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Pope Francis shakes the hand of a white man wearing glasses and a black garment

Pope Francis greets Fr. Marko Rupnik during a private audience at the Vatican in this Jan. 3, 2022, file photo. Rupnik, whose mosaics decorate chapels in the Vatican, all over Europe, in the United States and Australia, is accused of abusing adult nuns in Slovenia. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors has reached out to known victims of Slovenian Fr. Marko Rupnik, asking to meet with them.

The purpose of the invitation, written by a member of the 19-member papal body, was to examine and study how the victims were treated by the church, specifically the Jesuits — the religious order Father Rupnik was expelled from in June — and the Vatican, Il Sismografo, an Italian blog that closely follows the Vatican, reported Oct. 25.

Catholic News Service confirmed the invitation Oct. 26.

The mission of the papal body includes evaluating the church's response to victims and abuse allegations and ensuring that "robust policies and practices for the prevention and management of all forms of abuse are in place," according to the commission's strategic plan 2022-2027.

Its three-point mandate includes improving church practices by identifying and detailing gaps and ongoing concerns in current prevention and protection measures "so that appropriate steps can be taken," Cardinal Seán O'Malley, commission president, told the commission at its plenary assembly May 4.

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According to details provided by Il Sismografo and confirmed by CNS, the outreach to Rupnik's victims is not a legal review of their cases but is about reviewing current policies and practices and what the victims experienced by reporting the abuse to church officials.

"We do not have the power to change the current ruling or intervene in the decisions made" by the Vatican tribunal and others, said an excerpt from the commission's letter to the survivors.

Rupnik, who has been accused of sexually, spiritually or psychologically abusing more than 20 women and at least one man over a 40-year period, was reportedly recently accepted into the Diocese of Koper, Slovenia, the diocese where he was ordained a priest in 1985.

In December 2022, the Jesuits said Rupnik was operating under restrictions on his ministry because of abuse allegations and that the then-Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had confirmed he was briefly excommunicated in 2020 for absolving in confession a woman with whom he had had sex. The excommunication was lifted after he apparently repented. The Jesuits later expelled Rupnik for refusing to uphold his vow of obedience and confront the allegations against him.

Rupnik is a well-known artist and spiritual adviser who co-founded the female Loyola Community in Ljubljana, Slovenia, with Sr. Ivanka Hosta, who was recently removed from her position as superior of the religious community and sanctioned for an abusive style of governance, the Portuguese website 7MARGENS reported Sept. 25. The decree imposing three penalties on Hosta was signed by Auxiliary Bishop

Daniele Libanori of Rome, who was appointed to investigate the community.

Read this next: Former Jesuit Rupnik, accused of abusing women, welcomed into Slovenia diocese