



AFRICA/CONGO DR - In North Kivu, a new rebel group extorts money from the civilian population, reports a source of Fides

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - In North Kivu (eastern Democratic Republic of Congo) a new rebel group has appeared that extorts money from the civilian population. This is denounced to Fides Agency by a missionary source who wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons. "In response to the M23 group (made up of deserters and supported by Rwanda, ed), a new rebel group called M 26 has just started," says our source. "Its members say they want to ensure and protect the local population, in exchange they ask every adult male a fee of 1,200 Congolese francs per month. Or rather they impose it. Who pays is given a token that certifies the payment. Who does not pay is considered to be against them, and therefore risks retaliation. So, here everyone is forced to pay this tax," continues our source, who adds, "it is the same format used by the DFLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) that give a token (a receipt that states they have paid) to the people doing forced labor for them. Those found without a token, are forced to pay a fine."

The testimony of the source of Fides is a further confirmation of the war in progress in the eastern DRC, where armed groups are fighting among each other (they are also ready to form temporary alliances) for the control of the immense resources of the region, as reported by various UN reports. Reuters Agency published some anticipations of the report, prepared by the British Study Group Chatham House, highlighting the involvement of Uganda and Rwanda in the smuggling of minerals (tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold) illegally extracted in the Congolese region. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 17/10/2012)