

# Senior British rabbi filmed telling alleged child abuse victim not to go to the police

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Rabbi Ephraim Padwa said that reporting the case would break rabbinic law

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A senior British rabbi has been filmed telling an alleged victim of child sexual abuse not to go to the police.

Rabbi Ephraim Padwa, who is leader of the UK's Strictly Orthodox Jewish community, told the alleged victim that it was "mesira", or forbidden, to report a suspected Jewish sex offender to a non-Jewish authority. His advice, which was secretly recorded as part of a Channel 4's Dispatches investigation to be shown tonight, will reignite the controversy about the cover-up of child sex abuse by religious groups following global scandals surrounding the Roman Catholic church Strictly Orthodox Jewish people, known as Charedi, number 40,000 people, around a sixth of the Jewish population in Britain.

Rabbi Padwa, who is head of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations in Stamford Hill, north London, was recorded by a former member of the tight-knit community using a hidden camera. The footage shows the alleged victim telling Rabbi Padwa about someone "who sexually abused me when I was younger, when I was a child and I'm looking for your advice, to be honest, what to do...Would do you think maybe, is it a good idea to speak to the police about it?".

"Oh no," Padwa answers, explaining that doing so would breach Rabbinic Law. The alleged victim says that child sex abuse is a "very serious issue", but is told not tell the police. Rabbi Padwa adds: "Men Tur Nisht," which is Yiddish for "people must not tell tales." He continues: "The police is not the solution."

Another Charedi Rabbi claims later in the program that Rabbi Ephraim Padwa recently forbade a father who had told the police that his son had been sexually abused from pursuing the case. The man taped speaking to Rabbi Padwa agreed to help investigate possible sex abuse cover-ups after claiming he was abused as a child by a fellow Charedi, Channel 4 claims.

Rabbi Padwa's organisation, the UOHC, sent Channel 4 a letter responding to the allegations stating: "The Jewish Community considers the safety and protection of our children as paramount."

Last night it released another statement outlining its procedures for dealing with child sex abuse complaints. It said: "The Orthodox Hebrew Congregations have a special Committee to deal with incidences of attacks of this kind on the children of our congregations. The members of the Committee consist of rabbis, educators and members of the community, among whom there are those who have been trained in the right way to tackle this. It added: "The Committee which will deal with it [sex abuse complaints] according to the advice of the Rabbinical Court and according to the law of the land."