

Abuse case dismissed despite Cardinal admitting 'mistakes'

Posted: Thu, 4th Aug 2016

One of the most senior cardinals in France, Lyons' Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, has been told by the prosecutor that he will not face charges following allegations that he had failed to report suspicions of child abuse by a priest under his control, as is required by French law.

Bernard Preynat, a priest in his diocese, was charged in January after admitting to sexual assaults on four boy scouts between 1986 and 1991 — crimes which his lawyers say he can no longer be convicted of. There are thought to be many more victims.

Associated Press has reported that the "statute of limitations had expired for some of the allegations" against the Cardinal and the evidence for other accusations was not "sufficient".

In May at the height of prosecutors' investigations into Cardinal Barbarin's actions, the Pope said publicly that it would be "nonsensical and imprudent" to seek the archbishop's resignation at this stage, although Cardinal Barbarin admitted last month to "errors in the management and nomination of certain priests", while vehemently denying any cover-up.

Soon after the Pope's comments, on the very day of an important court hearing in the charged cleric's case, the Pope gave Barbarin an audience.

La Parole Liberee, a French group representing survivors, [claimed that the legal proceedings](#) "will now be overshadowed by this meeting". The group had earlier sought a meeting with the Pope, but was denied one. "We would have liked to have been received instead of the cardinal, we note that once again it's the victims who are sidelined."

Keith Porteous Wood, executive director of the National Secular Society, commented: "Given Barbarin's admission of mistakes in handling of abusive priests, he has been exceptionally fortunate in having escaped charges over failure to report suspicions of child abuse.

"We can only hope that the prosecutor treated him the same way as they would have done of someone who was not a senior cleric and who had not had the Pope speak out in their support."

- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Abuse](#)

Related Campaigns

-

End abuse in religious settings

Religious privilege must not undermine safeguarding and justice.

[Read More](#)

Related Articles

NI assembly votes in favour of inclusive, evidence-based RSE

MLAs speak of "twisted" RSE teaching that thoughts of sex are "sinful" and same-sex relationships "laughed at". [Read More »](#)

Experts speak out against religious abuse

Public authorities failing to tackle abuse in religious settings, panellists say at NSS event. [Read More »](#)

Report: CofE safeguarding “below standards” of secular institutions

Most victims and survivors unsatisfied with safeguarding approaches, while safeguarding 'weaponised' to remove those "seen as a nuisance", report finds. [Read More »](#)

Faith school banning parts of geography lessons, Ofsted finds

Ofsted finds faith school prohibiting parts of lessons it judges incompatible with its religious beliefs. [Read More »](#)

NSS to hold event on tackling abuse in religious communities

Safeguarding experts in panel discussion in Manchester this March. [Read More »](#)