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AMERICA/COLOMBIA - "We need to communicate and understand the protest of farmers," says the Bishop of Tibú

Tibu (Agenzia Fides) - The Bishop of Tibú, in Colombia, Mgr. Omar Alberto Sánchez Cubillos has invoked the path of dialogue to find a solution to the plight in the region of Catatumbo.
For days, more than 1,200 residents of Ocaña and three thousand of Tibú, protest to demand the definition of a Peasant Reserve Zone (ZRC) in Catatumbo. In the note sent to Fides, the Bishop explained that the frustration of the population comes from several causes, including the forced eradication of coca crops that has long been the backbone of the economy of the area.
"The State does not provide an immediate substitute for coca cultivation, which takes into account the need of the farmer who has lived for a long time thanks to this activity. This is why people protest for the way in which the issue of eradication of these crops by the government is being handled", said the Bishop of Tibú. The farmers refuse the projects of the so-called "locomotive of the mines" and call for the gradual substitution of illicit crops through sustainable productive projects.
Meanwhile, tension grows in the area, the roads have been blocked for more than ten days, the police denounce the infiltration of leftist guerrillas among the protesters, there is no food and fuel , and even the Red Cross reported that it is limited in their service of assistance to the wounded. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 24/06/2013)

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