



## **AMERICA/NICARAGUA – Devious persecution against the Church: the complaint of the Bishop of Esteli**

Managua (Agenzia Fides) - "I have already denounced not only the fact of having the phone under control, but also a devious persecution that is being carried out. One cannot talk openly and honestly without being subject to persecution by the authorities": is the strong complaint, sent to Fides Agency, by the Bishop of the diocese of Esteli (Nicaragua), His Exc. Mgr. Juan Abelardo Mata Guevar, SDB, who is also the President of the Nicaraguan Association for Human Rights (ANPDH).

The reason for the Bishop's complaint is originated by the spread of false information on the meeting which took place in Honduras between the ANPDH representatives and leaders of some groups opposed to the government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, the Bishop was present, with the aim of fostering dialogue between the two parties. The ANPDH delegation in fact entered Honduras legally, submitting to the control of the state border and especially under the supervision of the mechanism of military intelligence. While the newspaper La Prensa correctly reported the record of the event, other pro-government media tried to make everything look illegal, thus discrediting the Church.

In the note sent to Fides, the Bishop of Esteli states: "If anyone has something against us, it would be normal to call us and ask for official explanations, rather than reaching this situation". Then he goes on: "They want to discredit us because they cannot silence the cry of a people, it is a growing discontent. Somehow you have to look for scapegoats to falsely accuse those who truly are the voice of the voiceless".

With regards to the commitment to offer the Nicaraguan government dialogue with these opposition groups, Mgr. Juan Abelardo Mata Guevara points out: "There is the idea of dialogue, but not dialogue to gain profit because they do not want privileges, all of us want to work in peace". He then concluded: "As pastors we cannot see people being killed without doing anything. One cannot be treated like this simply because the population does not agree with the government". (CE) (Agenzia Fides 21/10/2013)