

## REPORT for CIDAC Panel: Gozen Soydag (GS)

<b>CIDAC hearing date:</b>	September 16 2025.
<b>Year of events:</b>	2022-2023.
<b>Occupation:</b>	Pastoral manager at Catholic girl's school.
<b>Issues:</b>	Following the discovery of GS's social media presence manifested by her <i>Wife in the Waiting</i> pages, the Catholic school expressed disapproval over this content, and asked GS, whose pastoral role extended to 180 girls, to resolve their concerns, which she agreed to do. However, her job was soon terminated.
<b>Was there a legal outcome?</b>	An Employment Tribunal dismissed claims of harassment, direct and indirect discrimination. An appeal is pending.
<b>Sex:</b>	Female.
<b>Denominations:</b>	Evangelical/Pentecostal.
<b>Use of data</b>	Unrestricted
<b>Evidence</b>	Bundle.

### Background

GS was headhunted for a role at St Anne's Catholic School ("the school") in the London Borough of Enfield. Over a couple of years, she previously worked at this and eight other schools in the Borough, providing one-to-one mentoring for girls, and was part of the Borough's school behaviour outreach team. GS says, "they really liked the work I did." One of the senior leader team members told her that the school needed help and a word would be put to the headteacher. When meeting the headteacher, she told GS that her work was "fantastic" and its results had been noticed. During conversations, GS was offered a role, yet to be defined. GS said that she could only work four days a week and, to her surprise, this condition was accepted. She was also asked how much salary she wanted. The headteacher explicitly said in an email, "the girls need you, the school needs you, I need you."

### Employment

When GS began her new role as a pastoral manager in September 2022, which lasted six months, she describes it as an "easy transition", noting that some of the students already knew her. She feels confident working with young people, she says. She further explains that "it was going smoothly ... It wasn't an easy role, being a pastoral manager for 180 girls who are highly emotional, 14-to-15 year olds." SG loved the role, seeing it not as a job but "an assignment from God". This role included, "extra support" for students with learning difficulties, those who were ill, while also supporting other year heads. She explains that she often sat on "behaviour panels" with students she had mentored, who had received warnings and were close to being excluded. Initially, the prospect of a written contract was broached, where either the HR department or GS would come up with one, but nothing came of it, and GS became a "contractor".

GS's line manager, an atheist, queried during a review meeting that GS shared scripture with students. GS acknowledged this, "to encourage the students, and it would always be to counsel, encourage, to comfort." She further explained to him: "I'm a pastoral lead. It's a Catholic school. There are scriptures plastered on the walls ... and as we give assemblies, which was one of my responsibilities too, we would share scriptures, we would share parables." GS understands that the majority of teachers were neither professing Christians nor Catholics.

### Social media concerns

*Wife in the Waiting* is what GS calls her "ministry page", which she says is about "positioning and posturing yourself to be a wife, if that be your desire." This platform is about "encouraging women, helping them heal, know their worth and value is in God, not a relationship status, not anything else that's happened to them. And to walk in purpose." She says her views are biblically based, that a wife "defers leadership of the family to her husband," and that her submission to

her husband is matched by his own prior submission to God. Her social media is public, and it “started kicking off around 2015”, she states. GS sees herself as a leader, and notes that many see her as a social media influencer.

The deputy head, called for a meeting with GS, saying, “this is going to be a difficult conversation.” “Your social media has come to our attention,” the deputy head told her and, “it appears that there's a post there talking about women in a negative way.” GS responded, saying that she believes in female empowerment, that “God made us so perfectly, and I'm here to encourage and empower women.” The deputy head cited a video of a woman in a headscarf who, GS recalls, said, “something along the lines of, if my husband asks me to do the dishes, I'll do the dishes. If he asks me to make his plate for dinner, I'll do it ... if he tells me not to go out in the evening, I won't go.’ But she caveats it with, ‘but I know my husband loves me, and I knew the man he was before I married him.’ And the question she posed at the end of the video was, ‘what are you willing to do to be the wife of the husband you say you want?’” GS explains that had she known that the Muslim lady was in a polygamous relationship, she would not have posted the video. (GS notes that she never brought up the subject of marriage within pastoral conversations with the girls and cites only one episode when a girl initiated the subject).

The deputy head told GS that social media accounts needed to be private. GS answered that she had read the school's policies and that, having been called to the bar with ten years' experience of practicing law, she “reads the small print.” GS said that nothing had stood out to her in the school's policies stating a prohibition against public social media accounts, and she asked to see the relevant document, to which the deputy head replied: “we don't have that right now.” GS asked what was now being asked of her? GS explains that she didn't want a confrontation, so agreed to take it down. “Not that I saw anything wrong in it, but just merely because they asked me to”, she says.

After the half-term week that followed, GS was informally asked by the deputy head if she had taken the post down, to which she said that she had. The deputy head responded that this was “great”, and that the headteacher would be “looking at your social media this weekend.” The headteacher subsequently discovered that the same post was still shown on another of GS's social media accounts. GS says this other account wasn't as popular and remained inactive. When notified about this, GS apologized, saying she had forgotten about this other account, but provided assurance that this post would be deleted immediately. GS states her belief that her posts were aligned with the school's proclaimed faith. Even after the post was removed, GS was shown the fact that her name still appeared alongside *Wife in the Waiting* on the Google search engine. She explains that the deputy head didn't understand that there was a time delay of a week or two between a post being deleted, and her name continuing to be linked to her social media tagline on the search engine.

### **Meeting with Headteacher**

A meeting was subsequently held with the headteacher, when GS was told that the school, “can't have this, this is an issue for us. We've had anonymous complaint, one from a student, one from a parent.” The proposal made to her was: “You need to do something.” One proposal made was for her to use an alias for her social media accounts, which GS said she would consider. She summarises the problem as: “now the issue wasn't just the post, it was the whole premise of *Wife in the Waiting*.” When she asked what the issue was, the headteacher explained, “it appears as though, unless you're a wife, you're of no worth.” GS replied that she wasn't married yet and that she carries herself, “with worth and value,” GS said, ‘you wouldn't have headhunted me otherwise.’” The headteacher agreed but explained that the message represented, “18th century teaching on womanhood, and we're a 21st century establishment, and we can't have that.” GS asked how long she had to “correct or at least try to alleviate” these concerns. She was given 24 hours, during which she prayed about it. (GS clarifies her beliefs that outside the family home, women can be leaders in business, etc., and also recognizes a variety of ways in which men can be abusive in marriage, and in such cases, “safety is always paramount.” She states that she is “100% against abuse in any relationship.”)

GS emailed the headteacher the following day, promising to make the following changes: her name would be disconnected from the *Wife in the Waiting* page ensuring that the two can't be linked; every post carrying her name and connected to *Wife in the Waiting* would be removed, or reposted without her name; and her full name would be removed from all posts connected to *Wife in the Waiting*. Following her email being acknowledged, GS was asked that day to another meeting with the headteacher. GS recalled that, “in my mind, I've done everything I've been asked to do,” and also that she never told students about her social media, though she cites the fact that some saw her posts, with an older student saying, “you're famous”.

### **Termination of employment**

At the meeting, GS was told that, with her 30,000 online followers, she was “global” and that this was a “big issue”. She was told that her services were no longer needed. She was also offered a reference but, feeling hurt and patronised, declined to accept, interpreting such an offer as, “we don't want you to work with us,” but will “happily write you a reference”. She felt “devastated”, she says, and cried. What she calls her “dream job” was ended immediately without notice. Saddened by the short tenure of her employment, she felt she was treated as a “danger” to the girls. Her

departure was handled informally, she notes, and she would have liked to have had support from trade union representation. In her dismissal letter, she was told that her social media presence wasn't in line with the school's ethos and mission statement.

GS felt grateful for her time with the students, "loving every minute of it". She recalled being praised by senior behaviour leaders, one of whom noted that her year group had previously had the worst behaviour in the school when she started her job but subsequently was the least troublesome.

### **Employment Tribunal**

During the Tribunal's proceedings, a theologian's expert report was considered which, GS says, concluded that all of her belief strands relating to Christian marriage (including the biblical belief of wives submitting to their husbands), formed part of a complementarian Christian view, and aligned with canon law. This is what Catholicism is based on, she notes. She recalls, it was "emphasized that Gozen was nothing but professional" with the girls." As part of her evidence in court, she says the judge kept stopping her from quoting the Bible, while also noting that two former work colleagues, like her, had sworn on the Bible in court, yet they don't believe in all its content. GS was shown two school social media policies, one whose date, she says, was after her dismissal, followed by another dated from her time of employment. In both versions, she says there was no prescribed policy to keep social media settings private. The school<sup>1</sup> felt satisfied that GS could express her views but only within a church setting. Her discrimination claims were rejected and she is appealing.

---

<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: this view was expressed by the Associate Headteacher during cross examination.