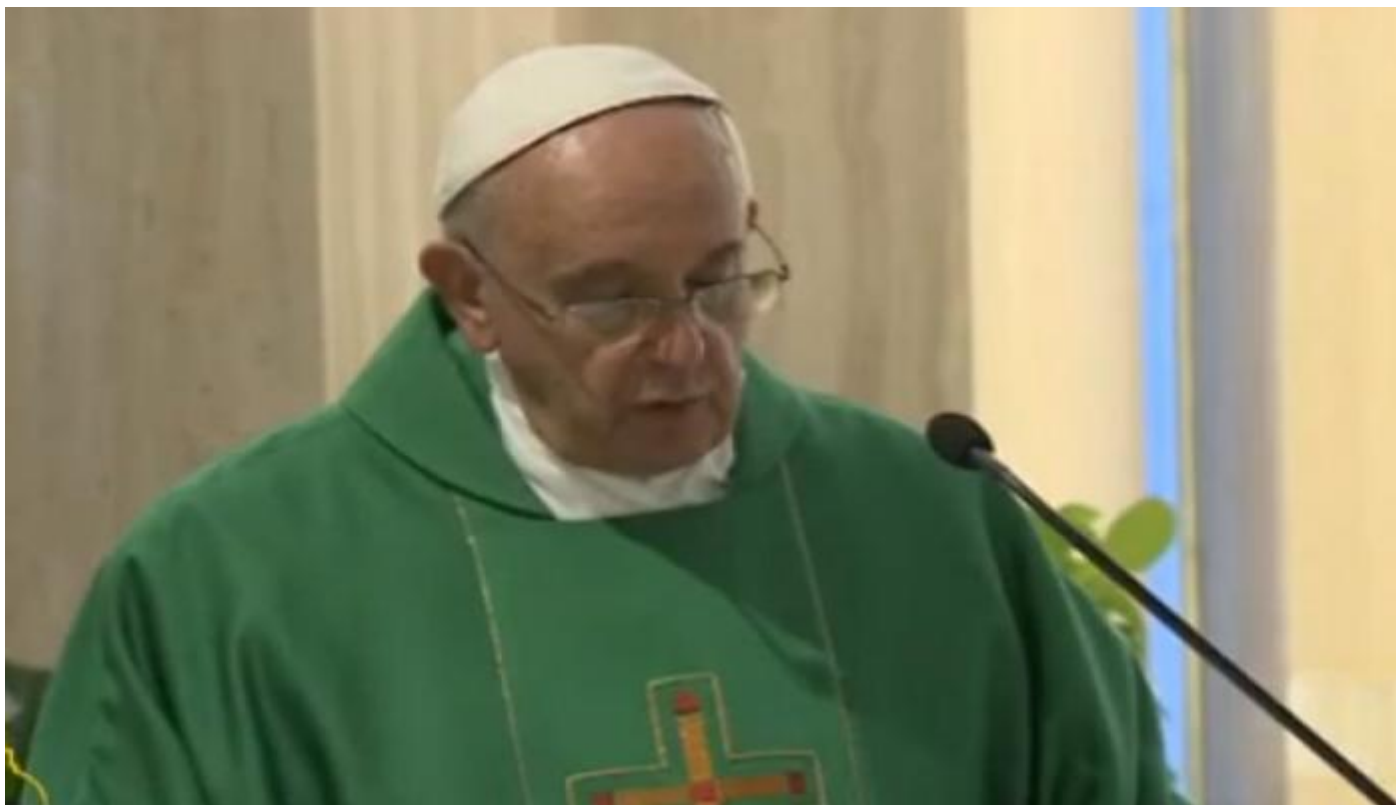


Pope Francis calls for end to violence in Ecuador



The head of the Catholic Church describes the crime committed against presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio as "inexcusable violence". Photo: Archivo/RHC

Havana, Aug 13 (RHC) Pope Francis called on Saturday, from Vatican City, on all citizens and political forces in Ecuador to "unite in a common effort for peace," while condemning the recent murder of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio.

In a message sent to the Archbishop of Quito, Alfredo José Espinoza, signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, it is stated that the Supreme Pontiff, after learning of the death of Villavicencio, wishes to convey "his deepest condolences to the family of the deceased and to all the beloved Ecuadorian people".

In the text, the crime, committed in the afternoon of August 9, after a political rally held as part of the campaign of the former legislator Villavicencio, candidate for the Concertación movement, for the elections of August 20 in the Andean nation, is described as an example of "inexcusable

violence".

According to the Minister of the Interior, Juan Zapata, six people have been arrested so far for allegedly being linked to the crime, all of them are foreign nationals.

Zapata stated that the National Police will use all its operational and investigative capacity to clarify the motive of the crime and find the masterminds (Source: Prensa Latina).

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