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AFRICA/CONGO DR - "The negotiation of Kampala must not compromise national sovereignty": Bishops' warning

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - "An agreement that compromises national sovereignty is unacceptable," warn the members of the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of Congo in a message issued at the end of a special session dedicated to the crisis in North Kivu, of which a copy was sent to Fides Agency.

"The fall of Goma has thrown the Congolese in consternation," write the Bishops referring to the conquest of the capital of North Kivu by the rebels of the M23, on November 20. Subsequently, the M23 left the city and started negotiations with the government in Kinshasa in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. "We call on the attention of those who will travel to Kampala on the pitfalls of these negotiations," said the message. "They must not compromise Congolese national unity, and support agreements that consecrate the Balkanization of the DRC."

The Bishops, recalling their previous messages on the subject, reaffirm the need to defend national unity and the inviolability of borders of the Country, "established at the time of the decolonization and recognized by the international community on June 30, 1960." They therefore address an urgent appeal to the Congolese leaders to work for the interest of the nation and to seek the good of all: "Leaders have to primarily guarantee the safety of the peoples and the integrity of the national territory. Only by taking on the legitimate aspirations of the people to internal and external peace, dignity and development, you will be able to consolidate national unity."

The message recalls the responsibility of neighboring Countries in sustaining and supporting the various guerrilla movements in the east of the Country, but also criticizes those Congolese politicians that by "privileging their own selfish interests, they become complicit with those who are disintegrating national unity. " With regards to the international community, the Bishops call for a review of the mandate of MONUSCO (UN Mission in the DRC) in order to enable the "Blue Helmets" to effectively defend the civilian population.

"We entrust to divine mercy the victims of this war. We express our closeness to His Esc. Mgr. Théophile Kaboy, Bishop of Goma, and our participation to the entire population of North Kivu. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Congo and the Queen of Peace, obtain for our Country and all its inhabitants, the grace of unity and peace," the message concludes. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 07/12/2012)

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