

Williams confronts Mugabe with dossier of abuses

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Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams has asked Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe to intervene to stop attacks on Anglicans by allies of an excommunicated bishop who has seized church property and intimidated clergy and worshipers.

In the capital city of Harare, the leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion handed Mugabe on October 10 a dossier with descriptions of attacks on parishioners and priests by supporters of excommunicated bishop Nolbert Kunonga, who left the Anglican Church in 2007, seized church property and locked out Anglicans from their church buildings.

Mugabe, who has maintained a tight grip on power for 30 years, has sided with the breakaway bishop. Williams told reporters that the dossier "gives a full account of the abuses to which our people and our church have been subject."

Stated in the dossier: "We respectfully ask that you as head of state put an end to this illegal harassment . . . and allow us once again to use the properties which are rightly ours so that we may worship God in peace and serve our communities and our country."

According to the documents, a woman was killed last February for siding with the officially recognized bishop of Harare, Chad Gandiya. In addition, some priests have received death threats at gunpoint, the documents state.

During his two-day visit, Williams visited a town in eastern Zimbabwe where church members are holding services in an old municipal hall after their cathedral was locked. A group aligned with Kunonga blocked Williams's entourage from entering the cathedral. —ENInews