



AFRICA/LIBYA - "What do you want to achieve with these bombings?", asks the Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli

Tripoli (Agenzia Fides) - "From last night to tonight we heard several very loud explosions, albeit in the distance, with the counter-attack by the Libyan anti-aircraft artillery, says Bishop Giovanni Innocenzo Martinelli, Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli, Libya, to Fides. "I do not see where all this will lead us. Is it possible that people do not understand that bombs do not solve anything? Once again I appeal to try and find a diplomatic solution, perhaps through the mediation of some African leaders. He who encourages this war must understand that Gheddafi will not give up. This risks creating a very lengthy crisis with an uncertain outcome," says Bishop Martinelli.

As regards the situation of African refugees in Tripoli, who are finding things difficult, the Apostolic Vicar said: "We are trying to organise the departure of Eritreans and refugees of other nationalities to Tunisia, the border of which is 150 km from Tripoli. On the part of the Libyan authorities and the Tunisians we have not come across any problems. In Tunisia there are people in international organisations who will take care of them. Meanwhile we continue to assist the refugees who are still in Tripoli."

"The small Catholic community is restricted," claims Bishop Martinelli. "Today a hundred people should depart, including Filipino nurses and workers of other nationalities who wish to leave the Country. But there are still many Filipino nurses who continue their work in hospitals. Those participating in our celebrations now are only African immigrants. And it is always a beautiful testimony of faith in this difficult time." (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 22/3/2011)