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HEADLINE: Troubled Poland Draws Pope's Attention in Peaceful Switzerland

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Troubled Poland was seldom far from the thoughts of Pope John Paul II as he hurried through a day-long visit to this tranquil city.

The pope _ whose next trip is likely to be to Poland in August _ referred subtly but often Tuesday to events in his native, martial law-administered country, where an open challenge to Communist rule was crushed last December in a sweeping military crackdown.

John Paul returned to the Vatican Tuesday night.

The pope invoked the word "solidarity" 47 times _ an indirect but inescapable reference to the independent Polish labor movement suspended when the Warsaw regime decreed martial law _ in an hour-long speech to the 149-member International Labor Organization.

The pope also met briefly and unexpectedly with Solidarity activists who were outside Poland when martial law was imposed, made a point of blessing the bearer of a "Solidarnosc" banner and often wove events in Poland into the broader context of his appeals for social justice, human dignity and workers rights.

The pontiff's address to about 1,800 ILO delegates was the cornerstone of his 13-hour visit to some of Geneva's best known international organizations.

He told them that workers' rights to associate freely are "severely threatened, often flouted."

Workers, he asserted, have a fundamental right "to form freely or join an association of their own choosing, and to run it."

The pope was clearly speaking about the stalemate in Poland between martial law authorities and trade unionists when he appealed for "dialogue and cooperation ...to resolve opposition, without seeking to destroy the opponent," and when he warned about "tensions between groups that are liable to break into open conflict."

The taxing pace of his recent itinerary, which included trips to Britain and Argentina this month, appeared to take their toll as the 62-year-old pontiff neared the end of his visit.

"He seemed to me to be a very tired man," an ILO official said as the pope concelebrated Mass for nearly 25,000 faithful at Geneva's sprawling Palexpo exhibition center.

John Paul's visit passed without incident. He became the first pope to visit the International Committee of the Red Cross, where he urged global efforts to outlaw torture and called for

unconditional compliance with Geneva conventions protecting non-combatants and prisoners-of-war. The Red Cross is guardian of those conventions.

The pope also visited the 12-nation European Nuclear Research Center, where he criticized non-peaceful applications of technological development.

"Vehicles of destruction (are) already terrible enough in their force and number," he said.