



## **AFRICA/CONGO DR - Not only the M23, even other groups commit violence against civilians in North Kivu**

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - Violence against civilians in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo continues. According to the local media, three days ago the men from the rebel leader Manu attacked the village of Bilulu, after putting to flight the local military garrison. Sources of civil society argue that it is the fourth village occupied by the men of Bilulu in North Kivu and in the neighboring Eastern Province, where they are reported looting of houses with fire and torture.

"There is much talk, concerning the violence of the M23 (group of military deserters that is said to be backed by Rwanda), but this is making everyone forget the existence of a number of other armed groups in North Kivu, in most remote areas of the Masisi territory, in particular," says to Fides Agency a local Church source, that requested anonymity for security reasons. "It is certainly true that the M23 is causing enormous damage to civilians: one believes that near Goma, in Kanyaru, a new spontaneous camp which houses 60,000 refugees has been created," continues the source. "But in North Kivu, thousands of displaced people suffer from the violence of other armed groups such as the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) and Nyatura (both ethnic Hutu), Raia Mutomboki and APCLS (Hunde tribe), just to name some."

Our source also says that "no one reported that at the beginning of August, two spontaneous camps of displaced people in Masisi territory (Kishondja and Kihuma) were literally razed to the ground by these militias, forcing thousands of people to flee once again in their lives. In late September a number of houses in the official camp of Kilimani, always in Masisi, were burned. Again, people were forced to flee."

On September 30, Pope Benedict XVI made an appeal not to forget the displaced in North Kivu (see Fides 01/10/2012). These days the DRC is at the center of international attention for the Francophone Summit, to be held in Kinshasa from October 12 to 14, which will be attended by the French President, François Hollande. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 11/10/2012)