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AFRICA/DR CONGO - More than 220,000 internally displaced since the beginning of the mutiny of the soldiers in the east

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - More than 220,000 people are displaced in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo since a group of military deserters from the Congolese national army (FARDC) has formed a new band of guerrillas, the M23.
The figure reported by IRIN agency, promoted by the UN office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs, according to which the IDPs in the region have exceeded two million for the first time since 2009. Some 20,000 Congolese, including 600 soldiers of the FARDC, have sought refuge in Uganda and Rwanda. The latter Country, however, is accused of supporting the M23 from a report by Human Rights Watch, published in early June, and by a supplementary report to the relation of the Group of Experts on the DRC (see Fides 27/06/2012).
The Rwandese support consists of, according to the UN document, the supply of weapons, in transporting men and equipment of the M23 across the Rwandese territory, and the recruitment of Rwandans and Congolese living in Rwanda to be included in the ranks of the movement. The document also states that Rwanda supports 6 other armed groups operating in the region. The charges were dismissed by the government in Kigali. Rwanda says that its only interest in eastern DRC is the presence in the area of the Democratic Forces of Liberation in Rwanda (FDLR), a group originally formed by the Hutu militias responsible for the Rwandan massacres in 1994 and found refuge in the then Zaire. But the UN report says that among those recruited by the Rwandese government to bolster the ranks of the M23 there are also former members of the FDLR who had surrendered and re-established themselves in Rwanda.
As often denounced by many, including missionaries and Congolese Bishops themselves, the instability in eastern DRC is functional to the predation of the enormous natural wealth of the area. The Bishops reiterated their unequivocal opposition to the "balkanization of the Country" (see Fides 10/07/2012), that could start from the east, separating the two Kivu provinces from the rest of the Country. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 11/7/2012)

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