



## **AFRICA/COTE D'IVOIRE - The tragic death of the Apostolic Nuncio in the Ivory Coast, Mgr. Madtha, a man of peace**

Abidjan (Agenzia Fides) - The Apostolic Nuncio in the Ivory Coast, His Exc. Mgr. Ambrose Madtha, died on Saturday, December 8 in a car accident in the west of the Country. The car carrying Mgr. Madtha was involved in an accident on the road Man-Biankouma. The Nuncio was returning to Man, where he spent the night, from the village of Odienné, where he presided over a Mass. The driver was also killed in the accident while the secretary and a religious woman are slightly wounded.

"The bishops are gathered for a special Bishops' Conference and after its conclusion the date of the Nuncio's funeral will be notified" says to Fides Agency Abidjan Yessoh Pierre Claver N'Guessan, Vicar General of Abidjan. The body of Mgr. Madtha arrived yesterday, Sunday, December 9, at the seat of the Archbishopric in Abidjan.

Mgr. Madtha was born on November 2, 1955 in Belthangady, India, and was appointed Apostolic Nuncio in the Ivory Coast on May 8, 2008. Mgr. Madtha, who was dean of the Diplomatic Corps in the Ivory Coast, was committed to finding a peaceful solution to the post-election crisis that out-going President, Laurent Gbagbo opposed, to the current Head of State, Alassane Ouattara. During the attack of the forces of Ouattara, backed by French troops, the Presidential Residence where Gbagbo was barricaded, Mgr. Madtha remained in the Nunciature, located at 200-330 meters from the palace, where Fides had contacted him (see Fides 08/04/2011). The Ivory Coast has not yet recovered from the political confrontation between the two factions. One of the areas most affected by latent insecurity for the presence of armed groups is precisely the west where Mgr. Madtha died. The Nuncio should have celebrated a Mass in Duékoué, a town on the border with Liberia, where during the crisis of 2010-2011 more than 3,000 civilians were massacred. In July 2012 several people were killed in the assault of a refugee camp in Nahibly, at the entrance of Duékoué. The Ivorian press recalls that Mgr. Madtha made a personal commitment on several occasions to come to the aid of refugees welcomed in a Catholic parish and other structures in the area. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 10/12/2012)