



## **AMERICA/CHILE - "The country cannot go on like this": Bishops' appeal for dialogue between students and authorities**

Santiago (Agenzia Fides) - "The country cannot go forward under the pressure of demonstrations or police repression, and neither under threat or provocation. In this decisive hour, dialogue is the key to objectively evaluate the requests and proposals, restore confidence, to find common ground to reach an agreement," says a statement sent to Fides by the Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference of Chile, where confrontation between students and government continues.

The Bishops remind all parties involved "that as in any negotiation, one should always give up something and come to some sort of compromise", they say in a statement to the episcopate.

The text was read by Monsignor Ignacio Ducasse, Bishop of Valdivia and general secretary of the Episcopal Conference (Czech Republic), together with the spokesperson Jaime Coiro.

The Bishops urged the students to consider the proposals submitted by the government and that "are not incompatible with the return to school for the benefit of many students, their families, schools and the Country". "If there is minimum consensus on these objectives, it is time to have a law to ensure that these aspirations can be translated into public policies", write the Bishops.

On August 10 the government expressed its availability for dialogue to find a solution after the demonstrations, sometimes violent, in the streets of the capital and other cities of Chile

For almost 2 months the conflict has paralyzed teaching in various universities and secondary schools run by Municipalities (see Fides 07/04/2011). Students demand better education, more resources, criticize exaggerated profits received by educational institutions that receive state resources and ask for local dependence of secondary schools to come to an end.

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Document of the Episcopal Conference (in Spanish):: [http://www.fides.org/spa/documents/Chile\\_camino\\_xsjusta2011.pdf](http://www.fides.org/spa/documents/Chile_camino_xsjusta2011.pdf):