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AFRICA/DR CONGO - In three months 241,000 other displaced from North Kivu: the complaint of a missionary

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "In the first quarter of 2012, in North Kivu alone, displaced people increased by 241,000 units" this is the complaint made to Fides by Fr. Loris Cattani, a Xaverian missionary animator of "Peace Network for Congo." The population of North Kivu, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, is forced to flee from violence committed by a few hundred soldiers who have deserted the ranks of the army. The deserters are soldiers from the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), integrated in the national army in 2009 (according to the peace agreements), but still under the command of General Bosco Ntaganda, accused of crimes against humanity and wanted by the International Criminal Court. According to the UN, the total number of people displaced in the DRC are over 2 million.
Peace Network for Congo had denounced the violence committed by military deserters in North and South Kivu (see Fides 21/04/2012), but according to reports gathered to date, the most serious situation is in the North. "In South Kivu it seems that the mass defection of the military has gone back to normal: many deserters have returned to the ranks of the regular army while some commanders who had incited the rebellion were arrested," said Fr. Cattani.
The different situation in North Kivu than in the South comes from the fact that, according to Fr. Cattani, Bosco Ntaganda has its stronghold in the North, especially in the territory of Masisi. "I am not sure why this is happening, but there are some hypothesis, continued the missionary. "Surely there is a reaction on behalf of soldiers of the CNDP due to the increased international pressure on the government in Kinshasa so that it handsover Bosco Ntaganda to the ICC. One cannot exclude, also, an attempt by the CNDP, which has turned into a political party, to intimidate the population of the territory of Masisi in view of the parliamentary elections that are to be held in two months. But this is only a personal hypothesis " said Father. Cattani. In Masisi legislative elections were canceled for the riots that had occurred, and in the time being the CNDP has no deputies in Parliament. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 03/05/2012)

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