



## **AMERICA/PARAGUAY - Clashes between police and farmers: 17 victims, the Bishops call for an end to violence and to respect laws**

Curuguaty (Agenzia Fides) - "The Bishops of Paraguay express their deep regret at the deaths of police officers and farmers which occurred on 15 June, during a procedure of eviction in Curuguaty, and express their solidarity and spiritual closeness to family members, colleagues and loved ones of those killed and injured. The Bishops are praying for the dead and for the full recovery of the wounded. " This is what is said, according to a statement on behalf of the Episcopal Conference of Paraguay, of which a copy was sent to Fides, after the tragic events that caused 17 deaths and several wounded in the Curuguaty.

"Under no circumstances one can violate the rule of law and violate the laws of the Republic - the statement continues – or even react violently and shoot to kill ... Violence begets violence, and there are tragic and bloody consequences when one tries to take justice in one's own hands. We call urgently, to avoid further escalation of violence, to respect the procedure of law for justice. The State has an obligation to protect life and the properties of citizens within the picture of strict respect for the dignity of persons and the safeguards prescribed by the Constitution and laws."

According to information gathered by Fides Agency, on June 15 about 300 members of the police force entered the estate of Morumbi (extended to approximately 2000 acres), which has been occupied by farmers for days. The police had to make an order of eviction, but when officers were attacked with blows of a firearm, with the clear intent to kill, they had to return fire. It seems that among the farmers there were some elements belonging to an armed gang. The Central Government, after this incident, has called for the intervention of the army to regain control of the area. The farmers claim ownership of these lands, which are located in the Curuguaty area, as part of a large natural park, which they say should not be private property. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 18/6/2012)