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AFRICA/MALI - Battles between Malian army and rebels rage

Bamako (Agenzia Fides) - The city of Konna, 70 km from Mopti (central Mali), is at the center of fighting between the Malian army and Islamist rebels who control the north of the country. "According to the latest information, the Malian military now have counterattacked and regained Konna, and are advancing towards the north occupied" says to Fides Agency Father Edmond Dembele, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Mali.
"The fighting continued yesterday and today have intensified. We have reports of several deaths and injuries on both sides. At first it was announced that the Malian army had taken over the rebels. Then instead it was stated that the situation had been reversed and that the rebels had conquered Konna. Today, finally, the army went on the offensive, " said the priest. "The military are faced with the men of MUJAO (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa) and Ansar Al Dine, supported by some belonging to AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) and by the Nigerian Boko Haram. All Islamist components have joined in the fight."
Also yesterday, January 10, peaceful demonstrations organized in Bamako by some parties that support the military coup to demand the resignation of President Dioncounda Traoré were held. "A few hundred people who have also expressed opposition to foreign military intervention to regain the north participated, saying that the Malian army can do it without outside help" concluded Fr. Dembele. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 11/01/2013)

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