



AMERICA/HAITI - Dramatic testimony of Apostolic Nuncio to Fides: "Port-au-Prince is completely devastated. Everywhere, you can hear cries from under the rubble."

Port-au-Prince (Agenzia Fides) - "Port-au-Prince is completely devastated. The Cathedral, the Archbishop's Residence, all the great churches, all the seminaries are reduced to rubble. The pastor of the Cathedral, who survived the earthquake, told me that the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince perished under the rubble, along with hundreds of seminarians and priests who are under the rubble." This is the dramatic testimony of the Apostolic Nuncio of Haiti, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, contacted by Fides after the violent earthquake that shook the country yesterday afternoon.

The Archbishop continued: "The National Palace is still standing. This morning I went to express condolences and solidarity to the President of the Republic, who was saved because he was out with the family. His private home has been destroyed. All the Ministerial buildings, except that of Culture have been destroyed. Parliament, with its senators; schools with children; supermarkets have all been reduced to nothing. The headquarters of MINUSTAH (the UN headquarters for Aid in Haiti) is reduced to a heap of concrete and hundreds of people are trapped, including the Head of Delegation, Hedi Annabi, I have been told by people that live in front of the headquarters."

The Nuncio has toured the devastated city as best he could and tells Fides: "I have just returned this morning. I found priests and nuns in the streets, without homes. The Rector of the seminary survived, as did the Dean of Studies, but the seminarians are under the rubble. Everywhere, you can hear cries from under the rubble. The CIFOR - Institute of Studies for the Men and Women Religious - has collapsed with the students inside, participating in a conference. The nunciature building has withstood the earthquake, without any injuries, but we are all amazed! So many things are broken, including the Tabernacle, but we are more fortunate than others. Many family members of the staff were killed, their homes destroyed. Everyone is calling for help. We will have problems of water and food before long. We cannot enter or stay inside the house much, as the earth continues to shake, so we are camped in the garden." (CE) (Agenzia Fides 13/01/2010)