



AMERICA/VENEZUELA - The Church: stop to the violence in Venezuela

Bogota (Agenzia Fides) - The complex situation in Venezuela - where, for about a month, the population have carried out demonstrations and clashes with armed groups causing more than 25 deaths (see Fides 11/03/2014) - is one of the themes discussed by the General Secretaries of the Bishops' Conferences of Latin America and the Caribbean, who met this week in Bogota (Colombia) to analyze the social, political, economic and religious reality of the region.

According to the Bishops' note, sent to Fides, the Latin American Church says it is urgent to stop violence, because every day that goes by, the number of victims due to clashes between the government and opposition increases.

Msg. Jesus Gonzalez de Zarate, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela, has launched an appeal "to say stop to violence. As Bishops of Venezuela, we have invited the parties to meet for dialogue, knowing that it is not easy when there are differences and misunderstandings. But it is urgent, otherwise there will be further and worse problems".

The President of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), Mgr. Carlos Aguiar, said that "it is always difficult to initiate concrete action, but we can clearly say that the path is dialogue, it is important to sit at a table and talk to analyze the reasons why there are demonstrations. Dialogue is not a judicial trial, but the way to understand what is behind each position".

The Secretary of the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela (CEV) reiterated the offer of mediation, which was launched by the Episcopal Conference, that is willing to open channels of dialogue. "The important thing is that there is a genuine desire for confrontation, on both sides. We can engage in constructive dialogue, in which everyone feels heard and valued", he concluded. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 15/03/2014)