

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6 a.m. EASTERN TIME IN THE US

Clergy Sex Victims File International Criminal Complaint vs. Vatican

Case Charges 4 Top Catholic Officials with ‘Crimes against Humanity’

Goal is to “Expose, Punish & Deter Widespread & Systematic Sexual Violence”

WHAT

Holding signs and childhood photos at a news conference, leaders of a clergy sex abuse victims’ support group and a human rights organization will disclose and discuss in detail a new formal complaint to the International Criminal Court prosecutor urging him to investigate high-level Vatican officials for crimes against humanity.

The filing is by an international, US-based support group called SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests) along with a leading New York City-based human rights organization called CCR (Center for Constitutional Rights).

DATE

Today, Tuesday, September 13

WHEN/WHERE

--1:00 p.m. in New York City, outside St. Patrick’s Cathedral on Fifth Ave (between 50th & 51st St.)

--11:00 a.m. in Washington DC, outside the Vatican embassy, 3339 Massachusetts Ave

WHO:

In both cities, several clergy sex abuse victims along with:

In New York City- a Missouri man who directs SNAP and a New York attorney who directs CCR

In Washington DC- a Missouri woman who is the outreach director for SNAP

DETAILS

Representatives of SNAP and CCR are formally asking the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor to investigate high-level Catholic Church officials for crimes against humanity. The detailed 80+ page complaint asserts a systematic, widespread and on-going global practice of concealing rape and abuse, tolerated and enabled by the Vatican. The complaint will be posted on line around 6:00 a.m. Eastern time in the US at CCRjustice.org and SNAPnetwork.org.

The jurisdiction of the ICC names rape, sexual assault, and torture as crimes against humanity. It also provides for individual criminal liability for those with superior responsibility over those who directly commit such crimes. Through these mechanisms, **the complaint urges investigation and prosecution of high-level Vatican officials for their roles in the on-going protection of perpetrators, hiding of crimes and the enabling of rape, sexual assault, and torture of thousands of individuals around the world.** If the ICC launches the investigation, this action could mark the first time that an international court asserts jurisdiction over the Vatican for crimes committed by its agents worldwide.

The four officials named as defendants bear, in the eyes of SNAP & CCR, greatest responsibility for ongoing, widespread and systematic sexual violence and cover up by church employees. They are:

--Pope Benedict XVI (both in his capacity as pontiff and former head of the CDF, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a church entity that oversees pedophile priest reports)

--Cardinal William Levada (current head of the CDF)

--Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone (the current Vatican Secretary of State, and

--Cardinal Angelo Sodano (the Dean of the College of Cardinals and former Vatican Secretary of State).

In the formal filing, a few particularly egregious and recent predator priest cases are highlighted including one involving a Belgian cleric who molested in the Congo and now works with kids in Rwanda, and another regarding an Indian cleric who raped a Minnesota girl and is now back in India. (His name is Fr. Joseph Jeyapaul).

Earlier today, outside the ICC headquarters (in The Hague in the Netherlands), a similar news conference was held. There, eight adults who were abused as children by priests in four nations delivered 10,000+ pages of evidence and documents to the ICC. The victims were from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the US. US victims included Megan Peterson of Thief River Falls, Minnesota, Rita Milla of Los Angeles, Phil Saviano of Boston (SNAPsaviano@gmail.com), Peter Isely of Milwaukee (peterisely@yahoo.com) and Barbara Blaine of Chicago (SNAPblaine@gmail.com).

The two principal human rights attorneys involved are Pamela Spees and Katherine Gallagher, both of CCR. They are both in Europe. Vince Warren is CCR's director. David Clohessy is SNAP's director. Barbara Dorris is SNAP's outreach director. Becky Ianni is SNAP's DC area director.

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(She speaks Dutch, English, Italian, French and German. Other participant named Rita speaks Spanish and one named Jakub speaks Polish.)