

Brazilian archbishops condemn Amazon fires



Brasilia, September 8 (RHC)-- In Brazil, Roman Catholic leaders are condemning a massive series of fires raging in the Amazon, adding to pressure against far-right President Jair Bolsonaro to stop illegal miners, farmers and ranchers from destroying rainforest critical to slowing the climate crisis.

Speaking with The Guardian, Archbishop Erwin Kräutler called the fires a “true apocalypse,” while Archbishop Roque Paloschi warned of the risk of genocide against indigenous people defending their forests against illegal fires.

This comes after President Bolsonaro attacked Michelle Bachelet, the former president of Chile, who now serves as U.N. high commissioner for human rights, after she warned that Brazil’s government is failing to stop widespread police shootings, while environmentalists, indigenous people and human rights defenders are increasingly murdered with impunity.

Bolsonaro taunted Bachelet over the 1973 U.S.-backed coup in Chile, which saw Augusto Pinochet topple the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende. President Jair Bolsonaro said: “She now, on the human rights agenda, is accusing me of not punishing police officers who are killing many people in Brazil. That’s her accusation. She is defending the human rights of vagabonds. She says more. She says that Brazil is losing its democratic arena. Mrs. Michelle Bachelet, if the people led by Pinochet had not defeated the Left in 1973, including your father, today Chile would look like Cuba.”

After the 1973 Chile coup, in which the democratically elected leader Salvador Allende was killed, Michelle Bachelet was arrested and tortured along with her parents. Her father, Alberto Bachelet, died in prison.

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