



## **AFRICA/KENYA - "This is not a war of religion, but Christians are exacerbated while cartoons against the Prophet harm us" say Church sources**

Nairobi (Agenzia Fides) - "We do not want a war of religion, but Christians are fed up with the attacks against their places of worship" say to Fides Agency sources of the local Church in Nairobi. In the capital yesterday, two children were killed in an attack with explosives against the Anglican church of St. Polycarp.

"The attack was aimed at hitting children. The neighborhood where the church is situated is close to another one nicknamed Little Mogadishu" refer our sources, that recall inter alia, that "among the Kenyan population a sense of insecurity for the continuous arrivals of refugees not only from Somalia, but also from South Sudan and Ethiopia, pushed in Kenya due to famine or war is growing. From refugee camps in the border areas, many of them move to the big cities of Kenya. Citizens complain about the rising levels of crime related to this phenomenon."

Going back to yesterday's attack Fides sources point out that "both Bishops and politicians insist that we are not faced with a war of religion, but a political issue, linked to the intervention of Kenya in Somalia.

This attack is therefore seen as a reaction to the capture of Kismayo, the last bastion of the Shabaab in southern Somalia, by Kenyan troops with the support of the African Union (see Fides 28/09/2012) .

"In recent days, the police seized large quantities of explosives carried by people moving in cars and on buses. So there is a movement of extremist cells that are sending to Nairobi and other areas of the country, explosives for a wave of attacks. "

"On the other hand – add the sources of Fides - for Muslim extremists the Church is linked to the West, just as the government of Kenya, which has formed alliances with various Western powers. The churches are then attacked because they are a 'soft target', an easy target and poorly protected. Hitting a church immediately takes on an international dimension because it is a story that is picked up by media around the world."

"If it is true that it is still difficult to talk about religious war, the spread of video against the Prophet and a French newspaper showing cartoons are making things worse. Those who spread these materials are irresponsible people who do not think about the consequences of their actions: in other parts of the world innocent people die," say the sources of Fides, that are a concrete example. "After the incident in Mombasa, arising in the aftermath of the killing of an extremist preacher (see Fides 28/08/2012)), a good working relationship between the Church and the Association of Muslim leaders had been established to invite two communities for peace, reconciliation and dialogue.

After the appearance of the infamous videos and cartoons, Muslim leaders have stopped these meetings because they feel offended by such materials."

"The situation is complex. After yesterday's attack some young Christians were planning to attack the mosque in the neighborhood " conclude the sources. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 01/10/2012)