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Pope Francis holds a private meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican May 2, 2024. (CNS/Vatican Media)



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Pope Francis received assurances from Jordan's King Abdullah II that Christian and Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem will be protected amid the Israel-Hamas war.

The pope met with the king of Jordan — the Middle Eastern country that has the longest border with Israel — for 20 minutes at the Vatican May 2.

King Abdullah told the pope that Jordan "will continue undertaking its religious and historical role in safeguarding holy sites in Jerusalem, under the Hashemite Custodianship," the court of the royal family said in a post on X.

Established in 1924, the custodianship refers to the role of the Hashemite royal family of Jordan in protecting the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

The king also stressed the need to stop settler attacks against Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank, the post continued, and also warned "of the consequences of continued Israeli violations of holy sites in Jerusalem."

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In recent years, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which falls under the Hashemite custodianship, has been the site of clashes between Israeli police and Palestinians Muslims. The mosque is built on the Temple Mount — the site where the first and second Jewish temples once stood — and Israeli officials have recently advocated for increased access of Jews to the site.

Some 1,600 Israelis forced their way into the mosque complex for Passover April 25 while Israeli police restricted entry for Muslim worshipers, said the Jerusalem Waqf, the Jordanian-appointed organization responsible for overseeing the mosque compound.

King Abdullah also stressed Jordan's commitment to safeguarding Christian holy sites in Jordan, particularly the baptism site of Jesus, "Bethany Beyond the Jordan," the X post added.

Both Pope Francis and King Abdullah have repeatedly called for a cease-fire and a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The two leaders first met in 2014 during Pope Francis' apostolic journey to the Holy Land, which included a stop in Amman, the capital of Jordan.