



AFRICA/LIBYA - "The Catholic community was not involved in the clashes," Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli tells Fides

Tripoli (Agenzia Fides) - "From where I am, I can't see anything. The city is quiet and still. There is nothing that makes you think about the fighting, although I have heard that riots and looting are occurring during the night. So far, the Catholic community has not met with any particular difficulties," Bishop Giovanni Innocenzo Martinelli, Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli in Libya tells Fides. "Many of the faithful go into our churches to pray for peace. The two churches in Tripoli and Benghazi, have not suffered any damages. The different communities of religious sisters working in hospitals in Cyrenaica (Benghazi, Tobruk and other areas) are busy treating those wounded in clashes. In every town in the area there is a religious community of women. In Tripoli, there are the sisters of Mother Teresa who work in various social centres."

Bishop Martinelli explains that the Church works in Libya for the many foreign communities of the faithful, from Asia, other African countries and Europe. "In addition to our pastoral care service, we also offer a social service because we have a large number of immigrants (Eritreans and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa) that have the Church as their reference point. For these people, our churches as places of worship are places of support and socialisation."

According to information agencies in Libya, especially in Cyrenaica (east of the Country) a revolt by the people is taking place, violently repressed by security forces. The dead and the wounded may be in the hundreds. (LM) (Agenzia Fides 21/2/2011)