

Pope calls for greater cooperation to ensure the right of return of Middle Eastern refugees



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Pope Francis has launched an appeal to the international community to make “every possible effort” to facilitate the return of refugees from Syria and Iraq to their homes.

In a video meeting with various Catholic aid organizations, Pope Francis on Thursday discussed the humanitarian situation in Syria and Iraq. The topics discussed dealt with the political and diplomatic situation in the two war-torn countries as well as the situation of the Catholic Church in the region.

The Pope said that the international community must guarantee security in home countries and make sure that the necessary economic preconditions are also met. He stressed that the return of displaced persons as well as perspectives of a longer-term aid should be moved further into focus in future aid arrangements.

Pope Francis@Pontifex

Everyone is called to contribute with courage and determination to the respect for the fundamental rights of every person, especially the “invisible”: of the many who are hungry and thirsty, who are naked, sick, outcast or imprisoned.

He also discussed the Catholic Church’s humanitarian engagement in Lebanon, which has the second-highest number of Syrian refugees, especially in terms of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among those attending the meeting was the UNHCR high commissioner for refugees, Filippo Grandi. Other participants included the papal ambassadors from

the region and the secretary general of the umbrella organization Caritas Internationalis, Aloysius John.

Safeguarding Christians

The Pope specifically called for ensuring the welfare of Christians in the region. He said that their presence in the Middle East has always been “a sign of peace, progress, development and reconciliation between people and peoples.”

However, he still encouraged Catholic relief agencies to work for the benefit of displaced persons regardless of their religious affiliation. According to Vatican figures, Catholic organizations in Syria and Iraq have provided \$1 billion in aid since 2014.

Pope Francis also announced that he would be traveling to Iraq in March.

Source: Pope calls for greater cooperation to ensure the right of return of Middle Eastern refugees - InfoMigrants

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