

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 230131a

Tuesday 31.01.2023

Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Francis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in South Sudan (Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace in South Sudan) (31 January to 5 February 2023) – Departure from Rome, Telegram to the President of the Italian Republic, and Telegrams to Heads of State

This morning Pope Francis began his 40th International Apostolic Journey, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on an Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace in South Sudan.

Before leaving Santa Marta, the Holy Father met with around ten migrants and refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, received and supported, with their families, by the Astalli Centre. They were accompanied by the prefect of the Dicastery for Charity, His Eminence Cardinal Konrad Krajewski.

On the way to Fiumicino airport, the car carrying the Holy Father paused briefly near the Monument to the Fallen of Kindu, the thirteen Italian aviators killed in Congo on 11 November 1961. Pope Francis dedicated a prayer to the victims of that bloody massacre and of all those who have lost their lives participating in humanitarian and peace missions.

He departed from Rome-Fiumicino International Airport at 8.29, on board an A359/ITA Airways aircraft, bound for Kinshasa.

The aircraft carrying the Holy Father landed at N'djili International Airport, Kinshasa, at 14.33.

Telegram to the President of the Italian Republic

As he left Italian territory, the Holy Father sent the following telegram to the President of the Italian Republic, the Honorable Sergio Mattarella:

HIS EXCELLENCY

HON. SERGIO MATTERELLA

PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC

PALAZZO DEL QUIRINALE 00187 ROME

AS I AM ABOUT TO LEAVE ON AN APOSTOLIC JOURNEY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO AND IN SOUTH SUDAN, MOVED BY THE ARDENT DESIRE TO MEET THE BROTHERS IN THE FAITH AND THE INHABITANTS OF THOSE DEAR NATIONS, BEARING A MESSAGE OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION, IT IS MY PLEASURE TO ADDRESS A RESPECTFUL GREETING TO YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, WHICH I ACCOMPANY WITH FERVENT PRAYERS FOR THE GOOD AND THE PROSPERITY OF THE ENTIRE ITALIAN PEOPLE.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Telegrams to Heads of State during the flight from Rome to Kinshasa

During the flight to Kinshasa, while flying over Tunisia, Algeria, Niger, Chad, the Central African Republic, Cameroon and finally the Republic of the Congo, the Holy Father Francis sent the following telegrams to the respective Heads of State:

Overflight Tunisia

HIS EXCELLENCY KAIS SAIED
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA
TUNIS

AS I ENTER TUNISIAN AIRSPACE ON MY WAY TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, I SEND CORDIAL GREETINGS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS. PRAYING THAT THE ALMIGHTY MAY BLESS YOU ALL WITH PEACE AND HARMONY, I INVOKE DIVINE BLESSINGS UPON THE NATION.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Algeria

HIS EXCELLENCY ABDELMADJID TEBBOUNE
PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
ALGIERS

FLYING OVER ALGERIA ON MY APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, I EXTEND GREETINGS OF GOOD WISHES TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS. ASSURING YOU OF MY PRAYERS, I INVOKE UPON ALL OF YOU ABUNDANT DIVINE BLESSINGS.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Niger

HIS EXCELLENCY MOHAMED BAZOUM
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NIGER
NIAMEY

AS I FLY OVER YOUR COUNTRY ON MY WAY TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, I SEND CORDIAL GREETINGS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND THE PEOPLE OF NIGER, TOGETHER WITH THE ASSURANCE OF MY PRAYERS THAT THE ALMIGHTY WILL BLESS YOU ALL WITH STRENGTH AND PEACE.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Chad

HIS EXCELLENCY MAHAMAT IDRISSE DÉBY ITNO
TRANSITIONAL PRESIDENT - PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHAD
N'DJAMENA

ENTERING CHADIAN AIRSPACE ON MY WAY TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, I OFFER PRAYERFUL GOOD WISHES TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS, AND INVOKE UPON THE NATION DIVINE BLESSINGS OF RECONCILIATION AND PEACE.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Central African Republic

HIS EXCELLENCY FAUSTIN-ARCHANGE TOUADÉRA
PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
BANGUI

I SEND CORDIAL GREETINGS OF GOOD WISHES TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS AS I FLY OVER THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC ON MY WAY TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO. I PRAY THAT ALMIGHTY GOD WILL BLESS YOU ALL WITH JOY AND PEACE.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Cameroon

HIS EXCELLENCY PAUL BIYA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

YAOUNDÉ

AS MY JOURNEY TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO TAKES ME OVER YOUR COUNTRY, I EXTEND CORDIAL GREETINGS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND THE PEOPLE OF CAMEROON. INVOKING THE BLESSINGS OF ALMIGHTY GOD UPON THE NATION, I PRAY THAT HE MAY GRANT ALL OF YOU PEACE AND WELLBEING.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Overflight Republic of the Congo

HIS EXCELLENCY DENIS SASSOU NGUESSO
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
BRAZZAVILLE

AS I FLY THROUGH YOUR COUNTRY'S AIRSPACE ON MY APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, I EXTEND GOOD WISHES TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS, TOGETHER WITH THE ASSURANCE OF MY PRAYERS FOR THE PEACE AND PROSPERITY OF ALL.

FRANCISCUS PP.
