



AFRICA/GUINEA BISSAU - Agreement on the transition between the coup leaders and parties; international condemnation and the population's adversity

Bissau (Agenzia Fides) – Since Tuesday, April 17 the Catholic radio station in Guinea Bissau, Radio Sol Mansi, was allowed to resume broadcasting. "The military junta authorized private radio stations, including ours, to continue broadcasting," says to Fides the director of Radio Sol Mansi, Fr. David Sciocco, PIME missionary, who has been living and working in Guinea Bissau for years.

The crisis erupted after the military coup on April 12 does not seem easy to solve. "At the moment there seems to be no danger of the outbreak of violence, but the political situation is more complicated," says the missionary. On April 19 representatives of 25 political parties signed an agreement with the coup leaders to establish a transition period of two years. The Parliament was dissolved, the Prime Minister and the government were dismissed and a "National Council of Transition," was quickly named which, as first act, appointed President of transition Manuel Serifo Nhamadj. This procedure, however, was deemed unconstitutional by the ECOWAS (the community of West African States), which previously had signed with the military coup another type of agreement.

"The majority of the population is against the agreement on the transition. Yesterday, the military gathered the religious leaders (including the Bishop of Bissau) and representatives of civil society, asking them to sensitize the population they they understand the reasons for the coup. But people are not able to understand them. So a total disconnection between the military and politicians on one side and the people on the other side has been created," said Fr. Sciocco.

Meanwhile, the community of Lusophone countries, which Guinea Bissau belongs to, has asked the UN Security Council to send a force in the Country for the maintenance of peace and the adoption of measures, including international sanctions , "to restore constitutional order" and allow the release of political leaders (including the Prime Minister) arrested by the coup leaders. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 20/4/2012)