



AMERICA/BOLIVIA – Flood stricken native peoples in Beni destitute and starving

Trinidad (Agenzia Fides) –Bolivia is witnessing the worst floods in recent years with casualties and major damage in many parts of the country. According to information obtained by Fides, in Puerto Varador, 7 km from the city of Trinidad, capital of the Amazonian department of Beni (north east), food is scarce, the little livestock which has not perished in the waters is now starving to death. Some of the poorest villagers armed with knives are attempting to cut off pieces of the animals' flesh to have something to eat to survive. Torrential rains have caused a concerning murrain of animals: to try to limit the damage, the government is distributing some 3,000 tons of forage . Extensive severe flooding in the region of Beni, the worst affected part of Bolivia, has provoked an exodus of poor native peoples towards dry land in search of food.

In Santa Ana de Moseruma, another village not far from Trinidad, families have lost their homes, simple hand-built huts, and their farmyard animals such as chickens and pigs, the main source of subsistence . Desperate, they have moved away, sleeping in the open protected only by blankets and plastic sheeting. Close to Trinidad streams of native people can be seen searching for help, some in small boats, others on foot, wading through flood waters. Along the roads of Puerto Varador, situated on the river Mamoré, enormous wild rodents almost completely immersed in water, can be seen searching instinctively for dry land. The city of Trinidad is protected by an 8.2 kilometre dam, which so far has prevented more flooding. Beni is the department which produces meat for the whole of Bolivia. The region is crossed by rivers flowing from the Andes and the Bolivian Valles, and swollen in the weeks preceding the torrential rains. (AP) (28/2/2014 Agenzia Fides)