



ASIA/MYANMAR - Open war and new displaced persons: humanitarian crisis in the Kachin state

Banmaw (Agenzia Fides) - The Burmese military hostilities intensify in northern Myanmar, in the state inhabited by minority ethnic Kachin: Caritas and the few organizations of solidarity across the territory launch, through Fides, the alarm concerning the humanitarian crisis, given the rising tide of refugees. "Just today, new families have arrived in refugee camps and in the church complexes, opened to welcome displaced persons. They come from the border areas. They say that the gunfire and bombing are ferocious" refers to Fides an operator of Caritas of the Diocese of Banmaw, one of the two Catholic dioceses (along with that of Myitkyina) that covers the Kachin territory. The local Church does everything it can in terms of accommodation (see Fides 30/04/2012).

Even the NGO "Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), in a statement sent to Fides, informs that it has received over 126 reports of fighting taking place between the Burmese army and the "Kachin Independence Army" (KIA). Conflict continues, although the president Thein Sein had already ordered last 10 December the Burmese army to stop its offensive, which has so far generated 70 thousand displaced people, while shelters are not sufficient. The military, say the CSW, are accused of cruelty to civilians and serious violations of human rights such as rapes, torture and killings.

In recent days, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, visiting Myanmar, promised the UN assistance to the Burmese government to conclude a peace agreement stating: "The situation in the Kachin state is in contrast to the successful conclusion of agreements for cease-fire with all other ethnic groups. The Kachin people should no longer be denied the chance that a ceasefire and a political agreement can bring peace and development ". Ban Ki Sun has requested access to humanitarian aid in the Kachin area.

As pre requirements for peace talks, the Kachin demand an end to military operations by the Burmese army, the withdrawal of the troops, stop to the abuses against civilians, the return of IDPs to their villages. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 10/5/2012)