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AFRICA/LIBYA - "The road to peace passes through the African Union," says the Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli, who adds: "the humanitarian bombs are creating civilian casualties"

Tripoli (Agenzia Fides) - "IF we really want to find a diplomatic solution to the Libyan crisis, we need to go through the African Union. Its absence from the Conference in London disappointed me," says Bishop Giovanni Innocenzo Martinelli, Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli, to Fides. Just yesterday there was a conference in London concerning the Libyan crisis. Attending were representatives from about 40 States and international organisations (UN, Arab League, Islamic Conference Organisation, EU, NATO). The Holy See participated as an observer, represented by the Apostolic Nuncio of Great Britain, Bishop Antonio Mennini. The African Union which had been invited, was notably absent, officially due to "internal issues".
"They want to keep going with the war. Now rebels are at the ports of Sirte, but to pass through Sirte will not be easy. To arm one part of the Libyan people against the other does not seem a moral solution to me," underlines Bishop Martinelli. "As for the action of the coalition, it does not come to my mind to say to bomb in order to defend the civilian population. No matter how accurate the bombing of military targets, it also undoubtedly involves bombing homes in the district. I know of at least two hospitals which have suffered indirect damage caused by the bombing. Doors and windows were destroyed and the patients are in shock. What we know: the military actions are causing casualties among those civilians who these military operations are trying to protect," says the Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli.
"I repeat: if you want a peaceful solution the African Union, the Arab League and some local bodies all need to be involved. But it seems to me that other logic is outweighing," insists Bishop Martinelli. "With regard to asylum seekers - Eritreans and Ethiopians - most were transferred to Tunisia. Others have reached Lampedusa and Malta. Here in Tripoli there are still about 25% and other African migrants (from Congo, Chad, etc ...)," concludes Bishop Martinelli. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 30/3/2011)

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