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AFRICA/CONGO DR - The Bishops of 34 African Countries "outraged and shocked by the violence in eastern DRC"

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "We are outraged and shocked by the escalating violence which started a few months ago in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and is causing a new human tragedy," said the statement sent to Fides Agency, signed by the "Bishop Presidents of the African Episcopal Conferences and Presidents of Caritas African " who met in Kinshasa for a meeting on the mission and identity of Caritas. The meeting, which was attended by Bishops from 34 African countries, was held from November 20 to 22.
The offensive in North Kivu by the guerrilla group M23, which culminated in the conquest of its capital, Goma, is blamed in this way by African Bishops: "Thousands of men, women and children, the victims of this war which is imposed on them, are displaced and abandoned in destitution in Goma and its surroundings. They are exposed to the bad weather, hunger, rape and all kinds of abuses, including recruiting of children into the army. This constitutes an offense to their dignity as human beings and children of God. "
The Bishops reaffirm their conviction "that the time is no longer for war or conquest, but rather to promote cooperation between peoples," and denounced "the illegal exploitation of natural resources, which is the main cause of this war." For this reason the signatories ask the UN, African Union, European Union and the governments of the DRC and Countries "involved in some way in the war", as well as multinational companies in the mining sector, to find "a just and concerted solution, in order to put a definitive end to the suffering of the civilian population in eastern DRC, avoiding to throw them in despair and violence. " The Bishops finally launch an appeal to Christian solidarity, especially through Caritas networks in the world. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 23/11/2012)

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