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AMERICA/EL SALVADOR - Truce or peace process, but the population still suffers violence, denounce the Bishops

San Salvador (Agenzia Fides) - The truce between the gangs in the Country, established on March 9, 2012 (see Fides 28/03/2012) "has not produced the benefits that the honest and hard-working population was expecting." This was stated by the Bishops of El Salvador in a statement that was read last Sunday in the cathedral of the capital by Mgr. Gregorio Rosa Chávez, auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador.
"Robbery, extortion and other illegal activities carried out by gang members continue, for this reason, the population does not perceive the benefits of the truce," said the Bishops' document.
In less than 24 hours the main gang leaders responded to the Bishops with a press conference in which they expressed their surprise at the fact that, according to them, Church leaders failed to understand that "it is a process of peace and not just a truce" and that "peace will be possible only when the process obtains the consent of all." Gang leaders have pointed out that "the problem of social violence is very different because it has very deep structural roots, and for this reason the process is complex; one must also take into account that we are talking about more than 2 decades of war." "We regret that the statement of the Church does not speak of the positive results achieved so far, as well as more than three thousand lives saved," they then added. "At least we are succeeding in removing El Salvador as the most violent Country in the world" they concluded.
In prisons across the country there are more than 10,000 gang member prisoners and it is estimated that those on the loose are about 50 thousand. For over a year the main gangs have signed a truce. The pact has had a first positive result: the average of daily murders has decreased from 14 to 5, but, according to the Bishops' statement, the situation for the population of the Country has not changed because others violent acts have continued: theft, reprisals, kidnapping, and especially extortions ordered from prisons to support the families of the condemned.
(CE) (Agenzia Fides 15/05/2013)

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