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## **Germany: a study on abuse in the Protestant Church presented today. 9,355 children and young people since 1946**

The number of victims of abuse in the German Protestant Church is much higher than it was thought to be. According to a study that has been presented today, 9,355 children and young people have been victims of sex abuse in Germany since 1946. 3,497 people have been accused. About one third of them are parishioners, that is, pastors or vicars. So far, the Protestant Church has estimated that about 900 people have been abused. The ForuM study has been developed by an independent team of researchers and published in Hannover. According to the researchers, the study shows just the “tip of the iceberg”. Approximately 4,300 disciplinary records, 780 personal records and approximately 1,320 more records have been surveyed. For the sake of comparison: the 2018 Mhg study commissioned by the German Bishops’ Conference covered 38 thousand files about priests and lay people in the Catholic Church. The published results show that 64.7% of the victims were men and approximately 35.3 were women. In addition, the indicted people are virtually all men (99.6%). According to the study, approximately one third of them were married when they committed their first crime. The seriousness of the crime largely varies: most of the crimes are so-called assaults, which means there has been physical contact with the victims, from unnecessary excessive physical contact in sports coaching to penetration. Ekd commissioned the study as many as three years ago for approximately 3.6 million euros. The researchers should include all the regional churches as well as the Diakonie charities. The study contains six sub-projects, which look at the causes and peculiarities of sex abuse in the Protestant Church. The victims have been involved too. The goal is to conduct an overall analysis of Protestant facilities and systemic conditions that promote sex abuse and make it difficult to deal with it. The research group works under the name: “ForuM – Research on Dealing with Sexualised Violence and other forms of abuse in the Evangelical Church and Diakonie in Germany”. It is coordinated by Martin Wazlawik, professor of social services at the Hannover University of Applied Science.

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