

*Pope Francis says countries are playing games with Ukraine on arms deal*

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Paris, September 26 (RHC)-- Pope Francis has expressed frustration with the countries that are “playing games” with Ukraine by first providing weapons and then considering backing out of their commitments. “It comes to my mind that there are interests, not just the Russian-Ukraine problem but selling arms, you know. The arms business,” Pope Francis said aboard the plane returning from a trip to the French port city of Marseilles.

He was responding to a reporter’s question about whether he was frustrated that his efforts to bring about peace had not succeeded. He has sent an envoy, Italian Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, to Kiev, Moscow,

Washington and Beijing to meet with leaders there.

The Pope told the reporter he felt “some frustration” and then began talking randomly about the commerce of weapons, military industry and the war. “We should not play games ... We have to help them resolve things ... I see now that some countries are moving backwards, not wanting to give (Ukraine) arms,” he stated.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni clarified that by the comments, Pope Francis was not taking a stand on whether countries should continue to supply weapons to Ukraine or stop sending them. “It was a reflection on the consequences of the arms industry: the Pope, with a paradox, was saying that those who traffic in weapons never pay the consequences of their choices but leave them to be paid by people, like the Ukrainians,” Bruni said.

In the meantime, the U.S. government recently confirmed that the Biden administration has sent more than \$100 billion worth of weapons, munitions and other military aid to the former Soviet republic to be used in the Russia-Ukraine war.

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