

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1216

BELGIUM: Court declares as unfounded false accusations about Jehovah's Witnesses

Court declares as unfounded false accusations about Jehovah's Witnesses

See hereafter the press release of the Information Service of Jehovah's Witnesses in Belgium and the 5 October 2021 decision of the court [here](#)

Christian Congregation of JW/ Belgium (21.10.2021) – On 5 October 2021 the Court Chambers (*) of Brussels declared that

there were “no grounds” for the criminal accusations brought against the non-profit “Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses” at the instigation of the Center of Information and Advice on Harmful Sectarian Organizations (CIAOSN). The decision of the Court Chambers, which is a final decision, was taken following the recommendation of the Federal Prosecutor.

The criminal investigation had been initiated based on false allegations disseminated in the media by CIAOSN that Jehovah’s Witnesses do not report allegations of child sexual abuse to the police, contrary to Article 422 bis and 442 quarter of the Criminal Code of Belgium. In dismissing the criminal charges, the Court Chambers concluded that the “unilateral statements” [of CIAOSN] were “not supported” by any other evidence in the case.

In fact, for decades, it has been the practice of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Belgium to instruct religious ministers of Jehovah’s Witnesses (congregation elders) to report allegations of child abuse to the police whenever it appears that any child may be in danger of abuse from an accused. That long-standing practice is confirmed by actual police reports showing that congregation elders have themselves reported such allegations to the police. It is also consistent with the worldwide child safeguarding policy document entitled “Jehovah’s Witnesses’ Scripturally Based Position on Child Protection”, published on the official website of Jehovah’s Witnesses, www.jw.org, which states (at paragraph 5) that Jehovah’s Witnesses “ensure compliance with child abuse reporting laws” and, even in the absence of a mandatory reporting law, elders will be “instructed” to report an allegation whenever it appears that a minor is in danger of abuse from the accused.[1]

On June 18, 2021, a civil action for defamation was filed by the Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Belgium against the

Ministry of Justice of Belgium (responsible for the CIAOSN) for its false statements about the child protection policy of Jehovah's Witnesses. A hearing on that defamation claim is scheduled for May 5, 2022.

Commenting on the reports upon which CIAOSN's allegations were based, Holly Folk, an internationally renowned expert, Professor of Religious Studies at the Western Washington University, said, "The reports are based on sensational journalism, faulty social science data, and a misunderstanding of the nature of the Jehovah's Witnesses organization."—<https://bitterwinter.org/jehovahs-witnesses-and-sexual-abuse-2-belgium-and-the-netherlands/>

Jehovah's Witnesses firmly adhere to the Bible, which condemns child sexual abuse as a crime. For more than 35 years, Jehovah's Witnesses have provided material in *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines and in religious books and videos that gives parents clear, timely and practical advice on protecting their children from the evil of child sexual abuse (for a sampling of that educative material, see page 12 of the May 2019 issue of *The Watchtower* and page 3 of the document "Jehovah's Witnesses' Scripturally Based Position on Child Protection" [2] This material is widely available in hundreds of languages on www.jw.org.

Information service of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

HRWF Comment

The CIAOSN has neither published a press release about the court decision nor posted the articles of *Le Soir* and *La Capitale* (Sud-Presse) on its website although it had posted quite a number of articles by Belgian media outlets accusing JW in Belgium of failing to declare cases of sexual abuse. These stigmatizing articles have not been removed from the

website of CIAOSN.

As of 25 October, only the two aforementioned media outlets have echoed the court decision.

Photo : JW headquarters in Belgium

[Further reading about FORB in Belgium on HRWF website](#)

[1]

<https://www.jw.org/fr/actualites/juridique/informations-juridiques/informations/dossier-ligne-de-conduite-biblique-tj-protection-enfants/>

[2]

<https://www.jw.org/fr/actualites/juridique/informations-juridiques/informations/dossier-ligne-de-conduite-biblique-tj-protection-enfants/>

<https://www.jw.org/fr/biblioth%C3%A8que/revues/tour-de-garde-etude-mai-2019/amour-justice-face-a-mechancete/>

Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1266

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1266

Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1267

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php

content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line **1267**

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in
/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-
content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line **1268**