



## **AFRICA/CONGO DR - Confirmed for today the "March of Hope" to ask for peace in Congo**

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides)- The "March of hope", organized by the Bishops of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as part of efforts to oppose the so-called "balkanization" of the Country, whose territorial integrity is threatened by a new armed rebellion in North Kivu (see Fides 25/07/2012) will be held today, August 1, in Kinshasa.

This was announced by Don Leonard Santedi, Secretary General of CENCO (Congolese National Episcopal Conference), who recalled how the March was preceded by a triduum of prayer for peace, unity and integrity of the country from July 31 to August 1, with a prayer for peace to be recited every day at the end of Mass and prayer meetings.

Don Santedi also stressed that the March is open to all men and women of good will and expressed the hope that this, like other initiatives, will become the prelude to the realization that "Congo is our heritage and that we must preserve it."

The CENCO also arranged a fundraising and collection of basic necessities in every diocese to help the Congolese peoples of Kivu, "victims of an unjust war" for the month of August. As part of this initiative, musicians and Catholic men and women of good will were asked to organize concerts and other events to help raise funds.

In North Kivu, the Congolese army is losing ground in front of the offensive of the M23 rebels, the rebel movement formed by deserters (mostly former guerrillas who had integrated the ranks of the regular army after peace agreements), which seem better armed and equipped than the regular military. Rwanda is accused of supporting up in arms, ammunition and men of the M23, to the point that the United States, Great Britain (the largest international donor) and the Netherlands have stopped sending civilian and military aid to the government in Kigali. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 01/08/2012)