

ISIS Threat? Chilling Poster Targets Pope Leo XIV Ahead of FIFA World Cup

A pro-ISIS propaganda outlet released a disturbing poster targeting Pope Leo XIV's upcoming visit to Spain during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, according to a June 1 report from the Middle East Media Research Institute's Jihad and Terrorism Threat Monitor.

The report said the poster was released by Al-Iman Media Center, a pro-Islamic State media outlet, and "depicts a decaying, zombie-like pope figure, holding a FIFA-branded soccer ball."



ISIS propaganda poster. MEMRI JTTM

The timing of the image appeared intentional as Pope Leo XIV is scheduled to visit Spain from June 6-12, while the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which is being played in the United States, Mexico and Canada, officially opens June 11.

According to the report, the poster carries the Spanish phrase "UNA VISITA DE 2 CARAS" or "A Two-Faced Visit," along with the message "SOON ON JUNE 11" displayed across the bottom.

The imagery featured in the poster directly references locations included in the pope's itinerary.

"On the left, Madrid's Santiago Bernabéu Stadium is shown under dark storm clouds with lightning striking overhead," the report stated. "On the right, Barcelona's Sagrada Família Basilica is portrayed engulfed in flames beneath an apocalyptic sky, with the FC Barcelona crest visible."



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The report said the imagery appears tied to Pope Leo XIV's planned appearances, including "his June 8 meeting with the diocesan community at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium, the June 10 Holy Mass and inauguration of the Tower of Jesus Christ at the Sagrada Família, and the June 11 travel from Barcelona to Gran Canaria."

The Jihad and Terrorism Threat Monitor said the poster "frames the visit as hypocritical by blending religious symbolism with football imagery, portraying the trip as 'two-faced' and accusing the Catholic Church and Western institutions of duplicity."

The warning comes after the organization previously published reports about potential threats surrounding this year's FIFA World Cup from "radicalized lone wolves and Iran's 'cyber resistance' proxies."

The combination of extremist propaganda, global sporting events and appearances by one of the world's most recognized religious leaders is likely to intensify security concerns across Spain as the tournament begins.

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