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Vatican calls for independent Palestinian state 'soon'

By JPOST.COM STAFF
03/06/2011

Pope Benedict XVI meets PA President Abbas at Vatican, says its urgent that Palestinian state, Israel "live in security, at peace with neighbors."

The Vatican on Friday called urgently for a just and lasting peace between peace between Israel and the Palestinians, which it said can be brought about through and independent Palestinian state.

"Soon, the State of Israel and the Palestinian state must live in security, at peace with their neighbors and within internationally recognized borders," the Vatican said in a statement issued following a meeting between Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican.

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The Holy See added that any solution to the conflict must be capable of ensuring "respect for the rights of all," calling the current situation "troubled."

Abbas, who was in Italy, exchanged gifts with the Pope, with whom he also discussed the situation of Christians in the Palestinian territories as well as the Middle East.

Late last year, the Vatican blamed the flight of Christians from the Middle East on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, saying that the exodus

could be devastating for the birthplace of Christianity.

Some bishops who took place in a special meeting blamed fanatical Islam for the trend but others accused Israel of discriminating against Arab Christians.



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