



AMERICA/CHILE - "No more violence, we must resume the broken dialogue": an appeal of the Mapuche community priests

Santiago (Agenzia Fides) - The Catholic priests who are part of the pastoral Mapuche, have asked to avoid acts of violence and have made an appeal to resume the "broken dialogue" between Mapuche communities and authorities. "We do not condone violence as a way to demand the restitution of rights or claims on land ownership. The law must be applied and respected. But the violence that the police are exerting against the Mapuche community is a very serious thing," said the group of priests. In a note sent to Fides says: "We are sorry to see the children of Mapuche, seriously wounded in their physical and psychological integrity on behalf of the police." Yesterday, July 26, in a few minutes, images of the wounds inflicted on the Mapuche children were released on the Internet and saddened the international public opinion. From the information sent to Fides by the local press, we know that the president of Chile Sebastián Piñera, after a meeting with the Minister of the Interior and the chief of police, said that he will give full support to the police to maintain security in the area. In recent weeks, however, episodes of violence on behalf of the police against the demonstrations have increased. The Jesuit priest Pablo Castro, who lives in a Mapuche community, said that the conclusions of the meeting on safety are "shameful", and regretted that everything is focused on the problems of control by the police. "It seems we have gone back to the period of colonization, increasing the military and police in the community," said the religious to Radio Cooperativa. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 27/7/2012)