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AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - "Seleka consists largely of jihadists, our situation is similar to that of Mali," says the Bishop of Bangassou

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "The rebels came from Bambari to Bangassou and after a 5-hour battle with the Central African Armed Forces (FACA), yesterday morning at 10 they entered the city," says to Fides His Exc. Mgr. Juan José Aguirre Munos, Bishop of Bangassou, the city in the south-east of Central Africa conquered on March 11 by a dissident faction of the rebel coalition Seleka. "I have been in Bangui for 3 days for a meeting of the Major Superiors, otherwise you would not have found me on the phone, because one of the first actions taken by the rebels was to cut telephone lines" says the Bishop. "From the little information that we managed to get, we know that the rebels have left a contingent in Bangassou, while the majority of their troops after stealing the Catholic mission car, took the Rafai road, east towards the border with Sudan. "
"Last night they arrived in Rafa" - says Mgr. Aguirre Munos-attacked the local Catholic mission, and continued towards the mission of Zemio."
"The rebels' goal is to overthrow the current government and impose a regime of Islamic imprint. These are the jihadists, probably paid for by someone from the outside," said the Bishop. "The situation is very similar to that of Mali, but the Central African Republic does not seem to alarm the world in the same way."
In the Country there are troops of the Central Africa Countries (FOMAC, whose strong core is formed by Chadian soldiers), plus a South African military contingent to protect the "sensitive areas" of the capital. "80-90% of the Country is in the hands of Seleka, 5-6 guerrilla groups gathered under this symbol. They consist largely of jihadists who speak Arabic and who after conquering other areas of the Country are also taking the east, where they have killed and raped civilians, looted homes and Christian missions, but not mosques. In the conquered cities they have destroyed the municipal registers (with the birth certificates) and courts, an action aimed at destroying the historical memory of the local population," said Mgr. Aguirre Munos. "Now they are heading towards Obo, where they will find an explosive situation. Here, in fact the Ugandan troops sent to Central Africa are deployed to counter the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army, a guerrilla group of Ugandan origin), backed by Central African soldiers and U.S. special forces. I do not know what could happen," concludes the Bishop. (L.M.)
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