

# *Pope Francis condemns exploitation of migrants for political propaganda*

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Athens, December 6 (RHC)-- Pope Francis has denounced the exploitation of migrants for political purposes, saying it is “distressing” to hear that some European leaders are seeking to build a wall and put up barbed wire to keep the immigrants out.

“We are in the era of walls and barbed wire,” the pope said during a Sunday visit to the Mavrovouni Identification Centre in Lesbos, Greece, where he also warned that the Mediterranean “is becoming a grim cemetery without tombstones.” “After all this time, we see that little in the world has changed with regard to the issue of migration,” he said, on the second day of his visit to Greece, according to AFP.

Pope Frances added that the root causes of the migrant crisis “should be confronted, not the poor people who pay the consequences and are even used for political propaganda.”

The Pontiff is on a five-day visit to Cyprus and Greece that has been dominated by the topic of migration. On Sunday, he spent two hours at the Mavrovouni camp, where nearly 2,200 asylum seekers live.

He also met dozens of child asylum-seekers as he walked through the camp, stopping to give a high five to a young African boy, patting children on the head, asking them their names, and posing for selfies.

“Please, let us stop this shipwreck of civilization!” he said, lamenting that “little has changed” since his first visit to the island, one of the main entry points for migrants, in 2016.

“It is easy to stir up public opinion by instilling fear of others,” he said. The Pope added that those who are anti-immigrant “fail to speak with equal vehemence” about the exploitation of the poor, wars, and the arms industry.

Greece has long been the main entry point into the European Union for migrants and refugees coming from West Asia, Asia, and Africa. The country is building a series of “closed” facilities on its islands with EU funds. The facilities have barbed wire fencing, surveillance cameras, X-ray scanners, and magnetic gates that are closed at night.

Three such camps have opened on the islands of Samos, Leros, and Kos, and two more will open on Lesbos and Chios next year.

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