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AMERICA/CHILE - Mgr. Quintana calls for dialogue, but emphasizes that air and clean water is a right for all

Freirina (Agenzia Fides) - The Bishop of Copiapó, His Exc. Mgr. Gaspar Quintana, visited the Freirina community after the clashes between the population and the security guards of the company Agrosuper, following the permission granted to the company to continue its activities despite protests for environmental pollution (see Fides 07/12/2012).

Mgr.Quintana complained about the serious attack on the leader Yahir Rojas, and has given his support to the family and also criticized the lack of commitment on behalf of the authorities to resolve this conflict. "It is sad that no government or society representative intervened to directely see the needs of the community," said the Bishop, who added: "We hope that the competent authorities do everything they can to make every effort to facilitate dialogue, which will help, with good will, all parties concerned."

In the dialogue with the community, Mgr. Quintana responded as follows about the construction of the power plant at Punta Alcalde, which increased tension in the area (see Fides 07/12/2012): "There is no doubt that there is a need for energy in the Atacama area, and also in our country and the planet, but one cannot compromise human life or natural resources, which are always at the service of man, and must be used in a responsible manner and with a sense of the future perspective."

In the note sent to Fides Agency by the Episcopal Conference of Chile, we read that Mgr. Quintana recalled the words of Blessed Pope John Paul II on the care of the environment: "Clean and unpolluted air, clean and abundant water are not a gift, but everyone’s human right. It is today a cry of humanity with which rulers, employers, workers and the entire human community must deal with, with acute ethical sensitivity." According to Fides sources, the presence and the words of the Bishop brought back calm among the population. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 10/12/2012)

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