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# International Call to End Sexual Abuse of Nuns by Priests - Women and Violence - Brief Article

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FROM 'WOMEN'S GLOBAL NETWORK FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS'

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In July 2001, representatives of 146 religious, women's rights and human rights groups launched an international campaign aimed at pressuring the Vatican to end Catholic clergy's sexual violence against nuns and other women.

Earlier in 2001 several activities were organised on the subject and materials were published. Since the Action Report was published, the European Parliament passed an emergency motion censuring the Vatican. The non-executive resolution (Responsibility of the Vatican in regard to the Violation of Human Rights by Catholic Priests) was passed by 65 votes to 49 with six abstentions on April 5. The motion strongly condemned all violations of women's rights and acts of sexual violence and requested that the Vatican 'seriously examine every indication of sexual abuse committed in the heart of its organization...[and] re-establish women in their posts in the religious hierarchy, who were removed from their responsibilities because they called the attention of their superiors to these abuses.' The Holy See was also asked to cooperate with any judicial inquiry. (European Parliament Daily

Notebook, April 5, 2001).

On July 14, 2001, more than one hundred organizations and individuals gathered in New York, to deliver the petitions that were collected for the Call to End Sexual Abuse of Nuns by Priests' to the Permanent Mission of the Holy See at the United Nations.

After a press conference at the Mission, representatives from endorsing organizations spoke out against the Vatican's silence on abuse of nuns. A large envelope with copies of petitions and organization endorsements was left. It was addressed to Pope John Paul II, care of Archbishop Renato Martino, who refused to meet with members of the campaign.

After the demonstration, many traveled to Washington, where they participated in a candlelight vigil at the Vatican Embassy. A second envelope containing petitions was left for the Apostolic Nuncio.

The formation of an independent Fact-Finding Commission to examine the many reported abuses (testimonies from all continents of sexual abuse of nuns by priests and who were, in some cases, coerced into having abortions after becoming pregnant) is currently headed by Feminist Majority Foundation (USA).

For more information contact: Catholics for a Free Choice, CFFC, 1436 U St., NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20009-3997 USA; e-mail: [cso@quixote.org](mailto:cso@quixote.org)."

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