



AFRICA/COTE D'IVOIRE - "Forty Catholic buildings have been attacked in two and a half months", reports the spokesman of the Archdiocese of Abidjan, while robberies continue

Abidjan (Agenzia Fides) - "In two and a half months, about 40 churches and religious men and women's houses all over Abidjan have been attacked by armed bandits with the aim to steal" the complaint to Fides is by Fr. Augustin Obrou, head of the communications Office of the Archdiocese of Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire. "The situation is impressive. It is true that after the civil war ended there is still widespread uncertainty, but the fact that so many Catholic places of worship have been attacked in such a short time leaves room for suspicion that there are also other reasons beyond simple robbery. We do not know whether there are political or denominational reasons, but we suspect that there is something else behind these facts", says Fr. Obrou.

"The attacks began in late August and still continue, in different areas in Abidjan" continues Fr. Obrou. Even in other parts of the Country there are assaults on Catholic Church buildings. In September a group of bandits attacked the Bishop of San Pedro's residence (see Fides 29/09/2011).

"We had a meeting with President Ouattara, with the Minister of Defence and Security to report the situation. Policemen and gendarmes have been placed in front of some parishes, but robberies continue", said Fr. Obrou. Côte d'Ivoire is emerging from 10 years of division and violence, a turbulent period which began in September 2002 and concluded in April this year with the victory of the forces of the current President Alassane Ouattara, backed by French troops, and the UN, against those of former President Laurent Gbagbo, who is now under arrest. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 09/11/2011)