**SEE, JUDGE and ACT**

BRIBRIS INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

VIOLENTLY DEPRIVED OF THE ANCESTRAL LAND IN

COSTA RICA. SEEKING THE COSTA RICA TO PREVENT ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE AND TO BRING JUSTICE.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Greetings of peace to you. I have received a petition, dated December 28, 2018, jointly made by Indigenous people of Costa Rica along with 29 organizations calling for support for the indigenous people. Among these organisations two are Claretian ones. The petition is below.

It is stated that in Costa Rica there are 24 indigenous territories. The indigenous people have lost their land. Now in the regions of , Salitre, Térraba and Rey Curré the ancestral lands are being recovered. But the non- indigenous people use violent means to grab the land.

The Bribris Indigenous people have been living in *Salitre Indigenous Territory* in Costa Rica. On December 25, 2018, the non-indigenous people have assaulted the Bribris with fire arms, have set the house on fire and occupied the properties. The Bribri families have fled to the mountain to protect their lives. The usurpers keep sending out threats not to return to their houses and to leave their properties.

The non-indigenous are forbidden to enter, to remain and to possess the land of the indigenous people by Indigenous Law (Law 6172 of 1977). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) says that Precautionary Measures since 2015 (MC-321-12 CIDH) have to be taken to prevent violence against the indigenous territories.

Yet such events keep happening to the Indigenous people in the last six years during the Christmas holidays. The police are alleged to be in hand in gloves with the usurpers and are slow to act. It is consoling that the *Office of the President* has informed the *National Committee for the Support of Indigenous Autonomy*, that orders and instructions have been issued to prevent further violence and to arrest the aggressors.

On the other hand, the Bribris have resolved to evict the usurpers. So there is likely situation for the eruption of further violence.

JPIC Roma: This situation was briefed to the Executive Secretaries of JPIC Roma. I was asked to find out : What is their expectation from us and who will keep us updated of the ground reality. So a letter was sent to them. Vicky Acuña Montero (Claretian JPIC Coordinator of Costa Rica and Member of Committee to support the Indigenous Fight) has replied on January 5th, requesting us to send e mails to Mr. Carlos Alvarado (President of the Republic,) Mr. Michael Soto Rojas (Ministry of Public Security), Mrs. Marcia González Aguilu (Ministry of Justice and Peace), Mr. Fernando Cruz Castro (President of the Court of Justice), Ms. Catalina Crespo Sancho (Defender of the inhabitants) and the National Front of Indigenous Peoples in Costa Rica. Also, we are assured that *The Committee of Support for Indigenous Autonomy* will keep us informed about the events in indigenous territories.

They feel this is a method to exercise a healthy international pressure on the Government of Costa Rica: to act preventively to avoid further damage, to protect the indigenous people and to promote all their Human Rights. Their letter is attached.

This issue was presented in the Core group meeting of English JPIC Promotors. This year is declared as the year of indigenous languages. There is going to be a Synod of Bishops on Amazon. In these contexts, the Core group found it good to support the cause of the indigenous people.

*What can we do? :*

1. We can send one email to the whole group listed in the letter by February 22, 2019:

despachopresidente@presidencia.go.cr,
despachoministro@seguridadpublica.go.cr,
contralo@seguridadpublica.go.cr,
info@mj.go.cr,
fcruz@poder-judicial.go.cr,
contraloriapj@poder-judicial.go.cr,
despachodhr@dhr.go.cr,
frenapi@yahoo.com.mx

1. Model letter:

*“Respected Mr. Carlos Alvarado (President of the Republic,) Mr. Michael Soto Rojas, (Ministry of Public Security), Mrs . Marcia González Aguilu (Ministry of Justice and Peace), Mr. Fernando Cruz Castro( President of the Court of Justice) Ms. Catalina Crespo Sancho (Defender of the inhabitants), National Front of Indigenous Peoples,*

*We draw your attention to the assault on the indigenous Bribris people. It is alleged that on December 25, 2018, the non-indigenous people have assaulted the Bribris in Salitre Indigenous Territory with fire arms; set their house on fire and the families have fled to the mountains. This happens despite the presence of the law that forbids the non-indigenous people to enter, to remain and to possess the land of the indigenous people by Indigenous Law (Law 6172 of 1977) and The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) that warrants Precautionary Measures (MC-321-12 CIDH).*

*We beseech you: To act effectively to avoid escalation of violence, to protect the people and to promote all the Human Rights of the Indigenous”.*

So dear Sisters and Brothers, you are requested to join this advocacy to protect the indigenous people. Please do send a mail to the above mentioned officials. Thanks. God bless you.

S.Vincent Anesthasiar,Cmf