

Christian Sues Employer Who Would Not Guarantee Sundays Off

A British Christian woman who was told she could not be guaranteed off on Sundays will take her case to the Court of Appeal this week.

Celestina Mba, a 58-year-old children's care worker with Merton Council, lost her job after she was told her employers could not guarantee she would never have to work Sundays.

"I chose not to work Sunday and my employers accommodated it for almost three years, and then decided that I now must work Sunday, violating my rights as a believer to practice Christianity in the way that blesses me and blesses other people," she said in a Christian Concern video posted on YouTube in February 2012.

Mba, a Baptist with three children, first bought a claim against her employer in February 2012 when they threatened her with disciplinary measures—even though her co-workers were willing to pick up the Sunday shifts.

She lost her claim for constructive dismissal when a judge ruled her employer could make her work on a Sabbath. The tribunal ruled that keeping Sunday as a day of rest was not a "core component" of Christianity, *Daily Mail* reported.

"Even though I have lost the case, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ because it is the gospel that sets us all free," Mba stated in the video.

She will say in her appeal that an employer has a duty to "reasonably accommodate" the beliefs of a Christian worker. Mba will argue that her employer breached her Article 9

guaranteeing freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the U.K.'s *Mirror* says.

"We have so many different faiths in this society," Mba told *The Sunday Times*. "I am standing up for my beliefs, not for anyone else's."

The Christian Legal Centre is backing Mba in her case. Its founder, Andrea Williams, said, "We are seeing secular courts ruling on core components of Christian practice," *The Independent* reports.

"The courts have acted to protect the *kara* bracelet [worn by Sikhs], Afro cornrow haircuts, the wearing of the *hijab* and a Muslim's right to fast, but have refused to grant protection to the cross or the Christian Sunday."

Mba now works in southwest London at a job that lets her take off Sundays and Mondays.