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AFRICA/NIGERIA - New violence in Nigeria, while the shadow of international terrorism is outlined, "the state must intervene and we are confident that it will", says the Archbishop of Jos

Jos (Agenzia Fides) - At least 14 people were killed on the outskirts of Jos, the capital of Plateau State in central Nigeria, in the last 3 days. "Some families have been attacked by a group of pastors who had previously suffered the theft of their cattle", says His Exc. Mgr. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, Archbishop of Jos to Fides. "It was a kind of retaliation against those who were suspected of having committed the theft. The fact that most of the farmers of the area are Muslim, adds a religious component to these episodes, but it is not the only component of the problem " stresses Mgr. Kaigama.
Previously a group of Muslims who had gathered in an abandoned area in 2001 to celebrate the end of Ramadan was attacked by a group who called themselves Christians (see Fides 30 and 31/08/2011). "I do not know who these people are and what denomination they belong to" says Mgr. Kaigama.
The security situation in Nigeria was recently aggravated by the attack against the United Nations headquarters in the federal capital, in Abuja, which caused the death of 23 people (see Fides 27/8/2011). The attack was claimed by the Boko Haram sect, active in the north-east of Nigeria, but, until now, had never struck in other parts of the country.
"We are optimistic that the Nigerian government will be able to cope with terrorism", says the Archbishop of Jos. According to several experts, there seems to be the intervention of foreign terrorists in the attack in Abuja. "I think that the external connections are obvious, although we are still in the field of speculations", says Mgr. Kaigama. "We are not in front of those belonging to Boko Haram, armed with bows and arrows, but at a more sophisticated level of violence. Attacking the UN headquarters in the center of Abuja is not an act carried out by local groups". "It is the responsibility of the government and security agency to find out who is behind these attacks and how far they extend the connections of those who committed them", concludes Mgr. Kaigama. (L.M.)
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