Vatican
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Pope Francis raises his right hand as he speaks into a microphone. He is against a black back

Pope Francis gives his blessing to visitors during his weekly general audience in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican Jan. 3, 2023. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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Pope Francis expressed his condolences and prayers after two bombings in Kerman, Iran, claimed the lives of 84 people and wounded scores more at a memorial for an assassinated Iranian military officer.

In a telegram sent on behalf of the pope Jan. 5, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said the pope "was deeply saddened to learn of the loss of life caused by the recent explosions in Kerman."

"He sends the assurance of his prayers for those who have died and for their grieving families" and expressed "his spiritual solidarity with the injured," the telegram said.

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The pope also "invokes upon all the people of Iran, the Almighty's blessing of wisdom and peace," it said.

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the Jan. 3 attack in southern Iran, saying it was caused by two of its members wearing and detonating explosives. The blasts went off outside a cemetery where thousands had gathered for the anniversary of the assassination of Qasem Soleimani in 2020. Soleimani, whose militia force had fought against the Islamic State in Iraq, had been killed in Iraq in 2020 by a U.S. drone strike.