



## **AFRICA/BURKINA FASO - Famine and insecurity at the base of the exodus of refugees from Mali; the project of the Camillian Task Force**

Dori (Agenzia Fides) - "Hunger and insecurity are the driving force behind this exodus that, if it has not yet taken on biblical proportions, it seems destined to grow" says to Fides brother Luca Perletti, a Camillian, describing the situation of the refugees from Mali who have fled their country and are finding refuge in Burkina Faso. Brother Luca Perletti and Father Paolo Guarise, Camillians (MI), have just returned from a visit to the Diocese of Dori (in the province of Seno), north east of Burkina Faso, to study a possible commitment of the Camillian Task Force (CTF) for populations of refugees from Mali.

In Mali there is an ongoing offensive on behalf of Islamic fundamentalist groups, whose goal is the establishment of a regime of strict observance. "For this reason, a significant number of people are fleeing to neighboring Countries, particularly in Burkina Faso – say to Fides fr. Luca -. To further stimulate the flight, famine that hit crops last year also contributes."

"Taking the Diocese of Dori as geographical boundaries of our intervention, we observe that the refugee population is scattered over a wide area, so much so that to reach some camps even 4 hours by car are necessary – says fr. Luca Perletti to Fides -. In our view, the emergency is only in its initial phase, with a strong presence of supranational institutions appointed to take charge of the refugees. Among the objectives of this phase: the creation of optimal conditions for survival as far as hygiene, water, health care, food, territory control, registration of refugees and allocation of space are concerned, in addition to prevention, to ensure that the migration satisfies the mutual rights of the hosting population and those who come to assume the status of refugees."

"One of the predictable problems - continues the Camillian missionary - could be due to conflicts with the hosting population, devoted to subsistence farming and herding in a pre-desert area and from poverty index. The risk is that the migration process aggravates the living conditions of local people who have already suffered the effects of the recent famine with a meager harvest. During the visit, we tried to understand the priority needs in view of possible involvement of the CTF."

The CTF's role will be to complement the efforts of organizations already involved, in order to cover the areas left uncovered. During the visit, close contacts were established in particular with OCADES Dori, the local Caritas, which has long been engaged in charitable projects and development in the diocese. The area of Dori is 95% Muslim, and the small Christian community has been able to carve out a space thanks to the works of charity and development.

OCADES was chosen as a partner of the CTF for this intervention because of its local roots. The action plan of the CTF, has obtained the support of the diocese and the willingness to collaborate from the Camillian Vice Province of Burkina Faso. The project, which will last 6 months, takes into consideration three areas (hygiene, nutrition and health care), this will be carried out in the camps visited, diversifying the programs according to priorities that emerge in each of them. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 16/7/2012)