



AMERICA/BOLIVIA - The Church's appeal to avoid violence and open dialogue

La Paz (Agenzia Fides) - The Catholic Church and the Defensoria del Pueblo have urged the government of Bolivia and the police, whose agents have been asking for a salary increase in the past few days, to speak without taking radical positions, to avoid violence.

The Secretary General of the Bolivian Episcopal Conference (CEB), His Exc. Mgr. Oscar Aparicio, on behalf of the Church launched an "urgent appeal to establish as soon as possible an open and responsible dialogue, to avoid violence that would have unpleasant consequences". "Moreover, no claim, however legitimate it may be, must leave the people defenseless," said Mgr. Aparicio in a statement sent to the international press and to Fides, referring to the measure taken by the police not to patrol the streets, asking higher wages.

Meanwhile Defensoria del Pueblo, declared: "We are concerned about the situation of helplessness in which the population finds itself, in the absence of protection on behalf of the police. We appeal to both sides to seek a solution in the framework of dialogue and peace, avoiding radical and uncompromising positions that prevent peaceful solutions and agreements."

Sergeants, corporals and police forces are in revolt in about 20 units and command centers throughout the country, and have even looted their own offices, a Directorate of Intelligence and Disciplinary Tribunal, one block from the presidential palace in La Paz.

According to the data sent to Fides, the rebels demand a minimum wage of 2,000 bolivianos (about \$ 287), the pension with 100% of their salary and the annulment of a law that forbids them to express themselves as public opinion. The Interior Minister Carlos Romero, has responded by saying that the first point is plausible, but has asked for dialogue, and did not say anything about the other two requests. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 26/6/2012)