



[Pope Francis Calls for Genocide Investigation in Gaza](#)

As Israel's devastating war in Gaza continues without an end in sight, Pope Francis – the head of the Catholic Church – has called for an investigation regarding whether what is happening in Gaza is genocide. The remarks featured in a new book written by journalist Hernán Reyes Alcaide based on interviews with the Pope titled “Hope Never Disappoints: Pilgrims Toward a Better World,” which was released on November 19th in Italy, Spain, and Latin America, and will come out in other markets at a later date. In a chapter titled “The Face of a Migrant,” Pope Francis discusses the need to always respect human dignity and praises nations that have taken in war refugees. When addressing the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the Pope says, [“According to some experts, what is happening in Gaza has the characteristics of a genocide. It should be carefully investigated to determine whether it fits into the technical definition formulated by jurists and international bodies.”](#) These are the strongest words yet from the Papacy, marking the first time that the Pope has called for an investigation of genocide regarding Israel's actions.

Throughout the conflict in Gaza, as well as the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Sudan, the Pope has been vocal about the need to abide by humanitarian law, allow for the free flow of aid, and prevent civilians from being harmed. Regarding the Gaza War, the Pope has been active in speaking out on the conflict since the beginning, [saying](#) in October of last year that “extremism does not help reach a solution between Israelis and Palestinians, but instead fuels hatred, violence, and revenge.” Pope Francis has presented himself as a voice of peace, calling for the release of hostages, an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, and humanitarian aid for civilians. Earlier this year, after being asked about the assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli strike that left several residential buildings destroyed and killed at least 33 with 195 more injured, the Pope suggested that Israel's response was [immoral](#) and disproportionate – although he did not reference Israel specifically by name. In the Vatican, the Pope has met former Israeli hostages and those with relatives still being held in Gaza on a few occasions, and he has also met with Palestinians who have lost loved ones and who have relatives stuck in Gaza.

The Pope's recent comments align with international consensus regarding Israel's military actions in Gaza which has increasingly drawn attention to how its actions have gone outside the rules of warfare and been comprised of egregious war crimes and human rights violations. Reputable humanitarian organizations, including Amnesty International and Save the Children, among others, point to the reprehensible levels of destruction across Gaza and the dire humanitarian crisis. Journalist Hernán Reyes Alcaide, the book's author, has noted that the Pope is not taking a stand on whether or not Israel is or has committed genocide but he is calling for an investigation to take place – given the widespread reporting of destruction, killing of civilians, and the obstruction of aid from reaching those who are in desperate need of it. Simply calling for an investigation should not be considered controversial. Israel is facing an ongoing case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) brought by South Africa which provides evidence that Israel – through its actions of mass destruction, targeting of civilian infrastructure, hindrance of humanitarian aid, and use of starvation as a weapon of war – is committing genocide in the Gaza Strip. While the court has yet to make a final ruling, it did [state earlier this year](#) that Israel must enact provisional measures based on the credibility of the charges. In a separate case at the International Criminal Court (ICC), the body has now issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former minister Yoav Gallant noting reasonable grounds that they bear criminal responsibility for the use of [starvation of civilians as a method of](#)

[warfare](#). The Israeli obstruction of humanitarian aid and use of starvation as a method of warfare are concerns that human rights groups have consistently been seeking to shed light on since the onset of the war.

Pope Francis is the leader of over 1.3 billion Catholics worldwide, so his call for an investigation is a noteworthy development. In recent months, the situation on the ground in Gaza has only worsened due to the relentless devastation caused by Israel's bombardment. The Pope's comments add to the growing global scrutiny regarding Israel's actions in Gaza and may apply increased pressure to put an end to its destructive military operations at a time when this is already continuing to mount around the world.