



Pope Francis is greeted by Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi as he arrives at Baghdad's international airport, Iraq, on March 5, 2021. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

by The Associated Press

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Pope Francis condemned an assassination attempt against Iraq's prime minister as a "vile act of terrorism" and said Tuesday he is praying for peace in the country.

The Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, sent a telegram to Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi expressing Francis' solidarity and prayers to al-Kadhimi's family and those injured in the Monday drone attack on the prime minister's residence.

"In condemning this vile act of terrorism, His Holiness once more expresses his confidence that with the blessing of the most high God, the people of Iraq will be confirmed in wisdom and strength in pursuing the path of peace through dialogue and fraternal solidarity," the telegram said.

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An Iraqi army general has said indications point to Iran-backed factions as being behind the attack, though a top Iranian general visited Baghdad on Tuesday and said Tehran had nothing to do with it.

Francis met with al-Kadhimi in March when he traveled to Iraq to deliver a message of peaceful coexistence in the first-ever papal visit to the country.