

# Vatican official calls leaked documents an 'immoral' and 'brutal' attack

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c. 2012 Religion News Service (RNS) The Vatican's No. 3 official on Tuesday (May 29) condemned the theft and publication of secret papal documents as an "immoral act of unheard-of gravity."

In an interview published on the front page of L'Osservatore Romano, the Holy See's semiofficial newspaper, Archbishop Angelo Becciu, who is the deputy to Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, also described the publication of an unprecedented number of leaked Vatican documents in recent months as a "brutal" attack against Pope Benedict XVI.

On Friday (May 25), Vatican police announced the arrest of a person who was "illicitly in possession" of confidential Vatican documents. The person was later revealed to be Paolo Gabriele, Pope Benedict's "assistente di camera," or butler.

Gabriele has been charged with "aggravated theft" and is now held in custody by the Vatican police.

The Vatican's chief spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, said Tuesday that formal hearings will start later this week or early next week. Gabriele's lawyers announced that he is willing to "fully cooperate" with Vatican investigators.

Despite Gabriele's arrest, Lombardi said that a cardinals' commission appointed by Benedict to investigate the leaks is still working on the case, with the authority to "hear anyone they think might have information in this case."

While Italian media have been rife with speculation about possible other suspects, including a cardinal, and of "power struggles" inside the Vatican, Becciu dismissed such rumors as a "fantasy with no relation to reality."