

UK / THE RS CASE

Polish and British governments wrangle over RS's fate

VIDA Y BIOÉTICA

24_01_2021

**Patricia
Gooding-
Williams**



RS, the Pole, at the centre of a complicated end-of-life legal battle, has been granted diplomatic status but is blocked in England because the Polish and United Kingdom governments are wrangling over his status and transfer. Officials on both sides are

working round the clock to solve the issue which appears more political than diplomatic.

In the meantime, according to Polish sources, a request by the Polish Minister of health, Adam Niedzielski, to his British counterpart, Matt Hancock, for more hydration to be made available to RS has been refused. He has been denied nutrition and adequate hydration for 10 days now. It is not officially clear why the request was denied nor what the cause of the hold up is for his repatriation back to Poland. Unofficial reports lay the blame for the delay largely with the U.K. government but also reveal that the Polish government is divided within, between those more or less in favour of resorting to extreme measures with unpredictable consequences, to save RS's life. Both governments are now under considerable pressure to resolve their differences, aware that prolonged negotiations could cost RS's life. Meanwhile, Polish Medical Air Rescue is on hand to transfer RS to Poland for urgent medical treatment.

The delicate diplomatic agreement, which could end up back in court, has to pick its way between multiple conflicting interests: both the Polish and British governments prefer to avoid a major diplomatic incident, the resistance posed by both the British court which ruled death was in RS's "best interests" and the Plymouth University Hospital NHS Trust which brought the case to court has to be resolved, the family division over the case which has pitted RS's wife and children who agree death is in his best interests against RS's birth family who are fighting to save his life is ongoing, and there is RS, whose medical state is now very precarious, to be considered.

The controversial case has put President Andrzej Duda and his pro-life government under considerable pressure to act swiftly and decisively to free the Polish citizen trapped in an English hospital. Polish media, which totally ignored Mr Justice Cohen's order to withhold the names and faces of those involved in the case, published intimate footage of their disabled compatriot crying in hospital on Christmas Day and family snaps. The coverage outraged Polish citizens and many across the globe. The story which quickly spread and made international headlines, is practically unheard of in the UK where Mr Justice Cohen's restrictions have been far more successful in controlling media coverage.

Just a few days ago, the Polish church decided to join the fray. The President of the Polish Bishops' Conference Archbishop Stanislaw Gadecki wrote a stiff letter to his British counterpart, Cardinal Vincent Nichols requesting his support and intervention to save RS's life. Two bishops wrote to the British government on behalf of Cardinal Nichols expressing his support for the Polish Bishop's position.

Meanwhile attention in Poland has focused on RS's wife recently who's complicity with the UK doctors and judges was the determining factor in the final ruling on December 15, to end RS's life. If she could be persuaded to change her mind, wishful thinking has it that the case would catapult in RS's favour and free the way for his repatriation. Numerous professionals and people have tried to contact her directly and the Polish media continues to publish stories and testimonies of brain damaged patients who have either made a full recovery, gone to university, married and had families or who live a "meaningful" life despite their disability. The facts is, RS, according to the medical opinion of several qualified doctors, had all the prerequisites to make at least a partial recovery. Yet, where laws in the U.K. deny him this chance and it would be legal to end his life, in Poland he would be legally protected and medically treated until his natural death.

In the last few days, at the request of RS's sister in England, a devout Catholic, masses and prayers have multiplied for RS's intentions all over the world. In addition, LifeSiteNews has started a [fund-raising page](#) to provide financial support to Christian Legal Centre which is fighting the case. RS's mother has already spent all her savings in legal costs in the attempt to protect her son's life. She finds it impossible to understand why the British courts and medical professional are so determined to cause her son's death. "I want to take my son back to Poland and care for him", she says. "What harm can it do to anyone?".