



Civil action in Rowe case possible

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Another civil case to seek compensation for the victims of Ralph Rowe is a possibility.

Civil lawyer [Elizabeth Grace](#) from Toronto firm Lerner's LLP, who was one of the lawyers handling civil cases involving victims of Rowe in 2005, said there may be another one pending. Although she couldn't go into details as to how the previous case was resolved, Grace noted civil court is an option.

"I would encourage other victims of Ralph Rowe to consider it an option," she said from her office in Toronto.

Rowe was sentenced in Kenora's Superior Court on July 6 to three years in prison after his third trial relating to several sexual abuse charges over incidents in far Northern First Nations where he was an Anglican minister and Boy Scout leader. He was in as many as 18 communities and, according to Grace, has potentially sexually abused over 100 to 200 young boys in the 1970s and 1980s.

Grace's civil cases involve the victims looking for compensation after years of crippling personal issues due to the abuse done to them by Rowe. These cases have been against the Anglican Church of Canada, the Anglican Diocese of Keewatin and the Boy Scouts of Canada.

Grace said Friday's sentencing is important because it proves Rowe has done more than fondle, he has now been criminally accounted for raping these young boys.

"Our clients have long since said more happened than just fondling," said Grace.

She said she has heard from leaders in the First Nations like those involved in the most recent case, including Weagamow Lake, Wunnumin Lake, Bearskin Lake and Big Trout Lake, that the impact is huge.

"(They say) how he destroyed a generation of leaders in the communities," she said. "We need to understand that sex abuse is part of the explanations of these problems."

She said going through a civil case is very difficult. Victims have to re-tell their story in great detail and outline exactly how the abuse has impacted them. For many, said Grace, it's breaking a silence on issues the victims haven't spoken about in front of others.

Drug abuse, alcohol problems, self-esteem issues, confidence in their own parenting, severe trust issues and other problems have prevented these men from leading more normal lives.

Grace said one of the issues is these men don't have access to consistent treatment to help them overcome some of these problems. She, along with partnering lawyers, have proposed a way for help to come to them on a regular basis. They are seeking funding for the program which would help increase resources to the northern communities.

"There are a lot of people out there who have a lot of problems and need attention," said Grace.

