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AFRICA/MALI - The population of the cities liberated are celebrating

Bamako (Agenzia Fides) - "In the region liberated by jihadist groups, the population is celebrating" says to Fides Agency don Edmond Dembele, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Mali, where the French and Malian military are advancing in the north of the Country to recapture the cities that since last March had fallen into the hands of jihadist groups. "Radio and television stations continue to transmit the manifestations of joy of city dwellers as soon as recaptured by the Malian and French forces. People are happy with the newfound freedom and the ability to return to a normal life. In Gao the Mayor is back in town and noted with satisfaction that the people are returning to their normal life as usual, " said the priest. The various jihadist groups had imposed the strict observance of Sharia law on the people, including mutilations and executions.
After liberating Gao, Malian and French soldiers reached Timbuktu, the city known as "World Heritage Site" by UNESCO (the UN agency for culture), which has been damaged yet to be quantified in its artistic heritage, made up of Sufi mausoleums and valuable collections of books of inestimable value. According to the mayor of the city, four days ago, the jihadists fleeing burned down the Ahmed Baba Institute, a bibliographic center built with funding from South Africa. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 28/01/2013)

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