

---

## "Protéger l'enfance" website created by the Paris diocese. Breaking the silence and reporting: "We are not the guilty ones, we are the victims"

The fight against pedocriminality must also involve awareness of this crime. It requires everyone - children, adolescents, adults - to exercise vigilance, have the courage to break the silence, and report it. In the wake of last week's announcement of some important decisions taken at the French bishops' plenary assembly to combat abuse, the diocese of Paris presented its new "Protéger l'enfance" website - [stopabus.dioceseparis.fr](http://stopabus.dioceseparis.fr) - whose aim is to contribute to the fight against child sexual abuse through prevention. The new website is intended for children, adolescents and adults with language appropriate for all audiences, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Cartoons, mini-fictions, reportages, TV clips: the portal explores with words and videos the various contexts in which sexual abuse or violence can occur, from the family to sports centres. Classified by age group, the videos focus on prevention, formation of educators, catechists, and all those whose jobs involve young people; the dissemination of useful links, contacts and instructions for reacting when necessary. **The homepage consists of three sections.** The first is devoted to awareness-raising, with short videos featuring diverse communication formats. Most of those addressed to children use the animated 'language' of cartoons. One video is designed for young children from the age of two, warning them graphically and symbolically not to let anyone touch them. Others are set in an ordinary family context and tell stories of friendships that unfortunately conceal risks of abuse and violence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoLMc3dIVqQ&t=2s> **The stories for adolescents are created with the participation of actors.** Also in this case emphasis is placed on the different environments where sexual abuse and violence can occur, ranging from families to sports venues. The teen section also tackles sexting - the practice of sending or posting sexually suggestive text messages and images. Adolescents are also informed of the awareness campaign to combat sexual violence in sport, promoted by the '**Colosse aux pieds d'argile**' association, that aims to raise awareness of this issue within the sport sector. Rugby player Sébastien Boueilh, who was sexually assaulted as a child and who today is actively involved in the dissemination of awareness-raising campaigns, also takes the floor in the video, conceived as a starting point for subsequent reflection and discussion with young people. "There are silences that have to be broken," the athlete says. "We are not the guilty ones, we are the victims. Do like me, speak out."

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=aO8LKfobocE&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=aO8LKfobocE&feature=emb_logo) **The "in-depth" section** includes legal information, press reports and statistics, along with videos featuring the first-hand accounts by the survivors themselves, like the story of Véronique Garnier, currently Episcopal delegate for the protection of minors and vulnerable persons in Orléans, abused by a priest when she was 13 to 15 years old. *This section features a report indicating that 3.5 million people in France were victims of sexual assault during childhood committed by their father, brother, family friend, football coach, priest or school teacher.* **"Take action" is the section for practical intervention. It is addressed to children, adolescents, adults, as well as to individuals who feel sexually attracted to children.** "I am a child and I need help", recites the link to a page where the child is helped to understand what is happening and how to react. For example, it states that "no one, absolutely no one, neither another child nor an adult, is allowed to touch a child underneath their clothes or do embarrassing things with them. If another child touches a child, it is a bad thing to do and it should not happen. If an adult touches a child, this behaviour is called paedocriminality." All children and adolescents are encouraged to talk to an adult whom they trust: "If you have any evidence of sexual abuse, whether it happened directly to you or to another young person, you must disclose it without delay. This is necessary for your own protection, for the protection of the victim you know, and for the protection of any prospective victims. The perpetrators of sexual assault might reoffend if nothing is done about it." Individuals who feel they may have paedophilic drives are given

---

a 'free and confidential' phone number to turn to in order to 'avoid that they might go from thought to action'."

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=ck3uOCyWB50&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=ck3uOCyWB50&feature=emb_logo) **"There is still a long way to go to raise public awareness and find the right solutions,"** writes Mgr Thibault Verny, auxiliary bishop of the diocese of Paris, coordinator of the anti-abuse campaign. "We want to face this challenge with you." Every uploaded video is extremely powerful. The aim is also to help survivors break the wall of silence, of the changing rooms, of their own rooms, to help them speak out and report the abuse. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EF3OW7CVogg&t=6s>

M. Chiara Biagioni