



AFRICA/LIBYA - The Libyan authorities decree the south "military zone" and close the borders with four States

Tripoli (Agenzia Fides) - The Libyan General National Congress (parliament) decreed the south of the Country "closed military zone" and announced the temporary closure of the border with Algeria, Chad, Sudan and Niger, in the Sahel-Saharan strip. Congress voted with a majority of 136 votes the decision which declares that the areas around Ghadames, Ghat, Awbari, Al-Shati, Sebha, Murzuq and Kufra are closed military zones. The decree states that the Secretary of Defense has to appoint a military governor for the south, with full powers to arrest those who are wanted for crimes in the area.

The instability and insecurity in the south of Libya have persisted since the civil war and the end of the Gaddafi regime. Earlier this month, twenty Members from the southern areas had staged a protest to denounce the deterioration of the security conditions and the failure of the government to deal with the problem. On the same day of the protest on behalf of these parliamentarians, 197 prisoners had escaped the prison of Sebha, it seems thanks to the complicity of prison guards.

The south of Libya is at risk for trafficking of arms, drugs and human beings, as well as the presence of various armed militias. This latter problem concerns the rest of the Country. On December 16, in Benghazi, capital of Cyrenaica, in the east, four policemen were killed in the assault to the police station by an armed group. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 17/12/2012)