



Pope Leo XIV condemns war and the "allure of powerful and sophisticated weapons" in an appeal for peace at the conclusion of his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican June 18, 2025. (CNS/Vatican Media)



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The world must resist the allure of modern weapons which threaten to give conflicts a ferocity surpassing that of previous wars, Pope Leo XIV said.

"The heart of the church is torn apart from the cries that arise from places of war," he said at the conclusion of his general audience in St. Peter's Square June 18. "In particular from Ukraine, from Iran, from Israel, from Gaza."

"We must not become accustomed to war," the pope said. "Rather, we must push against the allure of powerful and sophisticated weapons as a temptation."

Quoting the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World ("Gaudium et Spes"), Leo said that in modern-day warfare "scientific weapons of all kinds are used," and consequently "its atrocity threatens to lead the combatants to a barbarity far greater than that of past times."

"Therefore, in the name of human dignity and international law, I repeat to those responsible that which Pope Francis used to say: 'War is always a defeat,'" the pope said. And, quoting another of his predecessors, Pope Pius XII, he added: "Nothing is lost with peace. All can be lost with war."

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Leo's message came a few days after he expressed deep concern over the "seriously deteriorating" situation in the Middle East shortly after Israeli airstrikes were carried

out on nuclear sites in Iran and retaliatory drone attacks on Israel were launched June 13.

"No one should ever threaten the existence of another," the pope had said during an audience with pilgrims in Rome for the Holy Year 2025 June 14. While it is right to hope for a world "free from the nuclear threat," he said, "it is the duty of all nations to support the cause of peace, taking paths of reconciliation and promoting solutions that ensure security and dignity for all."

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, told the Italian news agency ANSA June 17 that the Holy See is advocating for nuclear disarmament and has prepared a document on the immorality of not only the use but the possession of nuclear arms — a notion previously expressed by the late Francis.