



AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - Uncertainty in Birao, Central African City, in the middle of clashes between the army and rebels

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - “The only information is that from the national radio. What seems certain is that the crisis is not over yet because both the government and the guerrillas say that they retain control of the city”, Fides was told by Bishop Firmin Gbagoua, Vicar General of Bambari Diocese, having jurisdiction over the prefecture of Vakaga (in the north-east of the Central African Republic), whose capital, Birao, was attacked by rebels from the 'Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix' (CPJP). On 24 November, a score of rebels took control of Birao. Last weekend, the military government, backed by the armed forces of neighbouring Chad attacked the city even using aviation and artillery. In turn, the men of the CPJP would have been supported by Chadian rebel groups who found refuge in neighbouring Sudanese Darfur.

“Most of the inhabitants have fled and many are in the forest. We have initiated contact with humanitarian organizations operating in the area to ascertain the needs of the displaced,” said Bishop Gbagoua. Communications with the area are almost impossible because the facilities of the mobile telephone network were destroyed or damaged.

The CPJP, unlike other Central African rebel groups, did not sign any peace agreement with the government in Bangui. (LM) (Agenzia Fides 29/11/2010)