


Pope denounces governments that use media to defame and character assassinate critics

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 Pope Francis checks his watch as he arrives for the weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Wednesday, Nov. 7, 2018. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

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1 / 3

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VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis is denouncing the way some governments seek to discredit their critics through "whisper" campaigns, using the media to defame anyone who represents a threat.

During his morning homily Thursday, Francis said such slander campaigns can infect relations in families, parishes and dioceses, as well as global politics.

He said the damage done by the "sin of whispering" is particularly grave in politics "when a government isn't honest and seeks to sling mud at its adversaries with whispers, defamation, calumny."

Francis didn't single out any country, but said dictatorial governments are known for taking

control of the media to "diminish anyone who represents a threat."

Francis this year is dedicating his annual peace message to urging greater responsibility in politics.