



## **AFRICA/GUINEA BISSAU - The uncertainty and the lack of controls incentivize speculation on cashews, the only source of income of the population**

Bissau (Agenzia Fides) - "As Radio Sol Mansi we have denounced speculators who pull on the price of cashews" says to Fides Fr. Davide Sciocco, PIME missionary and director of Radio Sol Mansi, the Catholic radio station in Guinea Bissau. In the situation of political uncertainty generated by the coup on April 12, the economic situation of the Country is also worrying.

"The banks have begun to function. Hopefully this will help to stabilize the price of cashews, which are the main production of the Country (this fruit represents 80% of exports from Guinea Bissau)," said the missionary. "In these days, wholesalers were buying at very low prices from farmers with regards to the production of cashew, the crop has started in this period. For most of the population cashews is the only economic income. Under normal conditions, the government controls the minimum purchase price (250 CFA francs per kg) on behalf of the wholesalers, " explains Fr.Sciocco. "In this situation of uncertainty and lack of controls retailers take advantage. In some areas cashews are sold at to 250 CFA francs, but the most isolated areas, speculation continues downward. "

Politically, on April 26, the Extraordinary Summit of the Economic Community of West African States convened in Abidjan (ECOWAS) to take stock of the situation on the transition process initiated by Guineans, but deemed not in conformity with the ECOWAS Constitution (see Fides 20/04/2012).

"Waiting for the ECOWAS Summit in Abidjan consultations between the military coup, political parties and civil society representatives are still in progress. The goal is to find a solution that best complies with the Constitution than that achieved last week, "said Fr. Sciocco.

Meanwhile the League of Human Rights in Guinea Bissau has denounced the arrest of the Secretary General of the association of the former combatants, Fodé Cassama. According to the soldiers who arrested him, he is accused of trying to reach safety in Senegal. According to the military law, an officer or soldier cannot travel abroad without permission from his superiors. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 24/4/2012)