



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 3, 2012

## Vatican Tells UN to Respect Parental Rights and Homeschooling

As some totalitarian-minded governments escalate their attacks on parental rights and homeschooling, the Vatican's delegation to the United Nations [called on the world](#) to respect families, the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of their children, and non-governmental forms of education. The Holy See's representatives also called on governments last week to stop indoctrinating the youth.



Noting that there are around 250,000 Catholic schools around the globe, the Church's permanent observer mission to the UN said its religious educational institutions are there to help. Parents, meanwhile, "have the right and duty to choose schools inclusive of homeschooling, and they must possess the freedom to do so, which in turn, must be respected and facilitated by the State."

Analysts [heralded](#) the strongly worded [diplomatic statement](#) to the UN as a "significant victory" for parental rights worldwide. Of course, there are well over 1 billion Catholics in the world today — about 20 percent of humanity — so when the Holy See says something, people and governments tend to listen. And those on the front lines of the battle for educational freedom celebrated the news.

"That's huge," media relations director Jeremiah Lorrig with the U.S.-based Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) told [LifeSiteNews.com](#). "Having the support of the Vatican ambassador would be invaluable to the homeschool movement."

Seton Home Study School, America's largest provider of Catholic homeschooling materials, applauded the Holy See's statement as well. "This is really a huge step, not just from the point of view of the U.N., but from the point of view of the Vatican," it said in an [online posting](#). "The term 'homeschool' isn't used much, if at all, in official Vatican documents, and this statement is a big show of support for homeschoolers around the world."

The Church was responding to a troubling trend: there is a growing number of anti-freedom politicians around the globe who are becoming increasingly hostile to alternative education and the traditional role of families in raising the next generation. And Catholics and other Christians — often the victims of the persecution — have long said that tough measures to preserve freedom are sorely needed.

"For some time now, my delegation has noticed a disconcerting trend, namely, the desire on the part of some to downplay the role of parents in the upbringing of their children, as if to suggest somehow that it is not the role of parents, but that of the State," Archbishop Francis A. Chullikatt, who heads the Church's mission, said in the statement addressing the UN Economic and Social Council's Commission on Population and Development.

But it should be the other way around, the Vatican explained to the UN gathering in New York last Tuesday. "In this regard it is important that the natural and thus essential relationship between parents and their children be affirmed and supported, not undermined," the statement read.



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Around the world — often with the support of UN educational programs — more and more governments are seeking to brainwash children with material that is contrary to their parents' fundamental values and beliefs. From issues like homosexuality, feminism, and abortion to the origin of life and evolution, families worldwide have become increasingly alarmed at the curricula being pushed in state-controlled educational institutions. And that must stop, the Church said.

“In this educational process, the State should respect the choices that parents make for their children and avoid attempts at ideological indoctrination,” the Holy See’s UN mission said in the statement, citing global treaties enshrining the rights of parents. “As affirmed in international law, States are called to have respect for the freedom of parents to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions which equally applies to their right to make judgments on moral issues regarding their children.”

The Church’s statement also quotes from the UN’s dubious “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” — a document which purports to grant a series of limited privileges, as opposed to the American system wherein unalienable rights are granted by the Creator and merely enshrined in the Constitution to be protected by government. But even the UN, a body composed largely of totalitarian regimes, acknowledges in the UDHR that “parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.”

Despite regularly paying lip service to homeschooling and parental rights, however, the global body and its members are often at odds with both, according to experts. “We actually find ourselves battling the UN, especially with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,” HSLDA’s Lorrige explained, referring to a controversial global treaty on children that has not been ratified by the U.S. Senate.

Of course, in countries ruled by openly despotic regimes — Cuba, North Korea, and China, for example, as well as other nations enslaved by communist dictatorships — the situation still remains bleak. The tyrants ruling over Cuba and China are both represented on the 47-member UN Population and Development Commission addressed by the Holy See’s statement. And both are openly hostile to educational freedom — or any other sort of freedom, for that matter.

Outside of Germany, which [still enforces a Nazi-era education law](#) purporting to ban home education, the vicious persecution of homeschoolers is now largely a thing of the past in most of the West. Some Western governments, however, have been bucking the global trend toward educational liberty in recent years.

In Sweden, for example — which already suffered from draconian restrictions on homeschooling — Parliament [passed a new law in 2010](#) in an effort to completely eradicate several dozen remaining families that educated their children at home. The law also forced all schools to teach the government’s highly controversial curriculum — leaving parents who have objections with literally no option but to flee.

Indeed, many of the persecuted Swedish families have [already fled abroad as exiles and refugees](#), shattering Sweden’s hard-won image as a tolerant social utopia. But some brave parents still remain in the Nordic kingdom even as the state wages an increasingly [ruthless war](#) on alternative education. And the fight is not over yet.

The Canadian province of Alberta has also come [under fire recently](#) for attempting to impose certain regulations on what homeschooling families may teach. And even in the U.S., where home education is



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almost universally recognized as a fundamental human right, state and local officials occasionally attempt to harass homeschoolers.

Despite the problems, however, there is hope for educational liberty going forward, according to activists. The Vatican even had some suggestions for governments around the world to start rectifying the troubling developments.

“An authentic rights-based approach to development places the human person, bearing within him or her infinite and divine inspirations, at the center of all development concerns, and thus respects the nature of the family, the role of parents, including their religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds,” it said in the statement. “The more the countries recognize this, the more they will be able to put into place policies and programs that advance the overall wellbeing of all persons.”

Whether the UN Commission will listen to the advice remains to be seen, but with members including communist and Islamist dictatorships, interested parties do not have high hopes. Still, for Catholics and embattled families in the West, activists said the Church’s bold statement was a welcome and deeply encouraging development.



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