



## **AMERICA/MEXICO - Appeal for the people of Tierra Caliente, "chastised by the scourge of fratricidal and absurd violence"**

Michoacán (Agenzia Fides) - "Those who have followed the escalation of violence in Michoacán know perfectly well that the bloody war among criminals, with wounded bodies and horror, was the conclusion of the classic 'nothing happens here' or 'it is just a problem among gangs and murderers' without harming the population. Then things degenerated, the attacks spread to other states and criminals occupied the power vacuum left by the authorities of the three levels of government. Now they run economic activities, have taken possession of the workplace and, worse still, were able to manage sources of illicit wealth not only from drugs. Corruption and the lack of state authority have pushed citizens not to cooperate with this scourge, despite being immersed in fear, to take up arms to protect themselves and even expand (this self-defense) to other municipalities".

With these words, the Archdiocese of Mexico, the country's capital, explains what is happening to the national community in the state of Michoacán. The note sent to Fides Agency also shows the declaration of the Bishop of the Diocese of Apatzingán in Michoacán, with which His Exc. Mgr. Miguel Patiño Velázquez, calls "politicians, government and the Secretary of the Interior, to give the people of the region clear signs that they actually intend to stop this 'killing machine'. People expect more effective action by the State".

Bishop Patiño Velázquez himself explains, in a statement: "The recent events in this new year, 2014, have outraged our people, as they confirm that neither the politicians nor the government show signs of wanting to solve the problem in Tierra Caliente. Instead of searching for the criminals who harm the community, the Mexican army, on orders from above, went to disarm the self-defense groups in Nuova Italia and Antunez, attacking defenseless people, causing three deaths. The situation got out of their control and they opened fire, first in air and then towards the people". The Bishop invites us to pray "for the pilgrim people of God in the Tierra Caliente, so chastised by the scourge of fratricidal and absurd violence". (CE) (Agenzia Fides 17/01/2014)