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AFRICA/CONGO DR - Calm situation, but developments are unpredictable; in any case the missionaries remain close to the population

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "Today in Bukavu, the situation is calm after yesterday where demonstrations and looting by the people were carried out after they had spread the news of the advance of the rebels of the M23 from North Kivu towards the south," says to Fides Agency a missionary source from Bukavu, capital of South Kivu, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The M23, after taking control of Goma, capital of North Kivu (see Fides 20/11/2012; 21/11/2012) threatened to march to Kinshasa if the central authorities do not start negotiations with them.

"It is said that the rebels of the M23, after having attacked the town of Sake (20 km from Goma), are heading towards Bukavu, but it is not known where they have arrived. We are in touch with our contacts in Goma who tell us that there is calm in the city, but the calm is apparent, because no one knows what will happen, " says our source who did not want to be mentioned," otherwise risks expulsion" he says. The missionaries, however, do not intend to go away: "We remain close to the people, no matter what. We have been here for 40 years and we are not thinking of going away," concludes our source.

Most NGOs have evacuated their staff from not only from Goma but also from Bukavu.

In a statement, the Congolese Bishops say: "After taking the city of Goma, the rebels threaten to march on Bukavu and the rest of the Country. The latter do not engage in fighting with the national army. We hope that the appeals launched by the Heads of State of the region are heard in order to avoid our compatriots further suffering."

Congolese President Joseph Kabila took part in an extraordinary summit in Kampala (Uganda) with Rwandan (Paul Kagame) and Ugandan (Yoweri Museveni) who launched a warning to the M23 to withdraw from Goma. A UN report published on 21 November accuses Uganda and Rwanda again for supporting men and means of the rebel movement. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 22/11/2012)

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