

# *Vatican Urged to Prosecute Priests over Sex Abuse*

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Rome, February 6 (RHC)-- A group representing victims of child sex abuse at the Catholic Church has called on the Vatican to prosecute offending priests.

In an interview with Italy's edition of the English-language news publisher, The Local, Barbara Blaine, president of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), said more action needs to be taken by the Holy See concerning systematic child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church.

A report by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recently shed new light on decades of such scandals. The report criticized the Holy See for adopting policies that allow the clergy to sexually abuse children with impunity.

The Vatican, however, said in a statement that it was committed to "defending and protecting the rights of the child" and would submit the findings to "a thorough study and examination." SNAP described the Vatican response to the UN report as inadequate, adding that child abuse will remain as long as those church officials who are protecting the offending priests are not prosecuted.

The group also criticized Pope Francis for refusing to take any action and called on him to publicly remove all offenders from their posts. The criticism follows the UN committee's public grilling of Vatican officials

during a hearing last month in Geneva. Groups of victims and rights organizations provided the UN panel with reports citing case studies from Mexico to the UK and from Canada to Ireland and Australia, detailing the Vatican's culture of secrecy.

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