



## **AMERICA/COLOMBIA – Farmers in the region of Catatumbo evicted from oil companies**

Catatumbo (Agenzia Fides) - Catatumbo is one of the poorest areas of Colombia, which is situated in the northern department of Santander. In the region there are no public services and infrastructures and there is so much social inequality. 73% of the population is poor despite this being one of the areas with a high concentration of oil. National and transnational companies have evicted the farmers without offering them anything in return, unleashing a series of protests now going on for over a month. They blocked roads and highways urging the government to declare a Reserve Zone to protect their land and their lives. Among their demands, the farmers also insist on a pilot project to replace illicit crops, protect human rights in the area, as well as subsidies to limit the food crisis and improve the living conditions of the population. The areas had already been legally defined in 1994 as a figure of territorial system in order to consolidate survival and rural economy. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 18/07/2013)