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AFRICA/MALI - "The need to face the challenge of national reconciliation immediately" ask the Bishops

Bamako (Agenzia Fides) - "For the Bishops and for the majority of Malians the main challenge is the reconciliation of the nation," says to Fides Agency Don Edmond Dembele, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Mali, who points out that "during their recent meeting with the President ad Interim, the local bishops asked the authorities to address the issues of national reconciliation as soon as possible."
This means - explains Don Dembele - first of all to reconcile the different communities living in the north of the Country, tourareg, Arabs, and sonrai and others. They are people who lived together before the crisis and during the seizure of power on behalf of jihadist groups." "We need to re-estblish the mutual trust between different communities and achieve reconciliation through forgiveness," said the priest.
Meanwhile, the French and Malian forces operations are concentrated in the Kidal area. Malian forces have not yet entered in Kidal but are currently negotiating to gain access to the city without using force.
The military offensive to liberate the north of Mali, however, has created a new wave of internally displaced persons in the south and refugees in neighboring Countries. "We need food, medicine, clothing and shelter to help these people," says Don Dembele. "The Church does what it can. Caritas is mobilized at a local and national level, while in the coming weeks at least two special collections in favor of refugees are expected," concludes the priest.
(L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 01/02/2013)

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