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Vatican Investigators Interrogated by Police in Chilean Airport

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A Vatican envoy was stopped and interrogated by Chilean police just before stepping on a plane headed to Rome following an investigation and reconciliation mission Tuesday.

"We arranged an interview with Charles Scicluna that took place in the offices of the investigative police in the airport before his flight," said Raul Guzman, a Santiago prosecutor, of Archbishop Charles Scicluna who was traveling with Fr. Jordi Bertomeu around Chile for the last week.

Guzman said he "interrogated" Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta in the police station at Santiago airport in relation to an abuse case involving 25 Marist brothers and 30 alleged victims.

While attending a press conference earlier, Scicluna had affirmed the Vatican's support for further investigations and its willingness to assist Chilean civil authorities to achieve justice for the dozens of abuse victims.

However, when asked whether he would make public a 2,300-page report he had produced following an earlier visit to Chile in February, Scicluna said the decision was up to Pope Francis, adding that the Church's "freedom and autonomy" should be respected.

"Investigating is a duty of justice. We need to do justice to the victims for the good of the country and also of the Church," the archbishop Scicluna said, reiterating the pope's apologies to victims.

During their week pilgrimage, the pair of priests conducted "hundreds" of interviews with abuse victims and shared their plans to establish a "listening service" for church officials to hear and moderate claims.

Some alleged abuse victims denounced Scicluna's decision to appoint officials from the National Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Accompaniment of Victims to run the "listening service."

Juan Carlos Cruz, one of three Chilean victims who visited the Pope in Rome earlier this month, said in an interview on Tuesday that he was “very disappointed” by Scicluna’s announcement.

“People are not going to be comfortable to speak to them about abuse when they are the same people who disregarded victims for years,” he said.

Last month, the pope accused the Chilean church of “gross negligence” in handling previous claims that children had been abused and that evidence of sex crimes had been covered up and accepted the resignations of three bishops.

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