



AMERICA/CHILE - Church is concerned for the violence in Freirina

Freirina (Agenzia Fides) - From the first hours of Thursday, December 6th incidents of violence in the city of Freirina in the south valley of the diocese Chilean Copiapó were reported. According to the note of the Episcopal Conference of Chile, Bishop of the Diocese, His Exc. Mgr. Gaspar Quintana, expressed his great concern for what happened: roadblocks of the inhabitants who later clashed with security guards of the Agrosuper company and then with the police. For a long time local residents have reported the plight of Freirina, where there is no water, air quality is compromised and there is a problem of respect for the environment, demanding better quality of life and respect for their rights .

The clashes have left a toll of eight people who were arrested and one person severely wounded: the manager Yahir Rojas, was admitted to the Provincial Hospital in Vallenar. According to the reconstruction, the situation has worsened because the health authorities in the region of Atacama have canceled the ban on the functionality of the industrial plant which has been closed for some time (see Fides 21/05/2012 and 23/05/2012). This measure is added to the recent authorization to install the thermoelectric plant in Punta Alcalde in Huasco, a city that is 15 miles away.

In the note sent to Fides Agency we read that the priests of the south valley, especially Freirina and Vallenar, are on the community's side. Fr. Mauricio Arancibia, of the community in Vallenar, visited the wounded and noted that the young manager Yahir Rojas is in critical condition. The protesters argue that Rojas was arrested by the security guards of the company, who was brutally beaten and then handed over to the police. The Bishop of Copiapó, Mgr. Gaspar Quintana, and the Vicar General of the diocese, went to the municipality of Freirina yesterday afternoon to assess the situation with the local authorities. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 07/12/2012)