



AFRICA/NIGERIA - The Archbishop of Jos, "they are destroying the hope of a united Nigeria and of the only Nigerian people"

Abuja (Agenzia Fides) - "They are destroying the hope of a united Nigeria and the only Nigerian people," said in an interview with Fides His Exc. Mgr. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, Archbishop of Jos, who launches an alarm on the stability of Nigeria as a nation following the wave of violence perpetrated by the Islamist sect Boko Haram. Mgr. Kaigama explains, "because of the terrorist acts on behalf of Boko several Nigerians from the south who live in the north regions are returning to their regions of origin, and even some Nigerians from the north who live in the south are coming home, for fear of reprisals" .

The question of reform of the Nigerian Federation to try to meet the diverse needs of the North and South, is now on the agenda in local political debate.

On this issue the newspaper "Nigerian Tribune" has gathered several voices, especially in southern Nigeria, in an article entitled "Boko Haram: It's time to discuss our unity." Among these is that of Comrade Joseph Evah, National Coordinator of the Niger-Delta Economic Monitoring Group (NDEMG), who states: "It is clear that what the Boko Haram wants is beyond Islamic governments in the North (...). Let us not deceive ourselves. Boko Haram has sponsors all over the North and they include very powerful people from the region who see political power as their birthright".

The Secretary General of the Ijaw National Congress (INC), Francis Williams, said "the issue goes beyond Boko Haram: our party had made its predictive position clear years back that until certain fundamental issues concerning the existence of Nigeria are discussed, we will be chasing shadows in trying to solve attendant problems. We must go back to the drawing board if Nigeria must remain one indivisible entity".

The crisis triggered by the Boko Haram attacks will be discussed at a Conference of the leaders of southern Nigeria which will be held next week. Meanwhile, attacks on behalf of the Islamist sect continue. In Bauchi, in the north, two churches, of which one is Catholic, were hit with handmade explosives. The two buildings were empty and there were no victims, but one of the remaining structures was burnt and is completely destroyed. A couple of hours earlier, eight civilians - all Christians, according to some witnesses - a policeman and a soldier were killed in a nearby location. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 23/01/2012)