

Toddler Alfie Evans' parents say they'll work with doctors

April 26 2018, by Jill Lawless



Tom Evans speaks to the media outside Alder Hey Children's Hospital where his 23-month-old son Alfie has been at the centre of a life-support treatment dispute, in Liverpool, England, Thursday April 26, 2018. (Peter Byrne/PA via AP)

The father of terminally ill toddler Alfie Evans said Thursday that he would work with doctors to give his son "dignity and comfort," as he called for a truce in a divisive case that has pitted doctors and the British

courts against Alfie's parents, Christian groups and the pope.

Tom Evans, 21, appealed for privacy "for everyone concerned," saying he would no longer make statements or give interviews about his son's case.

"Our lives have been turned upside down by the intense focus on Alfie and his situation," Evans said outside Liverpool's Alder Hey Hospital, where Alfie has been treated for more than a year.

The 23-month-old boy has an incurable degenerative neurological condition. British [doctors](#) say further treatment is futile and he should be allowed to die. His parents, however, have fought for months to take him to a hospital in Italy, where he would be kept on life support.

The hospital withdrew Alfie's his life support Monday after a series of [court](#) rulings sided with the doctors and blocked further medical treatment. Doctors say it is hard to estimate how long Alfie will live without life support, but that there is no chance he will get better.

On Wednesday the Court of Appeal rejected a new bid by the parents to take Alfie to the Vatican's hospital in Rome.

On Thursday, Tom Evans thanked the Alder Hey staff "for their dignity and professionalism during what must be an incredibly difficult time for them too."

It was a strikingly different tone from the one he struck hours earlier, when he said doctors were wrong about Alfie's prognosis and threatened to resume his fight in court.

It emerged in court Wednesday that Evans had even tried to bring a lawsuit for conspiracy to murder against three doctors at the hospital.

The long legal battle between Alfie's parents, backed by a Christian pressure group, and his doctors has drawn international attention. Officials in largely Catholic Poland and Italy have implicitly criticized Britain's courts and state-run National Health Service on the case.

Poland's Deputy Prime Minister Beata Szydlo said the withdrawal of [life support](#) for Alfie was proof that Europe was losing its "fundamental Christian values."

"It's more proof that the civilization of death is starting to win," said Szydlo, who represents a strongly pro-Catholic government.

Pope Francis has appealed for the wishes of the boy's parent to be heeded, saying only God can decide who dies.

Italy put a military plane on standby to transport Alfie to Rome if the courts allowed it and granted the boy Italian citizenship to facilitate his arrival and transport.

Alfie's plight has been front-page news for weeks in Italy, where supporters launched a nine-day novena cycle of prayer in Rome's St. Peter's Square on Wednesday to show solidarity with Alfie, his parents and the pope's message of support.

In Warsaw, supporters placed candles, teddy bears and notes in front of the British embassy.

Emotions have run high over the case, with a band of supporters protesting regularly outside the hospital, at times trying to storm its entrance.

Alder Hey [hospital](#) chairman David Henshaw and chief executive Louise Shepherd said staff had been subjected to a "barrage of highly abusive

and threatening language and behavior."

Tom Evans said he and Alfie's mother, 20-year-old Kate James, "are very grateful and we appreciate all the support we have received from around the world."

"We would now ask you to return back to your everyday lives and allow myself, Kate and Alder Hey to form a relationship, build a bridge and walk across it," he said.

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