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AFRICA/COTE D'IVOIRE - "I am not afraid to continue to give my testimony", says a missionary to Fides who has been working in a "difficult" area in Abidjan

Abidjan (Agenzia Fides) - "Security does not exist yet, but apparently the situation is calm", said Sister Rosaria to Fides, of the Sisters of the Holy Family, who works in the area of Abobo in Abidjan, among the most affected by the fighting during the civil war between former President Laurent Gbagbo loyalists and those close to the current president Alassane Ouattara. In Abidjan and other areas of the country, armed assaults have been going on for months to parishes and religious houses (see Fides 09/11/2011).
Sister Rosaria, who has not been touched by this wave of robberies, says "I do not know if the numbers reported (about forty) of church buildings looted is correct, but there have certainly been looting which still continue".
On who can be the authors of the robberies, the nun says: "We still live in a climate of reckoning and the approach of parliamentary elections is exciting the minds. However, it is easy to have a gun. There are still too many weapons in circulation".
Sister Rosaria adds: "But I have the impression that in some cases of looting concerning Church buildings there are people who inform the bandits about when and how they can act".
Insecurity does not discourage Sister Rosaria's determination to continue her testimony in one of the areas in Abidjan most at risk, giving assistance to the sick, with her ability as a professional nurse. "The Church – says Sister Rosaria - must remain free to proclaim the Gospel and denounce the evils. We must look man in his dignity and his rights. For this I am not afraid, I have Jesus with me and I work for them, for the poor and disadvantaged. It is not easy to witness and I am not perfect, but I try to bear witness with my life" concludes the nun.
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 by the UN, against those of former President Laurent Gbagbo, who is now under arrest. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 10/11/2011)

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