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Sex abuse by priests little pursued: report

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Twenty criminal investigations have been launched into sexual abuse allegations in Switzerland against Roman Catholic priests and laymen working for the church since 2010, a media report said on Monday.



But this compares with 172 suspected sexual offenders from within the church reported by church authorities themselves, suggesting that many cases are not being actively pursued, the ATS news agency said.

Certainly, numerous suspects are already dead and cases go back as far as 1950.

But the Conference of Swiss Bishops (CSB) said that other suspects have shown themselves nowhere to be found.

It is therefore impossible to know whether possible offenders may be again in contact with potential victims, ATS said.

The low number of investigations being pursued — less than one in eight reported cases — can be explained by the fact that church dioceses have provided only “very incomplete”

can be explained by the fact that church dioceses have provided only very incomplete information for the 1950-1980 period, Joseph Bonnemain, a priest and member of a special commission set up by the CSB, is quoted as saying.

The commission is tasked with looking into “sexual abuse in the ecclesiastical context”.

People close to families and friends of abused victims maintain certain members of the clergy are covering for their colleagues, ATS said.

But the transmission of information about reported sexual abuse cases can only happen if those who have been abused agree to step forward.

Bishop Charles Moreod of the Lausanne-Geneva-Fribourg diocese urged people communicate to him the cases that are not being pursued, the state broadcaster RTS reported.

“I said and say again that every accusation made against a priest or a lay person working for the church and still living will be immediately brought to the attention of justice officials.”

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