishop at Lambeth (previously Bishop of Truro), Tim Thornton, met a survivor Gilo recently for a mediated meeting.

It was not an easy process, having taken 18 months to organise from the end of the Elliott Review. It was a helpful and productive process for all concerned. The survivor was supported by the Bishop of Buckingham, Alan Wilson and Phil Johnson of MACSAS. Professional mediators had helped set up the meeting and were present throughout.

As a result of the day-long meeting an agreement and action plan was drawn up and signed by all. Although that agreement was confidential, with the full agreement of the survivor who has helped in the preparation of this statement we are releasing the following:

1. The process was helpful to all concerned. All agreed that they had listened carefully to each other and found it was useful to spend the time both reviewing what had happened and working on how matters could be better treated in the future.
2. The three Bishops made the decision to write to EIG and raise a range of issues with them and ask for a meeting to discuss the ways in which survivors are treated and to discover if there can be further revisions to the processes EIG have in place. The letter has now been sent in which reference was made to the Guiding Principles that have helpfully been drawn up by the EIG. The Bishops also drew attention to various specific matters relating to the case of Gilo. The hope is that this will set up a constructive dialogue with EIG on other cases both past and current and EIG have agreed to a meeting. The Bishops will work with the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding in seeking the House of Bishops to discuss an action plan for change. (The timing will be dependent on other developments below.)
3. It was agreed that Archbishop Welby should be approached to write a letter to Gilo apologising for the ways in which he had been treated by the church, and by Lambeth Palace in particular, in the past. This letter has now been written and sent.
4. Bishop Paul and Bishop Tim apologised for failures that have occurred in the response to his case, both by them and other senior figures in the church. Both continue to be deeply committed to working hard to improve relations with survivors and are also both more than willing to place on record their desire to work as hard as they can to make the Church of England a safer and more honest place for all. They recognise that the church continues to face serious challenges through its response to survivors. They are convinced that these matters need to be faced honestly and squarely.
5. The Bishops were very grateful for the way in which everyone handled this process and all present, including Gilo, hope further mediations with other survivors may prove a constructive way forward for many similar situations. We are grateful to the mediators and all present committed themselves to working on the various aspects of the agreement and ensuring positive steps were taken as a result.
6. We are releasing the letter sent to EIG, at the survivor's request (with his surname redacted). We hope that this will signal our clear intention that these difficult issues are addressed, both within the church and by our insurer. We are aware that much work needs to happen to make significant changes to our structure. We hope that the release of this letter signals that change is being taken seriously. We are aware that by so

doing we are laying things on the line and that our action must match our rhetoric and intention.

7. We recognise the cost to survivors in terms of the impact of the church's failure and recognise that there are many situations needing justice, healing and reconciliation. We are acutely embarrassed that it has been survivors who have over many years, decades in some situations, had to find the courage to drive forward change. We hope we can now match that with our own determination and bring our own necessary courage to the task. If healing and reconciliation is to happen we must for the sake of justice learn from the tenacity of survivors. And we as two bishops commit ourselves afresh personally to changing our culture and our structure.

8. Lastly on a personal note, we are aware that Gilo, despite a history of life difficulty and health issues arising from abuse, is also a gifted writer with distinctive theological insights. Remarkably, given the confusion the church has caused him, he writes hymns of considerable beauty. We hope to explore ways of encouraging this. Indeed the church should enable all survivors, in appropriate and achievable ways to develop skills, access support in terms of training, or receive other practical help in ways that might transform surviving into thriving. We need to encourage all bishops and our safeguarding to recognise that any response from the church should be the raising of a curtain rather than the closing of one.

This statement has been sent with the full agreement of the survivor.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-news-and-releases/statement-mediation-survivor-gilo>