

Evening News

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Charity worker held on child abuse charges set to face trial

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A CHARITY worker who has been held in an Albanian jail for almost 18 months on child abuse charges is finally set to go on trial.

But David Brown's hopes of being reunited with his family have been shattered by the news that his father – one of his strongest supporters – has died.

The 56-year-old charity worker lived in Edinburgh before becoming director of the His Children home in Tirana. He has always denied the charges of committing sexual acts against children, although he says he discovered children were being abused in the orphanage he ran.

His family say David was devastated not to be able to see his father before he died. They believe the stress of his son's plight had taken its toll on Douglas Brown, 86, as he battled lung cancer.

David's Albanian lawyer, Gjystina Gollosi, said she expected a trial date to be set in the next fortnight. She said: "It's a hard time for David, especially thinking about his mum, but God is encouraging him. He is well in general and praying and fasting."

Albanian police arrested Mr Brown and fellow workers at the His Children orphanage in May 2006.

He had opened the care home about six years ago after seeing the plight of street children in Tirana while he travelled on an aid truck to Kosovo. The evangelical Christian had lived in Edinburgh for more than ten years before.

His sister Yvonne Kershaw, 61, flew from her home near Sydney, Australia, to accompany her mother Sylvia, 84, to her father's funeral in Appin, Argyll, on Tuesday.

She said: "David feels terrible being stuck there while his father's being buried here. If he is freed in a matter of weeks, or months, it will still be too late.

"I think the stress about David's situation had a lot to do with Douglas' illness. David knew his father was ill but he didn't know how ill. He had been doing as much as he could for David."

Mike Taylor, 59, of the Scottish Children's Mission and chaplain of Mannafields Christian School on Easter Road, was amongst friends of David who attended the funeral of the former



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RAF bomber pilot.

He said: "He was a really decent guy and was doing everything he could to support David. He didn't look his age and was remarkably sprightly. He had spent thousands of pounds on David's lawyers and other needs, and it is very sad because David should have been there at the funeral.

David's British lawyer, Andrew McCooley, said there was frustration over the delays, but he hoped the trial would soon go ahead.

He said: "We're very concerned about David's health. He is in very poor conditions. It's very difficult to speak to him. I visited him three months ago and had to wait four hours on the pavement, although I had already made an appointment to see him."

Accused pair fight extradition

TWO further men accused of sex abuse at the home set up by David Brown are fighting extradition from the UK.

Robin Arnold, 55, and Dino Christodoulou, 44, were allegedly working as helpers at the refuge in Tirana, where it is said they molested six victims aged between six and 13. Both men are wanted to stand trial.

Following an extradition request Christodoulou, of Blackburn, Lancashire, was arrested. Arnold was arrested in Cromer, Norfolk.

The pair will now appear in court in London on October 25 when a date for the full extradition hearing will be set.

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