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AFRICA/NIGERIA - "Nigerians are not intimidated by threats of attacks", says the Archbishop of Abuja

Abuja (Agenzia Fides) - "Life continues normally, at least here in Abuja. Let us not be frightened by these threats or warnings. We will continue our usual life, trusting God that follows our steps", says His Exc. Mgr. John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan to Fides, Archbishop of Abuja, capital of Nigeria, where security measures were high for threats on behalf of the Boko Haram sect ready to carry out attacks on the anniversary of national independence (see Fides 26/9/2011). "At the same time we hope that the security force does its duty to ensure everyone's safety", adds Mgr. Onaiyekan.
Meanwhile, a group of the Niger Delta in southern Nigeria, calling itself the Ijaw Joint Revolutionary Council, issued a statement threatening "retaliation" against Boko Haram if within 14 days the sect does not cease their violent actions. "In my opinion, these are statements not to be taken too seriously - says the Archbishop of Abuja - even because they do not know what they intend to do. What does to retaliate against Boko Haram mean? There are many rumors circulating here in Nigeria. It is therefore necessary to discern".
Yesterday, 26 September, a presidential committee in charge of handling the problem concerning Boko Haram, presented a report which asks the government to enter into dialogue with the sect. "Nigerians are united in wanting to handle the problem posed by the Boko Haram sect. There is not, however, an agreement on how to deal with the problem", said Mgr. Onaiyekan. "There are those who talk of dialogue with members of the sect, but they are a minority. The majority of Nigerians do not think it is possible to talk about dialogue with people who kill innocent people indiscriminately. You cannot talk with killers". "This is the position of the Nigerian Episcopal Conference, that in a statement published last week says that the Nigerian government must meet the needs of legitimate and peaceful demands, but one cannot talk about dialogue with criminals and murderers" concludes Archbishop Onaiyekan. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 27/9/2011

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