

Vatican blames Israel for all Christian problems in Mideast

Thursday, January 21, 2010 Israel Today Staff

A document released by the Vatican this week blamed Israel not only for the exodus of Christians from Palestinian-controlled territories, but for the plight of Christians across the entire Middle East.

The document will serve as the basis for an October gathering of bishops to discuss the difficulties of minority Christian communities in the Muslim world.

It was largely authored by Arab bishops from the Middle East, most of whom said that the Israeli "occupation" of Arab-claimed lands is the root cause of nearly all oppression of Christians in the region. They suggested that in the absence of the "occupation," radical Islamic forces across the region would lose support and be unable to cause trouble for Christians.

The document also appeared to justify the use of terrorist violence by Muslims in both Israel and Iraq:

"Violence is in the hands of the strong and weak alike, the latter resorting to whatever violence is within reach in order to be free."

A Vatican official told reporters on Tuesday that the Catholic Church is not trying to take sides or make policy recommendations, but insisted that the Middle East-based bishops who authored the document "know the situation well."

<http://www.israeltoday.co.il/default.aspx?tabid=178&nid=20422>