



AFRICA / NIGER - Over 200 Nigerians have fled to Niger due to violence and are assisted by the Diocese of Maradi

Maradi (Agenzia Fides) - More than 200 Nigerians (among whom are women and children) have found shelter in Dan Issa, a small town on the border between Nigeria and Niger in the region of Maradi, in Niger, sources of the Diocese of Maradi refer to Fides.

Following the disputed victory in the presidential election of Goodluck Jonathan, on 16 April, violence in the north of Nigeria have increased. During the incidents some churches were set fire and native people from southern Nigeria who live in the north were taken to target. Goodluck Jonathan, a native of the south, is contested by the people of the north (who are predominantly Muslims), because he did not respect the rule of alternation between a Christian and a Muslim President.

Some churches were burned in Jibia (in the Nigerian State of Katsina), which is just across the border, 10 km from Dan Issa. Fearing for their lives, many families have taken refuge in Niger.

Mons Ambroise Ouédraogo, Bishop of Maradi, has arranged to send, through Caritas, emergency aid for refugees, who are deprived of everything. The aid includes: one tonne of millet, 300 kg of rice, 12 boxes of tomatoes, 25 kg of salt, 50 litres of oil, 250 litres of water in cartons, as well as products for personal hygiene.

The Niger authorities have asked the refugees to return to Nigeria, but they have refused, saying they fear for their lives, because the situation has not yet calmed down. On April 28, the vote for the election of governors will be held and new tensions are expected. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 27/04/2011)