

Vatican diplomat convicted of sexual abuse, defrocked

by [Josephine McKenna](#) in the [July 23, 2014](#) issue

A former Vatican ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Archbishop Jozef Wesolowski, has been defrocked and is likely to face criminal prosecution at the Vatican after a church inquiry convicted him of child sexual abuse.

Wesolowski, who is originally from Poland, was removed from his post in the Dominican Republic and recalled to the Vatican in August amid claims that he had abused boys in Santo Domingo.

The 65-year-old envoy is the highest-ranking Vatican official to be investigated for sexual abuse. He was found guilty after an inquiry conducted by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which has jurisdiction over all sexual abuse cases in the Roman Catholic Church.

In a brief statement on June 27, the Vatican said the verdict was issued "in the past few days" and that the former diplomat was facing arrest due to the "gravity of the case."

"Measures will be taken so he is in a precise restricted location, without any freedom of movement, since he has been found guilty of a serious crime and is awaiting further legal action," said the Vatican's chief spokesman, Federico Lombardi.

A bishop from the Dominican Republic was recently reported to have said that he was shocked to see Wesolowski walking freely on the streets of central Rome. Prosecutors in the Caribbean nation have said they have convincing evidence that the prelate molested young men.

He has also been accused of abuse in his native Poland. The Vatican rejected an extradition request from the Warsaw prosecutor's office on the grounds that he was "a citizen of the Vatican" and holds diplomatic immunity.

SNAP, the Chicago-based support group for victims of clerical sexual abuse, said the former nuncio's sentence did not go far enough, and he should be handed over to secular authorities. —RNS

*This article was edited July 10, 2014.*