

# Pope Francis Turns on Israel

With his call for a genocide investigation in Gaza, the pope has taken a side.

*By The Editorial Board*

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Pope Francis has written a new book to mark the 2025 jubilee. In an excerpt from “Hope Never Disappoints” that has generated headlines, he proposes a “careful investigation” by international experts into whether Israel’s actions in Gaza meet “the technical definition” of genocide.

But don’t kid yourself. What matters here is not the prospect of some authoritative finding by a respected international body. With this call, the pope has taken a side in the Hamas-Israel war. The headlines all have “pope,” “Israel,” and “genocide” in them—a great victory for anti-Israel forces.

Last December, South Africa accused Israel of violating the Genocide Convention in a case filed at the International Court of Justice. In January the court ordered Israel not to commit genocidal acts, which it wasn’t committing by any reasonable definition under the laws of war. It has yet to rule on whether genocide has occurred in Gaza.

There is something disturbing about a pope accusing Jews—the victims of genocide themselves—of genocide while they are fighting for survival on several fronts against enemies aiming to destroy them. Especially after the barbarous Oct. 7 massacre of unarmed Israeli civilians that started the war, and the follow-up Hamas strategy of using innocent Palestinian civilians as human shields.

The complicated papal history with the Nazis during World War II should give the Vatican reason to be careful making anti-Israel pronouncements. The resistance and moral example of John Paul II against Communism that helped to topple the Soviet Union was authentic humanism. But under Pope Francis that moral witness has attenuated.

By his use of the word “genocide,” Pope Francis has not moved Gaza any closer to peace. All he has done is give aid and comfort to the enemies of the Jewish people and all civilized society.