



## **AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - "Let us avoid the political crisis to become religious," said the Archbishop of Bangui**

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "We are again in a difficult moment in which the population is shunted from right to left," said Mgr. Dieudonné Nzapalainga, Archbishop of Bangui, in an interview with Radio France International (RFI). The capital of the Central African Republic is experiencing difficult moments after the conquest by the men of the coalition Seleka (see Fides 25/03/2013). Michel Djotodia, leader of Seleka, announced the suspension of the Constitution, dissolution of the National Assembly and the government and the imposition of curfew in Bangui from 7 pm to 6 am. The city is still prey to looting by criminal gangs. "My first thoughts go to those who have lost their lives," said Mgr. Nzapalainga.

The Archbishop of Bangui calls on the leadership of Seleka so that the protection of the population and its property is "priority". "We must put an end to looting and for the executives of Seleka to take charge of their responsibilities in relation to all the collateral damage," he added.

"On Sunday, March 24 - denounces the Archbishop - in front of the cathedral, men and women who had come to pray outside the church were robbed by people who also wanted to take their vehicles by force." Mgr.

Nzapalainga wonders if it was an act of common banditry or a deliberate act of intimidation against Christians. "It is the task of those who have now assumed the responsibility of power to react quickly and to ascertain who are the perpetrators of such acts," said Mgr. Nzapalainga who expresses concern "for religious tensions."

The Archbishop launched an appeal to the executives of Seleka to avoid the sectarian drift. "It is time to quickly put an end to these actions that could provoke in people's minds anti-religious sentiments or that might suggest that this crisis has as its objective the Christians as such."

"It is necessary that priests, pastors and imams are protected. I speak for everyone. Men of God should be protected. This crisis is political, we cannot let it take a religious drift " concluded Mgr. Nzapalainga. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 26/03/2013)