

# *Human Rights Activist Asks Pope Francis for Help in Argentina*

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Buenos Aires, November 21 (RHC)-- The president of the human rights groups Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo sent an open letter to Pope Francis to let him know about the situation of "hunger" and "institutional violence" in Argentina.

"Hunger is growing, with men and women with their children sleeping in the squares and sidewalks," Hebe Bonafini said. "Forgive me for this letter but I know that your words have a great reception among the people and we need them."

Bonafini met with the Pope last May at the Vatican, warning him about the threat to social rights and the rise of political persecutions for those who oppose the conservative government of President Mauricio Macri.

The 87-year-old iconic activist was also a victim of political persecution when last August a judge issued an arrest warrant against her into the alleged embezzlement of public funds. The case was dismissed as tens of thousands of Argentineans poured into the streets to protest and defend Bonafini.

Hebe Bonafini is recognized worldwide for leading the fight for justice for victims of disappearance during the 1976-83 military junta in Argentina. She has two sons who were disappeared by the military dictatorship. Since 1977, she and her colleagues have gathered at the Plaza de Mayo square in Buenos

Aires to seek justice for their disappeared sons and daughters.

Macri assumed office in December, triggering an abrupt reversal in the progressive social and economic policies of his predecessors Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernandez from 2003 to 2015.

The new conservative administration has been plagued by nationwide protests over a series of neo-liberal reforms, including mass layoffs, attacks on critical media outlets and the criminal prosecution of political opponents.

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