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AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - The Church calls for dialogue to resolve the crisis

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - There is growing concern in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, before the advancing of rebels of the coalition Seleka. "At the moment the situation is calm in the city, but one lives in the anxiety of uncertainty after the rebels took the strategic center of Sibut (160 km from Bangui)" say local sources to Fides Agency from Bangui, where a curfew was declared.
At a political and military level, the Countries of Central Africa have decided to send the Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) and urged the government and the rebels in Bangui to negotiations to be held in Gabon. The commander of the FOMAC has issued an ultimatum to the leadership of Seleka to prevent any advance on Bangui. The rebels, on their behalf, have announced that they have stopped military operations and to be open to dialogue.
The Church has launched several appeals for peace so that the path of negotiation and not a military one prevail. "Wisdom leads us to moderation and dialogue. Whatever the misunderstanding, a compromise is always possible through dialogue, " Mgr. Nestor Désiré Nongo Aziagbia, Bishop of Bossangoa writes in his New Year message. The Bishop recalls that the poor are the first victims of civil wars that have bloodied the history of Central Africa and denounces violence against civilians in areas of his diocese (Kabo and Batangafo) captured by the rebels.
Even the Archbishop of Bangui, Mgr. Dieudonné Nzapalainga, has launched an appeal for dialogue. In an interview with France-Presse, Mgr. Nzapalainga said he was confident because he sees "messages of hope".
(L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 02/01/2013)

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