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AMERICA/EL SALVADOR - Indigenous peoples continue to remain "invisible"

San Salvador (Agenzia Fides) - The indigenous population of El Salvador continues to suffer from poverty, lack of health care, drinking water, education as well as limited access to land and natural resources in the Central American Country. This is what emerges in a recent document from the UN Special Rapporteur for the Defence of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As there is no accurate data it is hard to determine an exact number of indigenous Salvadorans. Added to this is also the ongoing process of recovery of their identity after the marginalization and persecution suffered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as the massacres carried out in 1932, known as La Matanza, in which about 30,000 people were killed. In 2011, about 29.044 students were indigenous, most of them residents in the municipalities of Izalco (8,248) and Nahuizalco (8,880) in the department of Sonsonate, in the west of the Country. The document also states that the available data related to school attendance in these areas are alarming. In Izalco, for example, 19% of children between 7 and 15 years of age do not attend school and about 42% of them due to economic reasons. The situation of women also remains very precarious. They suffer severe discrimination and suffer repeated domestic violence. El Salvador and Panama are the only Central American countries that have not yet ratified the Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which emphasizes and highlights the importance of the collective rights of indigenous peoples. El Salvador includes Nahuas, Pipiles, Lencas, Kakawiras and Maya Chortis. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 01/10/2013)

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