



AFRICA/LIBYA - "I have trust in African wisdom," says Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli; a ship of refugees bound for Italy turned back

Tripoli (Agenzia Fides) - "I have trust in African wisdom to resolve the crisis. The Europeans delude themselves that they can resolve this matter with bombs. We need to allow room for mediation by the African Union." This is the new appeal sent to Fides by Bishop Giovanni Innocenzo Martinelli, Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli, in Libya, where Western air forces continue bombing, just as fighting continues between forces loyal to the regime and the rebels that have taken over some cities in Cyrenaica and in Tripolitania.

"We are really sleeping well with all the bombs, but we are surviving. What worries me is the situation of African refugees, who continue to knock on our doors, hoping that the Church can help them get to Europe. But this is not our task. We try instead to persuade them to go to Tunisia where they can be assisted by international organisations. Here now in Tripoli we can only offer assistance to the most difficult cases," said Bishop Martinelli.

The Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli also reports that "there was an attempt, though not well organised, to for about 400 asylum seekers to leave on a ship bound for Italy. The ship turned back after travelling just a few dozen miles. They reported engine failure. It was a way to extort more money from these poor people, or perhaps something else."

Not long ago, the international media had reported Gheddafi's threats to invade Europe with thousands of immigrants, as a reprisal for air raids made by the French, British and American-led coalition. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 24/3/2011)