
Netherlands: curfew and clashes in 10 cities. Prime Minister Rutte, “criminal violence”. Bishops, “stay in contact by prayer”

Tensions ran high over the weekend throughout the Netherlands, where a curfew has been in force between 9 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. since 23 January. The “tough measure”, announced by Prime Minister Mark Rutte, was deemed necessary to “reduce the number of contacts between people and curb the spread of the virus”. But in the nights of Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 January, vandalism and attacks on police forces, who had to intervene to restore order, were reported in over ten Dutch towns and cities as reported by the Dutch press today. On Sunday afternoon, water cannons were used to disperse an “illegal demonstration” in Amsterdam’s Museumplein and 190 people were arrested. Such violence is “unacceptable”, Mark Rutte said today, “this has nothing to do with protest or the fight for freedom. This is criminal violence and we will treat it as such”. “99% of the Netherlands has enforced the measures, including the curfew”, Rutte went on to say, “because we know that we can fight the virus only together”. Rutte expressed his esteem to the mayors of the 10 municipalities where the clashes took place, as well as for “law enforcement officials and for the journalists who try to expose the facts”. After the announcement of the curfew by the Government, the Bishops had immediately issued guidelines on how to respond in case of “urgent pastoral needs” during the curfew hours and had updated the recommendations for the celebrations. “The new curfew measure is hard to accept for people, even in parishes”, the Bishops had written, inviting everyone “to stay in contact by prayer and, where possible, to keep in touch” in all possible ways.

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