



## **AFRICA/SOUTH SUDAN - "There must be no more war between Sudan and South Sudan!": Appeal of Catholic Bishops and Anglicans of South Sudan**

Juba (Agenzia Fides) – The Catholic and Anglican Bishops of South Sudan are asking the International community for a “more balanced” position on the conflict that is setting their country against Sudan. The message, published at the end of the meeting held in Yei from 9-11 May affirms, “We believe that it is important that our friends in the International community assume a more balanced position. ‘Balanced’ does not mean criticizing the two sides in the same way but having a broad view, balanced, in the long term, after an in-depth study and trying to put pressure where needed in order to bring about a just and lasting peace”.

In the document which arrived in Agenzia Fides, the process which brought about the independence of South Sudan with the help of the International community is outlined in a summary account. The attitude of ONU and of the greater powers towards the recent tension between Juba and Khartoum on the control of the boundary areas, rich in crude oil, of Heglig (called Panthou by the South Sudanese) and Abyei has disappointed the local population. The Bishops write, “We live in direct contact with the South Sudan community and what we hear from them is worrying us. It looks as if the people of South Sudan are losing confidence in the International community. We have seen public demonstrations against the United Nations and its Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon. We are beginning to ask ourselves, at the same time, if the International community still understands the yearnings of the people of South Sudan in the same way as the marginalized communities of Sudan”.

After the occupation of Heglig by the South Sudanese troops, ONU put strong pressure on Juba to retreat. However, after the retreat of the South Sudanese soldiers the Khartoum Air Force continued to strike various parts of the South Sudanese border territory. The Bishops conclude affirming that they, “have a dream of two democratic and free nations where all religions, all ethnic groups, all cultures and languages enjoy the same rights based on citizenship. We dream of two nations in peace one with each another and in cooperation in order to make the best use of their God given resources. We dream of a people no longer traumatized, of children that can go to school, mothers who can be treated in hospital, the end of malnutrition and poverty and Christians and Muslims who can go to Church and Mosque without fear. Too much is too much. There must be no more war between Sudan and South Sudan!”. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 16/5/2012)