



AFRICA/DR CONGO - Almost all the NGOs and the French Consul have left Goma, uncertain situation in the capital of North Kivu

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "Almost all NGOs have left Goma and are in Gisenyi, the city of Rwanda on the border with the Congolese capital of North Kivu. Even the French Consul in Goma has left the city and is in a hotel in Gisenyi," says Danilo Giannese, an Italian aid worker operating in the Great Lakes Region on the phone from Rwanda.

"From the evidence I could gather, yesterday, Sunday, November 18, the rebels of the M23 came to Goma with relative ease, since they were not hindered by peacekeepers of MONUSCO (UN Mission in Congo) and took control of the airport. If the M23 was able to get to Goma with relative ease, in other areas they fought hard, so much so that from Gisenyi one could hear the gunfire," says Giannese.

According to agency sources the rebels seem to be lined up 5 km from the city.

The governor of the province of North Kivu has urged people to stay calm, saying that Goma is under the control of the army and UN forces. The rebels of the M23 said they will ask the government the announcement within 24 hours "of the opening of direct political negotiations" and "the demilitarization of the city and the airport of Goma", otherwise they will continue their offensive until Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 19/11/2012)