



## **AFRICA/CONGO DR - "We need to avoid a civil war in Kivu": the missionaries aim at free and transparent elections**

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "What must be avoided is a possible clash between two large blocks: on the one hand, the M23 and allied groups, on the other hand the national army reinforced by the integration of other armed groups. It would mean turning a war of aggression in a civil war", write the missionaries of the Network for Peace in Congo in a note sent to Fides Agency on north and south Kivu (eastern Democratic Republic of Congo), where "the situation becomes more and more complex".

"The movement of March 23 (M23), an armed group backed by Rwanda and Uganda, militarily occupies the territory of Rutchuru, reorganizes its military structure, forms alliances with other armed groups and threatens to resume hostilities if the Congolese government will not accept negotiations. On its behalf, the Government is now proceeding to the integration of other armed groups in the ranks of the national army." The note continues to describe the political and diplomatic steps undertaken by Countries in the region: "The member Countries of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) are struggling to set up a neutral international force to combat the various armed groups, including the M23 and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)."

The problem is that the ICGLR are part of Rwanda and Uganda, that are accused by the UN of supporting the M23. To add to the complexity of the situation, according to the Network for Peace in Congo, is the fact that the security services and the highest offices of the State and army are expressions of groups in turn linked to Rwanda. "To get out of this system and put an end to the war in the DRC - says the statement - the non-violent political way of the elections is certainly the most democratic. For this reason it is important to continue to fight for a radical restructuring of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) that would allow really free, transparent and credible elections."

In addition to this it is also necessary that the Countries that benefit from the wealth (such as coltan) illegally removed from the Congolese people with the complicity of the armed groups operating in Kivu stop fueling the conflict. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 09/11/2012)