



AFRICA/CONGO DR - Bishop of Isiro-Niangara tells Fides: I join in the appeal made by the people of Niangara to President Obama, asking that he help stop the LRA guerrillas

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "I support the appeal made by civil society in Niangara to President Obama as a useful effort in trying to make the world understand our tragedy," Fides was told by Bishop Andavo Mbia of Isiro-Niangara, a diocese in the Eastern Province (northeast) of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where civil society and representatives of 7 NGOs for human rights, have appealed to U.S. President Barak Obama, asking that he intervene to block attacks by the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

"The signatories of the appeal are all members of local civil society, including some Catholics," says Bishop Mbia. The appeal calls for, inter alia, the creation of a telephone network and a community radio to warn people of the approach of the guerrillas.

"The LRA attacks are continuous and have led to a serious situation of insecurity in the villages near Niangara" says Bishop Mbia. "The violence committed by the guerrillas is unspeakable. Unfortunately, so far the response from the Congolese army and UN peacekeepers of the UN Mission in Congo (MONUC) has been inadequate in facing up to this scale of violence," says the Bishop of Isiro-Niangara.

According to the humanitarian organization Human Rights Watch (HRW), which has boosted the appeal made by civil society in Niangara, LRA rebels have savagely killed 96 civilians and kidnapped dozens of people between January and April 2010 in the northeast DRC. To these are added the crimes committed by LRA rebels in the southeastern part of Central Africa (see Fides 19/5/2010) and southern Sudan.

"The violence of the LRA is a regional problem that must be solved with the help of the international community. Do not leave us on our own in facing this tragedy," concluded Bishop Mbia. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 05/22/2010)