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Advocates for Awareness of Watchtower Abuses

Press Release - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **AAWA welcomes Charity Commission investigation of UK congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses**

May 30, 2014

Advocates for Awareness of Watchtower Abuses (AAWA) announced that they welcome the decision by the UK Charity Commission to open an operational compliance case into a Manchester-based Jehovah's Witness congregation following concerns about how it protects vulnerable members.

In late May 2014 the UK Charity Commission said that it was in discussions with the Manchester New Moston Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses after reports in the Manchester Evening News that a congregation member, Jonathan Rose, recently released from prison after serving nine months for the indecent of assault of two girls, was allowed to question his victims in front of congregation elders. The abuse survivors were required to recount the abuse at the judicial committee meeting to have Rose barred from the congregation. [[Link to original news account.](#)]

Lee Marsh, AAWA's president, said, "We urge the Charity Commission to not only investigate this congregation in Manchester, but to also consider why the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses has not complied with an earlier request to develop an effective child protection policy."

"We hope this will be the first of many investigations, as both the UK and international experience indicate this is not a unique situation."

"Indeed as more historical cases and fresh child molestation cases are put under the spotlight it is irresponsible at best for the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses to still be advising congregation elders that they can conduct separate "trials" where convicted perpetrators are allowed another day in court and where there is no legal framework for questioning of abuse survivors."

"The queue of Jehovah's Witnesses who are survivors of physical, mental, and emotional abuse gets longer every day. AAWA hopes the perpetrators will have their day in the criminal courts and that the congregations

will support the survivors rather than ostracize them for talking to the police or choosing to leave the Witness faith.”

A spokeswoman for the Commission said, “The Commission has ongoing serious concerns about the Manchester New Moston Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses in connection with its policies and procedures for the protection of vulnerable beneficiaries. We are engaging with the charity’s trustees about our concerns. We cannot comment further at this stage.”

Lee Marsh responded, “Hopefully the UK Charity Commission will identify that what has created this situation is an inadequate global policy which does not protect children and that this is not just a local aberration.”

AAWA, an organization committed to raising awareness of these continuing human rights abuses, has extended an open offer to the leaders of Jehovah’s Witnesses to meet and discuss ways in which the organization can remedy these distressing issues. So far their offer has gone unanswered.

More Information Links:

- [Shunning Policy Explained](#)
- [Child Molestation Information](#)
- [Domestic Abuse](#)
- [Anti-education](#)
- [Refusal of Blood Transfusions](#)

#### **Advocates for Awareness of Watchtower Abuses (AAWA)**

**Background:** AAWA is a religiously neutral organization, a not-for-profit corporation with 260 volunteers from over twenty countries committed to objectively and respectfully raise awareness and to help victims of abusive Watchtower (Jehovah’s Witness) policies. URL: <http://aawa.co>

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