

Hillsong Leader Brian Houston Resigns to Fight Charge He Hid Father's Sexual Abuse

Brian Houston, the leader of Australian-based global megachurch Hillsong, has stepped down from his position to fight a charge of covering up child sex offenses committed by his preacher father, Frank, several media outlets are reporting.

The 67-year-old Houston was charged in August last year in Sydney with concealing a serious indictable offense and said in a statement he had already been told to step aside from all Hillsong boards.

"In December during our board meeting, Hillsong's external legal counsel gave the board advice regarding the current charge I am facing—that it would be the 'best practice' for me to step aside completely from church leadership during the court proceedings," Houston said in the released statement. "We have talked about the effects of the situation with my father, which go back many years up to the current legal case, and the impact this has had on me emotionally.

"The result is that the Hillsong Global Board feels it is in my and the church's best interest for this to happen, so I have agreed to step aside from all ministry responsibilities until the end of the year. I need to be fully committed to preparation and engagement with the case and work closely with my lawyers in defending this charge."

reported that Houston's lawyer said in October that he planned to plead not guilty. NBC News reported that in "August 2021, Australian police said they would 'allege in court the man (Houston) knew information relating to the sexual abuse of a young male in the 1970s and failed to bring that information

to the attention of police.'”

A government inquiry found that Houston became aware of allegations against Frank Houston in 1999 and allowed him to retire quietly rather than report him to police. His father confessed to the abuse before he died in 2004 at age 82, The Associated Press reported.

Houston has suggested that the charge against him was related to allegations that his father had abused a boy over several years in the 1970s. {eoa}

Follow breaking news like this on our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.