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AFRICA/DR CONGO - The campaign to recruit new military has been launched: is this what is really needed to end the war in Kivu?

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - The Congolese army has launched a campaign to recruit new troops, officially not related to the war in North Kivu, where one must deal with the rebel movement M23, consisting largely of deserters. The recruitment of new military, however, raises several questions, as stated in a report sent to Fides Agency by the Peace Network for Congo. First on the schedule: to recruit and train new soldiers requires at least 6-9 months. Meanwhile, the M23 can continue its advance undisturbed. One, instead, must select the military in service who are truly loyal to the State and provide them with the resources necessary to meet rebel offensive. "There are many military cadres who have been trained in various academies, national and international, and that are undervalued or even abandoned. They could be used immediately to ensure the coordination and control of new units of combat," says Peace Network for Congo.
The main problem is the infiltration of elements linked to the various guerrilla groups in the ranks of the regular army. "In an interview with the daily Le Potentiel - says the report sent to Fides - the president of the youth association of Rutchuru, Sinza Wolf, denounced the lax attitude of some military authorities and those responsible for security services in North Kivu and the increasing evident complicity within the military chain of command. "
"According to Sinza, the planning of the present war in North Kivu was held in Goma, under the eyes of the security services, and a possible capture of the city of Goma by the rebels of the M23 will not be a surprise, because many of these rebels are already in town. Refuting the argument that the Congolese soldiers were not able to face the M23, he said that it is rather a problem of lack of organization and betrayal by some officers of the army. "
The Congolese soldiers, deprived of the most basic means of support (starting from food) and whose pay is often curtailed or pocketed by corrupt officials, were thus forced to extort money from civilians. FARDC (Congolese Armed Forces) risk becoming in the eyes of civilians one of the many armed movements that oppress them.
(L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 06/09/2012)

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