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Suit Against Mexican Cardinal Dismissed

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LOS ANGELES (AP) — A judge dismissed a lawsuit Friday that accused Mexico City Cardinal Norberto Rivera of conspiring with Roman Catholic officials in the United States to shelter a suspected pedophile priest.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Ralph Dau issued his ruling at a brief hearing, said Steve Selsberg, a U.S.-based attorney for Rivera.

It marked the second time a Los Angeles judge has dismissed a civil suit filed against the Mexican cardinal by a Mexican citizen.

"We think justice was served," said Selsberg. "The case had no business being filed in state court in Los Angeles."

An attorney for the plaintiff, who was identified in court papers only as "Juan Doe," said his client would appeal.

The lawsuit, like a different one dismissed last month, accused Rivera of conspiring with Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony to transfer accused pedophile priest Nicolas Aguilar Rivera between the two nations to cover up the priest's alleged acts.

Rivera, who is no relation to the cardinal, fled the country in 1988 before Los Angeles police began investigating allegations against him.

He remains at large in Mexico after being charged in California with 19 felony counts of committing lewd acts on a child.

Mahony has settled his part of both cases regarding the priest and was no longer named in the lawsuit, Selsberg said. A call to Mahony's spokesman was not immediately returned.

The plaintiff in the suit dismissed Friday alleged the Mexican cardinal transferred the priest to Los Angeles in 1988 even though he knew he had abused children.

The priest fled back to Mexico nine months later. The suit alleges he then continued to molest children in Mexico, including the plaintiff.

The plaintiff alleges he was abused in 1997 at a parish in Mexico's Oaxaca state.

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