

Argentine concern over priest's arrest

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Quito, Ecuador--Argentinian archbishop Jorge Novak has protested to authorities over the detention of three priests who were arrested October 9. Authorities charged the priests with defending poor residents who took over a farm in a Buenos Aires suburb.

"I consider it a grave offence that these three priests have been detained," said Novak who is bishop of Quilmes, a southern suburb of the capital.

"The judicial order leaves a cloud of doubt over the priestly ministry and the good name of the diocese," he said.

"I have sent the fathers my expression of sincere affection and solidarity" said the bishop who indicated that the priests were working in concert with the ideals of the church.

The priests were detained by Buenos Aires police in Quilmes and accused of "illegal acts and disobedience." They are not being allowed to communicate with the diocese or others outside of the prison.

Local press reports say the priests were working in the area of social action and offered a mass for those who had taken over the land.

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