

**Statement from the Missions Etrangeres de Paris Society (MEP)
to Mgr Bernard Katsuya, Bishop of Sapporo and to the faithful of the diocese**

An adult French man, Mr T., has accused a priest from the Missions Etrangeres de Paris, also French, Father P., of having had non-consensual sexual relations with him at the end of July 2022. Until then, Father P. had been serving in the diocese of Sapparo.

Faced with this serious accusation, the MEP listened to the two men. Father P. categorically denies the accusation of a non-consensual relationship. On August 2, 2022, the MEP reported the facts to the French judicial authorities, as the two men were French. A French police investigation is underway and has not yet been completed. The MEP also notified the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome and opened a canonical investigation, which has been entrusted to the Church's Canonical Criminal Court in France.

The Missions Etrangeres de Paris Society is shocked and sorry about this situation and its thoughts are with Mr T. who is hurt by this affair. The MEP is also confused and sorry for the diocese of Sapporo, its bishop Mgr Katsuya and the people of the diocese who have been hurt by this situation. The MEP would like to apologize to Bishop Katsuya and the Catholics of Japan.

Pending the results of ongoing investigations, caution and reserve are called for. The secrecy of the investigation must be respected. The MEP are at the disposal of the French police and of the canonical courts. For the duration of the investigation, Father P. has been set aside by the MEP, which has taken conservatory measures in his regard.

The MEP management, as well as several individual MEP priests, have devoted a great deal of time to listening to Mr T. and referred him to professional lawyers and psychologists from the French Church Commission for Minors and Vulnerable Persons. The MEP also reimbursed Mr T.'s travel expenses to come to France to tell the story.

The MEP Society informs that they have decided to conduct an external audit on the issue of sexual violence within the MEP in order to take the necessary measures. The MEP mandated the independent UK firm, GCPS Consulting, to carry out this audit (<https://gcps.consulting>). This audit will be finished next December 2024.

Anyone wishing to provide information on any genuine concerns of sexual violence that may have been committed by any MEP member can contact the GCPS audit team using the following details: mep_review@gcps.consulting.

GCPS is the main and preferred communication channel on this topic but, of course, it should not prevent referring to the Justice Department of the country for matters falling within its competence.

MEP Society, Paris, April 8, 2024
media-communication@missionsetrangeres.com