



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dear brothers and sisters of many different faiths,

In our on-going journey in the footsteps of the representatives of the various religions who came together in Assisi in 1986 to pray for peace, this month we want to bring before the one God the situation in **Ecuador**.

There is a full-fledged conflict going on in that country with the ever-present burden of pain, suffering, death, and the curtailment of rights and freedom. This is not an armed conflict in which two or more nations are pitted against each other, as is often the case. Rather, it is an internal crisis within the state where some criminal groups affect people's lives by imposing their own criminal code with tools of terror, corruption and disregard for human life in order to strengthen their own economic interests and power.

Unfortunately, this same situation also exists in other countries, and legitimate governments do not always have the appropriate tools available to intervene effectively. The President of Ecuador has launched exceptional measures that we hope will produce the hoped-for results. It is up to us to reassert, with all the moral force of an authentic religious sense, that the criminal activities of those organizations go against the will of God who desires peace and good for all his children.

That is why on January 27, we will unite our voices on behalf of the people of Ecuador, each with our own community or in our homes, and places of prayer, and following our own faith tradition. May every person regain the peace that the Almighty sows with his bountiful hand and that blossoms to the extent that we open our hearts to his gift. May God hear the prayer of the humble, convert the hearts of the violent and protect the innocent. May the final word be peace.

May the Lord give you peace

Assisi, January 2024

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop