



AFRICA/DR CONGO - A Congolese Bishop denounces the attacks on behalf of monkeys: "Protect humans not only nature"

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) – His Exc. Mgr. Joseph Mokobé, Bishop of Basankusu, the capital of Equateur province in the north-west of the Democratic Republic of Congo, protested against the insecurity caused by the Bonobo monkeys, after a new episode of attack against human beings.

According to the DIA Agency of Kinshasa, on 3 August, three people were admitted to hospital in Basankusu due to injuries following an assault by a group of Bonobo monkeys, in the Reserve of Elonda.

The monkeys mutilated the face of the three foresters. The doctors were able to stabilize the wounded waiting for a possible evacuation from Kinshasa. The incident aroused excitement among the population. A crowd gathered in front of the general hospital in Basankusu and asked if the foresters' employment contract prohibits them from defending themselves from monkeys in the event of aggression.

Mgr. Mokobé recalled that what happened on August 3, is not the first case of aggression by the monkeys. Last May, a forester was injured in similar circumstances. The Bishop of Basankusu urged the authorities to protect not only natural resources, but first and foremost human beings. The attack on August 3, leads to five cases of victims of aggression by the Bonobo monkeys.

According to the DIA the Bonobo monkeys, are not a rare species. About three years ago, an international NGO, in collaboration with the Congolese government took steps to move the Bonobos in a sector of the forest 10 km from their natural habitat, in order to "protect these rare species".

An operation, said the DIA, which caused the evacuation of more than 250 families who had occupied that area of the forest for over a century. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 08/08/2011)