



AFRICA/CONGO DR - Bishop of Doruma-Dungu tells Fides: American plan to stop LRA is good news

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "This is good news and I hope that the United States will commit themselves personally to stopping attacks against civilians." These were the remarks of Bishop Richard Domba Mady, Bishop of Doruma-Dungu in the Eastern Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in telling Fides his reflections on the new law signed by U.S. President Barack Obama to support Uganda and other neighboring countries in combating the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The law, promulgated by President Obama on May 25, commits the United States to helping put an end to the LRA, which "preys on civilians – killing, raping, and mutilating the people of central Africa; stealing and brutalizing their children; and displacing hundreds of thousands of people." "The United States has been working against terrorism for years. The current configuration of the LRA, with its indiscriminate attacks against civilians, is that of a terrorist group," said Bishop Domba Mady.

"I think that the recent report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on crimes committed by the LRA in our diocese has been crucial in convincing the American president to sign the law to fight the LRA," adds the Bishop of Doruma-Dungu. The HRW report was published in late March (see Fides 29/3/2010).

"The Justice and Peace Commission of our diocese helped HRW investigators in their research. The Director of Justice and Peace accompanied the researchers of the human rights organization to Dungu and other areas where the LRA has carried out massacres, helping to collect the testimonies of survivors. The HRW report is very detailed and even lists the names of those killed by guerrillas," said Bishop Domba Mady.

"Since February, the situation is calmer. There were no major attacks like those perpetrated in early 2010, when the LRA hit several districts of Dungu, endangering even the local mission of the Comboni Order. However, we do not know whether the relative calm granted us by guerrillas is merely a tactical retreat, to reorganize their files and then attack again. Only time can tell, and that is why we need international protection," concluded Bishop Domba Mady. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 05/31/2010)