



Oral statement to UN Human Rights Council

Forty-second session, 18 September 2019

The Holy See's *second periodic report to the Committee for the Rights of the Child was submitted so late it prevented the Committee from reviewing the implementation of the Convention by the Holy See for 14 years*. The next periodic report is already two years overdue.¹

It is urgently needed because issues of huge concern appear still to be outstanding, for example:

- (a) the 2014 Concluding Observations refer to the abuse of “tens of thousands of children” and the impunity of the perpetrators, yet there is little evidence of implementation of the Concluding Observations;
- (b) Geoffrey Robertson QC considers the Holy See is in breach of CRC Articles 3(1), 19(1), 19(2) and 34², yet, the Holy See declines to exert control over the worldwide Catholic Church to uphold the Convention;
- (c) the Holy See/Vatican fails to fully assist secular trials or investigations into clerical abuse or make available relevant secret archives;
- (d) settlements to victims are still being obstructed or minimised; and
- (e) numerous formal inquiries, including in Australia³, England & Wales⁴, Germany⁵ and –Pennsylvania (USA)⁶ echo the Committee's concerns, such as:
 - (i) Catholic clerical abuse being on a huge scale;
 - (ii) suspected Catholic perpetrators not being reported to civil authorities, which allows the abuse to continue; and
 - (iii) widespread failure to offer adequate compensation or rehabilitation to victims.

In conclusion, we respectfully request the HRC and member states to strongly encourage the Holy See to submit its overdue Periodic Report.

Further information is included in our [written submission](#) to the UNHRC.

¹ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=VAT&Lang=EN

² *The Case of the Pope*, Chapter 7

³ https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_volume_16_religious_institutions_book_2.pdf

⁴ <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/document/roman-catholic-church-archdiocese-birmingham-case-study-investigation-report> and <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/6583/download/ampleforth-downside-investigation-report-august-2018.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/german-investigators-left-shaken-by-scale-of-child-abuse-in-catholic-church-1.3641288>

⁶ <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/pa-abuse-report.pdf>