



AFRICA/CONGO DR - Relative calm in Goma after the arrival of soldiers and police officers sent from Kinshasa

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "The M23 has withdrawn from the center of Goma, but still controls the airport and the surroundings of the city. It has not withdrawn 20 km from Goma as it was announced," says to Fides Agency Fr. Loris Cattani, a Xaverian missionary and an animator of the "Peace Network in Congo," which follows the evolution of the situation in Goma, capital of North Kivu (eastern Democratic Republic of Congo), a few days before the withdrawal of the rebel movement M23 .

"Among the population, it is further stated that the military of the M23 have remained in the city, disguised as Congolese policemen or civilians," the missionary continues. "In Goma, however relative calm prevails after the arrival of 1,500 police officers and about 800 men of the Congolese army sent by the government in Kinshasa." On the political front, Fr. Cattani said that "in a few days negotiations between the Congolese government and the M23 are expected to start, and representatives of the political opposition and civil society members of North and South Kivu are expected to participate." The first phase of negotiations will be held in Kampala (Uganda), and then will move to Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) with the mediation of President Denis Sassou-Nguesso. "Rwanda and Uganda, which had been indicted by UN experts to support the M23, are now playing the role of mediators. In this way, on the one hand they exonerate themselves from accusations of complicity with the rebels, and on the other continue to have a say in the east of the DRC, " concludes Fr. Cattani. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 04/12/2012)