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Pope says 'demagogic' populism does not help peace Cairo

Pope Francis denounced "demagogic populism" yesterday and insisted that violence profanes God's name, in a wide-ranging speech as he visited Egypt to push for tolerance.

"Peace alone ... is holy and no act of violence can be

perpetrated in the name of God, for it would profane his name," the Catholic pontiff told a Muslim-Christian conference in Cairo.

Francis is in Egypt on a 27-hour visit to push for dialogue with Muslims and support the country's embattled Christian minority

that has suffered a series of jihadist attacks.

In his speech, Francis said peace was not helped "demagogic forms of by populism... on the rise".

It is "essential", he added, to block "the flow of money and weapons destined to those who provoke violence".

Francis landed in Cairo earlier on Friday and met President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Ahmed al-Tayeb, the grand imam of the prestigious Islamic Al-Azhar institution.

He will later visit a church that was bombed in December.

That attack was followed by twin church bombings in April that killed 45 people, in the deadliest assault in recent memory on Egypt's Coptic Christian minority.

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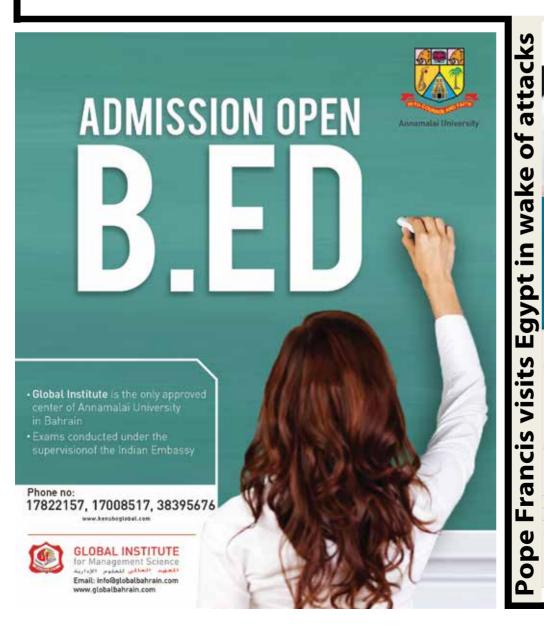
Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi (R) welcoming Pope Francis at the presidential palace in Cairo

Security is extremely tight with the country under a state of emergency following the

The pontiff's visit, intended to build on inter-faith dialogue with Muslim

church bombings which were claimed by the Islamic State group.

On Saturday, the pontiff will preside over a mass for Egypt's small Catholic community, estimated to number around 272,000 people spread across various rites.



leaders, comes at a time of acute fear and uncertainty for Egypt's Christian community following a spate of terrorist attacks Apr 28-29: Pope Francis meets President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, Grand Imam of al-Azhar world's most influential centre of Sunni Islamic theology - and Pope Tawadros II, head of Coptic **Orthodox Church** Population **MEDITERRANEAN SEA** Muslim 81 million Around 90% Feb 2017: Dozens of Coptic Christian Christian families flee northern Around 10% Sinai after number of killings by suspected Islamist militants Nile Delta ISRAEL \bigcirc Alexandria Arish Tanta Apr 9, 2017: Ismailiya 🔘 C: AN Suicide bombers nal Cairo kill 45 people at EGYPT 0 two churches in Suez œ Tanta and Alexandria 07 Nile on Palm Sunday. SINAI River So-called Islamic PENINSULA State (IS) militants claim responsibility SAUDI Dec 11, 2016: Bombing at chapel ARABIA adjacent to Cairo's main Coptic cathedral kills 28 people. IS claims attack 50km 30 miles Apr 18, 2017: One police officer killed and three others injured after IS militants attack checkpoint near St Catherine's Monastery one of world's oldest Christian monasteries RED SEA © GRAPHIC NEWS Sources: Vatican, Wire agencies Pictures: Getty Images