



AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - Rebels of the coalition Seleka conquer Bria, an important diamond center

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - The diamond center of Bria, at the center of the Central African Republic, was conquered today by the men of Seleka, a coalition of three rebel groups, who are looting it. So says a local army source released by Agence France Press. Bria is 300 km from Ndélé, another town captured by the rebels in recent days, and more than 400 km from the capital Bangui, where, according to local sources contacted by Fides Agency, the situation is calm. Members of Seleka threaten to overthrow President François Bozizé because, they say, has not complied with the agreements of 2007 and 2011, signed by his government with the groups that joined the coalition.

The local press reports that the government is faced with difficult choices. To negotiate starting from a position of weakness, seeing the rapid advance of the rebels? Or to choose a military solution? The latter is made difficult by the departure of the Chadian elements of the Presidential Guard, since the planned withdrawal of MICOPAX (the Central African peacekeeping force deployed in Central Africa) and the changed attitude of the government in Paris, which seems unwilling to intervene to help authorities in Bangui. France has a long tradition of military expeditions in Central Africa. The last was in 2006, when troops of Paris stationed in Chad intervened to repel an offensive rebellious similar to that happening these days.

The newspaper "L'Hirondelle" wonders if "the new allies of power", China and South Africa, will be available to act in the place of France. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 18/12/2012)