



AMERICA/GUATEMALA - " They only leave crumbs, generate social conflicts and destroy the environment": Mgr. Ramazzini on foreign mining companies

Huehuetenango (Agenzia Fides) - The mining companies, mostly Canadian, which exploit the gold, silver and other metals in Guatemala and Mexico, "not only leave crumbs, but are generating social conflicts, and then, in addition, destroy the environment". This is what the Bishop of Huehuetenango, Guatemala, His Exc. Mgr. Alvaro Leonel Ramazzini Imeri said. In a note sent to Fides Agency, the Bishop points out that "in order to maintain peace it would be enough to stop the exploitation of mines in Guatemala", where currently four mines extract metals, but it is known that more than 168 work without permission.

"For eight years there has been a struggle for changes in the mining laws in Guatemala. There are groups opposed to the extraction ... We propose a radical reform that closes the mining sector activity", said the Bishop speaking also on behalf of the local community. Then he reiterated: "It is always best to consult the population about the mining activity. For example, in Huehuetenango, bordering Chiapas, virtually the entire population does not want this type of mining, and out of 32 municipalities, 30 are opposed".

Mgr. Ramazzini Imeri also denounced that these mining companies "have a negative environmental impact: the waste of water in areas where it is scarce, the use of cyanide which ends up in the rivers. There are no economic benefits for the country". Canadian companies also represent "a generator of social conflict, since there is nothing left of the wealth they say they leave to the community: in fact out of the 1 per cent they have to pay according to the law, 0.5 percent goes to the municipality and the another 0.5 to the central government". (CE) (Agenzia Fides 23/10/2013)