



AFRICA/SOUTH AFRICA - Marikana mine: "The first goal is to make peace among the members," says the Bishop of Rustenburg

Johannesburg (Agenzia Fides) - "I am not aware of the progress concerning the trade union negotiations, I just know that yesterday government authorities held a meeting with the unions to find a peace agreement in order to defuse tensions and avoid further violence," says His Exc. Mgr. Kevin Dowling, Bishop of Rustenburg to Fides Agency, in whose territory we find the Marikana mine, where there is still a state of agitation of the miners after clashes with police on August 16 which caused 44 victims (see Fides 28/8/2012).

"The tension among the miners remains high," continued the Bishop. "violence has not been reported, but the intimidation of those who want to go to work continue. Between 8 to 13% of miners want to go to work. The miners want a strong wage increase from the current 4,000 to 12,500 Rand per month. "

The case of the Marikana mine is shaking South Africa. The Deputy President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe, has launched the alarm on the huge disparities between rich and poor, which are likely to cause a revolution in the Country. "This situation has persisted for years," explains Mgr. Dowling. "In South Africa, the income gap between a rich minority and the millions of poor people is the most severe in the world, even higher than the Latin American Countries, like Brazil."

The economic issues are at the center of the political debate between the different components of the ANC (African National Congress), the party in power since the fall of apartheid, which later this year will have to choose its candidate in the forthcoming presidential elections. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 30/08/2012)