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AFRICA/DR CONGO - "The integrity of national territory is not negotiable," say the Bishops

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "No to the balkanization of Congo. No to the division of the Country," say the Bishops of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in a message made public at the end of their Plenary Assembly held in Kinshasa from July 2 to 6.
This is an explicit reference to the situation of the two Kivus, in the east of the Country, where the M23, the rebel movement formed by deserters and backed by Rwanda, as a UN report says (see Fides 27/06/2012), is sowing death and destruction, forcing people to flee. According to news agency IRIN, linked to the UN, in the refugee camp of Nyakaband alone, in Uganda, 16,270 Congolese refugees were recorded last week.
Local sources also claim that the Congolese troops and the UN are heading towards Goma, capital of North Kivu, which is directly threatened by the forces of the M23.
Faced with this latest attempt to divide the DRC, as claimed by the missions of the Peace Network for Congo, the aim is to take control of its natural resources, the Congolese Bishops denounce "illegal occupation of our territory", and reaffirm the unity of the Country according to borders established in 1960, the year of national independence. "The integrity of national territory is not negotiable" say the Bishops. The Bishops urge the Congolese political leaders and citizens to a "patriotic jerk in order not to be accomplice in this macabre plan of disintegration and territorial occupation of our Country."
The Congolese Episcopal Conference (CENCO) is addressed to all the Congolese at home and abroad, so they mobilize to block the plan of division of the Country. To this end, the CENCO intends to promote "simultaneous actions in all parishes of the DRC and in the chaplaincies of the Congolese abroad, to express our categorical rejection of this plan and to implore the grace of peace." (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 10/7/2012)

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