



## **AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - Local Fides sources tell of a new rebel group in Central Africa**

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) – A newly formed rebel group has appeared in the southeastern Central African Republic, according to a report in the international press. Bishop Juan Jose Aguirre Muños, Bishop of Bangassou, sent Fides a testimony in this regard, written by a source from the local Church which for security reasons does not wish to be named.

According to this testimony, the group is called the “Front Patriotique pour la Liberation” and is formed by people loyal opposition leader Charles Massi, who died during an interrogation in January in the barracks of the police force in Bogangolo.

According to the source of Fides, the leader of the guerrilla group is Abdulai Issen. The appearance of the new group dates back to late July, when a dozen guerrillas attacked the village of Mourou, where they beat the catechist of the local Catholic chapel. The man was not seriously injured.

Shortly afterwards, the guerrillas set up their camp near Nzako. When they realized there were Central African soldiers who were on their trail, the guerrillas headed towards Bakouma, where they attacked the police headquarters. In a neighboring village, Fodé, the guerrillas killed the pastor of the African Evangelical Church (MEA), whom they suspected of possessing a weapon. On August 26, after a long march through the forest, the rebels arrived in Mbagou (28 km from Bakouma), a mining town. The whole area of Bakouma is rich in important mineral resources (phosphates, uranium) that for the most part remain untapped.

Between August 26 and 30, the rebels passed through other towns in the area, where they sacked the civilian population. The guerrilla group has suffered losses, however, in a series of clashes with the Central African army. In one of these clashes, the rebels also lost a good amount of their artillery, including their only rocket launchers. According to the source of Fides, on August 28, two rebels surrendered themselves to the leaders of the village of Piya, who handed them over to soldiers stationed in Nzacko. "The news we have received says that these two people were killed on the spot, in Nzacko," says the source of Fides. Their companions, upon hearing the news of their death, blocked the road leading to the village of Piya.

Fides' source continues: "As of August 30, they are still there with only two modern weapons in hand, but they are successful in blocking the road and paralyzing activity in the village. It is not known whether or not the group is still together or dispersed. We do not even know what it is they are looking for in the area. Some think that the rebels intend to avenge the death of Charles Massi. Others claim that the guerrillas arrived in the area to settle accounts between Runga and Goula, two ethnic groups at war."

"The future will tell," concludes the source of Fides. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 31/08/2010)