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AFRICA/CHAD - Weapons and non-development: the law has not been applied that required to use the oil money for civilian purposes

N'Djamena (Agenzia Fides) - In 2010, Chad spent 154 billion CFA francs (234 million euros) on arms, still a very high figure although lower than in 2008 (275.7 billion CFA francs, 420 million), the year in which the regime of President Idriss Déby faced a series of guerrilla movements, which even threatened the capital, N'Djamena. This is shown by a recent report by the NGO CCFD-Terre solidarie, denouncing the strong increase in arms transfers in the African Country from 2004 to 2010, in violation of the spirit of the law of 11 January 1999 which stated that the oil resources of Country were to be used for social purposes.
In particular, the law stated that 10% of Chad's oil revenues should have been deposited in a special account for future generations, and 80% would be invested in health care, social affairs, education, infrastructure, rural development (livestock and agriculture), environment and water resources; and 5% for local communities of areas where the oil is extracted.
The law had been imposed by the World Bank as a condition for the granting of funds for the construction of infrastructure necessary for the exploitation of oil (in particular the pipeline linking Chad to port Doula in Cameroon).
This law, as the report says, has never been applied, and indeed has been supplanted by another in 2005 that eliminated the portion of the proceeds allocated to future generations and has instead increased the share dedicated to security, justice and administration of the territory. "These sectors defined as priorities have been given 65% of the direct income", the report said.
The social consequences are dramatic: in 2009, Chad was 175th out of 182 countries in the index of human development and 132nd place out of 135 for what concerns the human poverty index. The proliferation of weapons, especially light weapons on Chadian soil has also increased violence between local communities (as well as being exported to neighboring countries, particularly in the Darfur region of Sudan), while there remains a serious problem of mines (1 million) and unexploded ordnance (2 million). (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 01/02/2012)

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