

NEWS RELEASE

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The Governing Body Commission (GBC) of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) today expelled GBC member Kirtanananda Swami from the Hare Krishna movement.

For months the Swami has been at the center of a controversy centered around the West Virginia community he heads (known as New Vrindaban) in which bodies have recently been exhumed and former members convicted of murder and charged with child molestation.

Recently the GBC and ISKCON temple presidents throughout the world had been pressuring Kirtanananda to resign due to his continued defiance of ISKCON policies, the vilification of the GBC and other members of ISKCON, his practice of accepting lavish public demonstrations of worship, and his refusal to honor the ISKCON-established geographical boundaries for his field of activity. Of particular significance were his attempts to establish himself as the sole spiritual heir to ISKCON by which he had systematically obscured and minimized the pre-eminent position of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON.

The GBC's decision also took into account repeated instances of dishonesty and actions which encourage division and factionalism within the religion. Another important factor in the expulsion was his apparent approval of illegal activity in

the community.

"The strength of our movement," said ISKCON Public Affairs director Mukunda Goswami, "lies in the purity and cooperative spirit of our members. It is of prime importance that our leaders exemplify these two qualities."

"Kirtanananda believed that the media, government and certain anti-cult groups had teamed up in a conspiracy to destroy the West Virginia community over which he has presided. We found no evidence to support this view. In fact our leadership has been assisting law enforcement agencies to solve some of the crimes connected with the New Vrindaban community, and we are awaiting the outcome of a number of investigations that are currently underway," Mukunda said.