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AFRICA/GUINEA BISSAU - Is there a former commander of the Navy behind the coup?

Bissau (Agenzia Fides) - "The situation remains uncertain and confused, between riddle of rumors circulating through the streets of the city, but that cannot be verified because the radios continue to remain closed, even if the road circulation is normal and no clashes have been reported " is what is reported to Fides by local sources from Bissau, capital of Guinea Bissau, where on April 12 a group of soldiers seized power in a coup. In a statement the coup leaders claim to have deposed President Raimundo Pereira, Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior and the Chief of Staff, General Antonio Indjai.

"Yesterday, there was a meeting between the military junta and the parties. The coup leaders reaffirmed the reasons for the coup, but the parties did not reach an agreement to end the crisis," Fides sources said, that for security reasons have requested anonymity.

"But who are the perpetrators of the coup?" We ask our sources. "It is difficult to say-they reply-for now the coup leaders from the middle management have appeared in public, but behind them there could easily be Admiral Bubo Na Tchuto, the former Navy commander who was arrested in December on charges of plotting a coup attempt. Na Tchuto is still under arrest, at least officially, but remains a powerful figure."

We stress that Na Tchuto is accused of being an important reference for drug traffickers who use Guinea Bissau to send huge quantities of cocaine to Europe. "This is true but the military are all a bit involved in drug trafficking. Indeed it is said that behind the coup, there is a struggle to win on this trade" respond the sources.

The coup leaders claim to have carried out the coup to report an alleged "secret agreement" between the local government and Angola, which provides that in case of crisis, the Angolan military mission in Bissau (composed of 200 men) assumes the protection of the Guinean institutions. "The motivation is credible, because the military in Bissau were afraid that the presence of Angolan soldiers would change the structure of the army" confirm the sources of Fides.

The international community has condemned the coup. "Guinea-Bissau is isolating both the African Union and the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and this is a serious problem for a poor Country like ours," concludes the source of Fides. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 14/4/2012)

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