

REVELATIONS FROM VATILEAKS

In 2012, there was a leak of confidential Vatican documents - the Vatileaks scandal. A special commission of cardinals was established by the Pope to investigate the forbidden flow of those documents to the media. The pope's Italian butler, Paolo Gabriele (46) was arrested by the Vatican police and charged on May 26 for the theft of the documents. He was detained in the Vatican jail. Vatican law decrees he can only be held there for maximum 50 days. The Church granted an exemption to this rule so that it could detain him for another 50 days.

The Vatican, or Holy See to be specific, is not a true state but steals statehood privileges. The detention of Paolo Gabriele must be understood as false imprisonment. The Vatican must pay for this crime. And though he is a harmless man, he is going to be detained more than 50 days which is a gross violation of human and civil rights. Amnesty International should do something. The pope is the one who must be imprisoned. He is the representative of Vatican law - though he has no genuine civil authority to jail anyone he is responsible.

The Vatican refused in 2014 to hand over any more documents about clerical sex abuse in Australia. Australians Lawyers Alliance spokesman Andrew Morrison, who has represented many victims of church abuse, says the Vatican has a long history of refusing to assist in such inquiries, including a similar instance in Ireland. He said, "The Vatican claims the status of independent nation and in those circumstances there's nothing which can be done by government, let alone by the royal commission, to compel it to produce documents," he said.

Investigative journalist, Gerald Posner wrote God's Bankers: A History of Money and Power at the Vatican. The book digs into how the Vatican Bank did immoral deals with Nazi Germany and the mob in the eighties. The Church never had a central bank of its own but it found it needed one when the Nazis were in full force - why? "It needed it because the Americans and British were trying to stop money going to Nazi Germany, and the Vatican knew that. It wanted to play both sides of the game by making money with the West and making money with the Italian and Germans, and the only way to do that was to have its own bank." He claims the evidence shows that the Vatican Bank deliberately shored up and invested in companies that robbed Holocaust victims. It covered the financial trail through using proxies in Italy. The Vatican was urged to pay the money back to Holocaust survivors but it responded by silence and a refusal to let its files be checked.

He alleges that the Vatican Bank would knowingly invest in companies through Italian proxies that would steal money from Holocaust victims.

Posner firmly believes that there is no way the bank would ever consider reparations to the families of Holocaust victims. "When it comes to giving out money, the answer is always 'no'," he says. "Even with this pope." In the 1990s, there was a push for restitutions by Holocaust survivors against insurers and companies who had engaged in using Jewish slave labor. "The Vatican was the only entity that refused to open up its files or to cooperate or to give a dollar," says Posner. Even today the Vatican Bank is essentially a corrupt "offshore bank in the middle of Rome".

Isn't it time the nations took away this fictitious statehood from the Holy See?

