

Pope expresses concern over violence against cardinal

VATICAN CITY - Pope Benedict XVI expressed his concern over the recent violence aimed at Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino of Caracas, Venezuela.

The cardinal announced he had been verbally assaulted and that the vehicle he and his driver were in was violently attacked by a group of people in downtown Caracas, the capital.

In a brief letter dated Dec. 9, the pope said the news "of the aggression ... by a violent group" Dec. 7 caused him concern.

"I am urgently expressing my sincere closeness and solidarity in these regrettable circumstances," the pope wrote in a letter published on the Web site of the Venezuelan bishops' conference.

He said he was keeping the cardinal in his prayers, encouraging him "to stay true (to) the fulfillment of your pastoral mission."

Cardinal Urosa said in a statement that he was not harmed in the attack.