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AFRICA/BURUNDI - "We must make every effort to avoid the abyss of war": Bishops of Burundi's appeal

Bujumbura (Agenzia Fides) - "We invite you to forcefully reject war and everything that could plunge back into violence in our Country. If we do not commit ourselves to doing everything in our power, there is a risk that the Country falls into the horrors of another war, while they are still open wounds". It is the dramatic appeal made by the Bishops of Burundi to their compatriots in the Christmas Message.
In the document, sent to Fides, the Bishops say that Burundi was on its way towards reconciliation and civil reconstruction after the end of a bloody civil war (1993-2006): from the return of displaced people and refugees from neighboring Countries, to respect for freedom of speech to the opening of several sites for public and private works. "Is it possible that in the face of all these benefits, we still want to take the logic of distrust, exclusion, conflict and war? No and again no! "The Bishops said in the message.
While, there are rumors of a return to war, "in recent times - write the Bishops - murders and massacres have passed all measures. It goes beyond ordinary crimes, such as those arising from the robbery, by land conflicts and of interest: the Country is threatened by bloody crimes for political reasons and of which one accuses all parties in conflict". The Bishops write down that besides murder there is also the crime of disappearances: "People are kidnapped, only to be murdered, thrown in rivers, without leaving any trace, even to the point of mutilating them in order not to be recognized. Some of these crimes are, unfortunately, attributed to some agents of the Services et Renseignement National et de Sécurité Nationale".
This has created a climate of fear among the government (which fears the presence of armed groups) and the population (who fears the violence of the security apparatus), note the Bishops, who offer some steps to overcome this situation: respect the government that has just come out from the democratic elections which must in turn respect and recognize the role of opposition; establish dialogue between all political parties; investigate on the agents of security services indicated by the population as responsible for crimes committed against them; bring to justice those criminals who have already been identified "even if they belong to the party in power"; complete the process of disarming the population and disband the militias of the party. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 13/12/2011)

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