
Pope Francis to Open Vatican Files on Argentina's 'Dirty War'

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This move could lead to the clarification on the fate of tens of thousands disappeared under the military regime, who ushered in a period of state terrorism from 1974 to 1983.

The information was revealed by Father Guillermo Karcher, an Argentinian priest and pontifical usher that has known the Pope for over 20 years.

Karcher said the pope wished “for something to be done,” adding that the secretariat of state – who is taking charge of the case – has already begun on declassifying the Vatican archives related to Argentina’s dictatorship.

Human rights groups say up to 30,000 people were kidnapped, murdered or disappeared during the dictatorship and the Catholic Church is acknowledged to have been a key player in the country during those years. Church officials collected a large amount of information on the cases, and likely saved records of their dealings with the military regime.

In 2010, former Argentine dictator Jorge Rafael Videla admitted for the first time that his regime “disappeared” leftist opponents, while also taking babies from their parents before being disappeared and giving them to military and regime-friendly families. Videla was convicted and sentenced to 50 years’ imprisonment for these crimes in 2012, but died one year while serving

his sentence at a Marcos Paz prison.

When Francis was elected Pope, an alleged photo of him giving the sacramental bread to Videla became viral in social networks, however the photo was later proven to be false.

The Pontiff has been described by his biographers as very critical of the dictatorship and human rights activist Adolfo Perez Esquivel, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980, confirmed that Francis never collaborated with the dictatorship.

Relatives of the thousands of victims killed by the military regime could finally discover the fate of their loved ones. Pope Francis has ordered the Vatican to open its files relating to Argentina's military dictatorship, according to church officials Wednesday. This move could lead to the clarification on the fate of tens of thousands disappeared under the military regime, who ushered in a period of state terrorism from 1974 to 1983. The information was revealed by Father Guillermo Karcher, an Argentinian priest and pontifical usher that has known the Pope for over 20 years. Karcher said the pope wished "for something to be done," adding that the secretariat of state – who is taking charge of the case – has already begun on declassifying the Vatican archives related to Argentina's dictatorship. Human rights groups say up to 30,000 people were kidnapped, murdered or disappeared during the dictatorship and the Catholic Church is acknowledged to have been a key player in the country during those years. Church officials collected a large amount of information on the cases, and likely saved records of their dealings with the military regime. In 2010, former Argentine dictator Jorge Rafael Videla admitted for the first time that the his regime "disappeared" leftist opponents, while also taking babies from their parents before being disappeared and giving them to military and regime-friendly families. Videla was convicted and sentenced to 50 years' imprisonment for these crimes in 2012, but died one year while serving his sentence at a Marcos Paz prison. When Francis was elected Pope, an alleged photo of him giving the sacramental bread to Videla became viral in social networks, however the photo was later proven to be false. The Pontiff has been described by his biographers as very critical of the dictatorship and human rights activist Adolfo Perez Esquivel, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980, confirmed that Francis never collaborated with the dictatorship.

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