



## **AFRICA/MALI - "Humanitarian corridors to be opened to help civilians": Archbishop of Bamako's appeal**

Bamako (Agenzia Fides) - It is necessary to immediately open humanitarian corridors to allow aid to be sent to the population without food and medicines. This is the appeal launched by Archbishop Jean Zerbo, Archbishop of Bamako and President of Caritas Mali, through Caritas Internationalis. In a note sent to Fides Agency, Archbishop Zerbo says: "a new period of suffering is beginning for the people of Mali. We would welcome support so that we can help the increasing number of displaced and refugees. These people need food, drinking water, hygiene kits, anti-malarials and other items to cover their basic needs as the situation worsens. We are in the cold season, and it is also damp. This makes the humanitarian situation even more complicated."

The report of Caritas Internationalis says it is estimated that about 400,000 people have fled from the north of Mali and the combat zones, to take refuge in the south or in neighboring Countries. "The exact numbers of displaced and refugees are difficult to ascertain because people continue to move" says to Fides don Edmond Dembele, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Mali. "Caritas Mali has been mobilized for some time but has limited means. Already since April 2012 it had donated several tons of cereals and medicines to the people of the north occupied by Islamists, as well as having activated to help displaced people in Bamako and other cities of the south," said Don Dembele. "Indeed, as Mgr. Zerbo said, the already dramatic humanitarian situation has worsened in the last week with the start of the fighting. Urgent international aid is needed," said the priest. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 18/01/2013)