

# *Argentinian Official Meets with Pope Francis at Vatican, Talks about Malvinas*

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Vatican City, Mar 27, (RHC), – Pope Francis showed an interest on the Malvinas question negotiations during a meeting on Wednesday at the Vatican with Daniel Filmus, chairman of Issues relative to the Malvinas Islands of the Argentine government.

According to Argentine sources, the meeting took place in the framework of Wednesdays open audience at St Peter's square, when an estimated 50.000 people attend the ceremony.

"The Pope asked how the (Malvinas) secretariat was working and how were we advancing in the Malvinas issue", said Filmus *in statements to reporters after the meeting*.

"The Pope insisted in the need to advance in the search for dialogue, and I told him that for the Argentine government, the only alternative was to continue working in support of a bilateral dialogue with the United Kingdom", said Filmus

"His holiness was hopeful that Argentina could start a bilateral dialogue in such a way we can reach a peace solution", added Filmus.

"It's really a strong signal that only weeks before the Pope meets Queen Elizabeth, he received us. The Pope is a man who acts on gestures and his agenda is determined by him" concluded Filmus who said he was very satisfied and pleased with the meeting.

Located about 480 kilometers (300 miles) off Argentina's coast, the Malvinas Islands have been declared part of the British overseas territories since the UK established its colonial rule on the territories in 1833.

Argentina and the UK fought a 74-day-long war in 1982 over the islands, in the South Atlantic Ocean. The conflict ended with the British side claiming victory.

Argentina claims the islands as part of its national territory, saying UK's rule over them violates international law and UN's resolutions on decolonization.

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