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Two lines of men with striped pants and plumed helmets walk in lines

Swiss Guards march in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Dec. 25, 2017. To better protect minors and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse and exploitation, Pope Francis approved a new law and a set of safeguarding guidelines for Vatican City State and the Roman Curia. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

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Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, the papal vicar for Vatican City State, has appointed Scalabrinian Fr. Luigi Sabbarese, a 60-year-old canon lawyer, to coordinate and verify the city state's safeguarding efforts.

Francis established a set of guidelines in 2019 for the protection of children and vulnerable persons for the Vicariate of Vatican City, that is, for Vatican City State and the Roman Curia.

The guidelines said the papal vicar "shall appoint a contact person for the protection of minors who shall coordinate and verify the implementation of the present guidelines so that, within the vicariate, there is a community respectful and mindful

of the rights and the needs of minors, as well as being vigilant in preventing any form of violence or abuse."

The contact person also was to coordinate "the prevention and training activities of pastoral workers" and promote increased care in welcoming and supporting "those who claim to have suffered exploitation, sexual abuse or ill-treatment, as well as their family members," the guidelines said.

As the new safeguarding "point person," Sabbarese also will be able to rely on support from the Vatican City State's health care department and the Holy See's labor office, the guidelines said. The health care department was mandated in 2019 to create a special office to offer victim assistance, starting with a "listening service" and including psychological, medical and social support.

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Gambetti made the appointment Dec. 29, according to a communique from the Vicariate of Vatican City sent to reporters Feb. 9.

Sabbarese, who was born in Salerno, Italy, is also currently: judicial vicar of the ecclesiastical court of Vatican City; attorney general of the Scalabrinians; dean of the faculty of canon law at Rome's Pontifical Urbanian University; consultant to the dicasteries for Evangelization and for Eastern Churches; and legal secretary of the Supreme Court of the Apostolic Signature, a Vatican court.

The 2019 safeguarding guidelines for Vatican City State and the Roman Curia were issued the same day Francis approved new norms and legal, criminal and safeguarding procedures.

The law "On the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons" and the safeguarding guidelines were created, he had said, so that in the Roman Curia and in Vatican City State there will be, among other things: respect and awareness of the rights and needs of minors and vulnerable adults; greater vigilance, prevention and corrective action when abuse or mistreatment is suspected or reported; clearer procedures as well as specific offices for making claims; support services and protections for alleged victims, their families and those accused; and adequate formation for and background checks of new personnel, including volunteers.