



AMERICA/PERU - Denunciation of the Bishop of Puerto Maldonado for the violent intervention of the police against the miners

Madre de Dios (Agenzia Fides) - The Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado, His Exc. Mgr. Francisco González Hernández, O.P., and the priest Pablo Zavala Martínez, who carries out his ministry in the communities in the area of Manu in Madre de Dios, on Tuesday, June 11th went to the Congress of the Republic to ask the government to end its involvement in the region, which is causing terror and destruction.

The Peruvian government has in fact proposed to combat illegal mining and that of small-scale miners who act on their own, without permits, which has increased a lot in recent times in the area with serious environmental damage, closing dozens of shops that offer their services to those working illegally, many of which are run by the same families of the miners. The head of this government action, Daniel Urresti, announced that within a month more than 200 shops will be closed because they are not in order, and "if the owners of these shops do not close, we will demolish them". We are talking about bars, restaurants, pharmacies and mechanic's workshops.

Government measures are being implemented by the army and national police who often resort to violence.

The note sent to Fides Agency by a local source, reports the Bishop's words: "I am here to denounce that this should not be done, it must be stopped. We are in front of a state that is committing acts of terror and harassment against a population that is inert, with no assets, that is afraid. In the name of God, I ask you to stop this", said Mgr. Gonzalez.

The Bishop told the journalists present at the time of his arrival in Congress that during the intervention operations in Madre de Dios, not only the shops were destroyed, but also all the few properties of those who run them. He pointed out that if the miners have committed a crime, they must be processed, but one cannot impose a state of terror, an invasion of the police and the army to destroy everything.

The priest Zavala Martínez stated that although the mining activity in Madre de Dios was not well-designed, no one has ever taught the miners how to work "the right way". "A difficult situation has been created that could explode at any moment". (CE) (Agenzia Fides 13/06/2014)