

Former Vatican official: ICC appeal the 'usual anti-Catholic attempt'

John L. Allen Jr. | Sep. 13, 2011 NCR Today

For now, Vatican spokespersons are withholding comment on an appeal to the International Criminal Court to open an investigation against Pope Benedict XVI and three other senior officials for "crimes against humanity" related to the sexual abuse crisis.

That request was announced today by the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests and the Center for Constitutional Rights, a New York-based group with roots in the civil rights movement.

One former Vatican official, however, has weighed in. On the sidelines of an interreligious assembly in Munich, Germany, organized by the Community of Sant'Egidio, Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe of Naples, a former prefect of the Vatican's missionary department, offered his take.

The appeal to the ICC, Sepe said, amounts to "the usual anti-Catholic attempt, which tends to obscure an image [of the church] that, from a human point of view, is about the most prestigious we have in our society."

Sepe's comment was reported today by "Vatican Insider," an on-line service of the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*.

Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesperson, has said only that the Vatican is aware of the request to the ICC, but had no comment.

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