NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

'Unjust' criticism won't force Vatican to drop treaty, spokesman says

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service | Feb. 7, 2014
Vatican City

The Vatican said it would continue to adhere to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and give an attentive response to the U.N. committee monitoring adherence to the treaty, despite what it views as unfair criticism and suggestions from the committee that would violate church teaching.

The Vatican will follow the procedures foreseen by the treaty "with openness to criticisms that are justified, but it will do so with courage and determination, without timidity," said Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman.

Fr. Lombardi issued a statement Friday, two days after the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child insisted the Vatican was not doing enough to prevent clerical sexual abuse of children and even suggested that, for the good of children, the Catholic church change its teaching on abortion, contraception and homosexuality.

Committee members went "beyond their competence and interfered in the doctrinal and moral positions of the Catholic Church," the spokesman said, adding that the committee's suggestions reveal an "ideological vision of sexuality."

"Certainly, while the Holy See was the object of an initiative and media attention that, in our view, was unjustly pernicious, it must be recognized that the committee itself has attracted serious and well-founded criticisms" for its Wednesday report, Lombardi said. Many Catholic commentators encouraged the Vatican to withdraw its adherence to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In 1990, the Vatican became one of the first countries to ratify the children's rights treaty because of the church's historic commitment to the good of children, Lombardi said. Not recognizing all the church has done for centuries through its schools, hospitals and charitable agencies is to ignore reality.

While the Vatican "will continue its commitment" to fulfilling the requirements of the treaty, he said, it cannot pretend that the committee's observations did not present "serious limits."

The committee "did not adequately take into account the responses -- both written and oral -- given by representatives of the Holy See" before and during a Jan. 16 hearing in Geneva, he said.

The recommendations, he said, demonstrated a lack of understanding about how the Holy See is different from other states that signed the convention.

The Vatican, Lombardi said, has repeatedly explained in detail to the committee and to other U.N. agencies that it has direct legal jurisdiction over those who live and work in the small territory of Vatican City State. While it has canonical and spiritual jurisdiction over Catholics around the world, priests and bishops are subject to the laws of their own nations.

"Is this impossible to understand or do they not want to understand it," he asked. "In both cases, one has a right to be surprised."

Lombardi said the tone of the criticism and the mention of specific cases, including the treatment of young Irish women in the so-called Magdalen laundries and of young men by the Legionaries of Christ, seems to indicate the committee "gave much greater attention to well-known organizations" representing victims than to the testimony of Vatican representatives.

"These organizations typically do not want to recognize how much the Holy See and the church have done in recent years to recognize errors, renew norms and develop measures for formation and prevention," Lombardi said.

Source URL (retrieved on *08/27/2014 - 04:35*): http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/unjust-criticism-wont-force-vatican-drop-treaty-spokesman-says