

*Iranian religious leader applauds  
Pope Francis for speaking in  
favor of oppressed peoples*

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**Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in a message to Pope Francis urges him to support in defense of the oppressed people.**

Tehran, June 2 (RHC)-- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in a message to Pope Francis urges him to support in defense of the oppressed people.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in a message to Pope Francis has urged him to continue to “defend the oppressed” people across the world, especially in Palestine and Yemen.

The message was delivered to the supreme authority of the Catholic Church this week through Ayatollah Alireza Araf, the head of Islamic seminaries in Iran, who was on a visit to the Vatican.

In the message, Ayatollah Khamenei hailed some stances taken by the pontiff in strengthening interaction between Islam and Christianity and speaking for the oppressed people in the world. “We expect you to continue to work to defend the oppressed people of the world, especially in Palestine and Yemen, and to have a clear and transparent stance in that respect,” the message reads.

It further noted that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution expects action to be taken in defense of the Palestinian people and believes that the Palestinian issue should be decided by native Palestinians in a free election with the participation of all the native people, including followers of all religions.

Pope Francis, for his part, conveyed his warm greetings to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. Earlier this week, Head of the Iranian Islamic seminaries, Ayatollah Alireza Araf held meetings with the head of the Catholic Church Pope Francis and high-ranking prelates at the Vatican.

Pope Francis and Ayatollah Araf, during their meeting at the Vatican, emphasized the need to boost synergy and cooperation among different religions, especially Islam and Christianity. He also spoke about challenges facing the contemporary world, oppression against nations, poverty and hunger, warmongering rhetoric, illegal occupation of sovereign states, internationally organized oppression, environmental crises, and increase in extremism, according to Hawzah News.

Ayatollah Araf's visit to the Vatican coincides with the commemoration of the 33rd anniversary of the demise of Imam Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The prominent Iranian cleric had in November 2020 written a letter to Pope Francis expressing concern over sacrilege committed by Western media and politicians against Prophet Mohammad. In response, Pope Francis said he was concerned for those affected by aggression and insults of religious figures, symbols, and sentiments.

Iran and the Vatican established full diplomatic ties in 1954.

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