



AFRICA/DR CONGO - A secessionist group sows terror in Lubumbashi

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - Several hundred armed men sowed terror in Lubumbashi, capital of Katanga in the south of the Democratic Republic of Congo, before laying down their weapons in the local base of MONUSCO (UN Mission in the DRC).

On March 23, as reported by the Congolese press, about 245 people, among them women and children, broke into the city center, waging a three-hour shootout with security forces. The provisional toll is about thirty deaths and several wounded among the attackers while the number of casualties among military and civilians is still not known.

The militiamen, who later surrendered to the peacekeepers of MONUSCO, said to belong to the militia Kata Katanga that ask the province's independence from the rest of the Country.

This militia has committed several attacks in the area, including two assaults (in February 2011 and August 2012) at the airport in Lubumbashi. The group is responsible for the deaths of 65 people in Mwemena in the territory of Kasenga (250 km from Lubumbashi) killed between January and February this year.

Katanga was the protagonist of several attempts of secession, promoted by Western interests, in the aftermath of the independence of the then Belgian Congo in 1960.

More recently, another group led by Kyungu Mutanga Gedeon sowed death and terror in the territories of Mitwaba, Pweto and Manono between 2004 and 2006, before his arrest. In September 2011 Gedeon escaped from the prison in Lubumbashi where he was held. The guerrilla leader is still free and has reorganized his group. The people wonder how this happened. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 25/03/2013)