

27 May 2014

**RE      Query regarding children of priests**

Dear

I write in response to your query regarding international children's rights standards and their relevance to the above issue.

In its concluding observations on the second periodic report of the Holy See under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Document CRC/C/VAT/CO/2 - 25 February 2014), the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child raised the issue of the children of priests in the context of commenting on children's right to know and be cared for by their parents.

The UN Committee expressed the following view at paragraph 33:

*The Committee is concerned about the situation of children fathered by Catholic priests, who, in many cases, are not aware of the identity of their fathers. The Committee is also concerned that the mothers may obtain a plan for regular payment from the Church until the child is financially independent only if they sign a confidentiality agreement not to disclose any information about the child's father or the plan.*

The UN Committee went on to make a related recommendation at paragraph 34:

*The Committee recommends that the Holy See assess the number of children fathered by Catholic priests, find out who they are and take all necessary measures to ensure that the rights of those children to know and to be cared for by their fathers is respected, as appropriate. The Committee also recommends that the Holy See ensure that churches no longer impose confidentiality agreements as a condition to providing mothers with financial plans to support their children.*



From the comments set out above, it is clear that the issues affecting the children of priests engage rights protected by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially a child's right to know and be cared for by his or her parents. States Parties to the Convention are therefore obliged to ensure that those rights are respected, in so far as the States Parties can do so.

I trust the information above is of use to you.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Logan

Ombudsman for Children