



Vienna Boys' Choir Apology Over Abuse Allegations

Vienna Boys' Choir president issues apology as abuse allegations climb to 11

The Associated Press

VIENNA

The president of the Vienna Boys' Choir apologized Monday on behalf of the famed institution as the number of abuse allegations rose to 11, up from eight last week.

President Walter Nettig also pledged to hold more in-depth conversations with all potential victims and offered support to anyone who wanted counseling.

"And we apologize in the name of the institution," Nettig told the Austria Press Agency.

Nettig said most of the callers to the choir's hot line reported overly harsh discipline methods rather than sexual abuse. The sexually related allegations revolve around abuse attempts rather than actual assaults, he said. Some alleged incidents date back 40 or 50 years.

Nettig, a member of the choir in the 1940s, also acknowledged that he recalled having exceedingly strict teachers and even hated one of them.

Choir spokeswoman Helga Longin confirmed Nettig's comments to The Associated Press.

"We really want to clear this up and are doing all we can," she said, adding that the allegations also implicated fellow former choir members, not only adult faculty.

The recent series of abuse allegations came about after a local newspaper reported earlier this month that two former members, both now adults, recalled incidents of sexual abuse and "merciless discipline."

The Vienna Boys' Choir is not church-affiliated. However, the allegations coincide with an ongoing string of abuse claims against members of Austria's Catholic Church.

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