



AFRICA/CÔTE D'IVOIRE - "There have been violent explosions in the centre of Abidjan," Archbishop Kutwa tells Fides, before communications are cut off

Abidjan (Agenzia Fides) - "I am in a hidden place. Violent fighting continues. We can hear massive explosions," Archbishop Jean-Pierre Kutwa of Abidjan, says to Fides before he hangs up. He is in the centre of the administrative capital of Côte d'Ivoire, where incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo is still barricaded in the presidential residence, which is currently being assaulted by the Republican forces close to President-elect Alassane Oattara. According to news agencies, loud explosions can be heard coming from the Presidential Palace and from the residence of the Head of State.

The final battle by Ouattara's men, who is recognised by the international community as the legitimate President of Côte d'Ivoire, began yesterday, 5 April. The UNOCI (United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire) and French forces attacked the heavy weapons of the forces of Laurent Gbagbo, on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1975 which provides for the protection of civilians. During the night between 5 and 6 April, Gbagbo, who does not recognise the victory of Ouattara in the November 2010 election, had sought a path of negotiation, to no avail. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 6/4/2011)