



AFRICA/NIGERIA - Amnesty for Boko Haram, doubts of some bishops who criticize MEND, too

Abuja (Agenzia Fides) - "Churches in Northern Nigeria, and my diocese in particular, have been recording depletion in the number of faithful attending church services owing to Boko haram insurgencies," said His Exc. Mgr. Stephen Mamza, Bishop of Yola in the north of Nigeria to the Catholic News Service of Nigeria (CNSN) who points out that several Catholics have moved elsewhere for fear of the violence of the Islamist sect. The Agency promoted by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria reports the reactions of some Bishops to the possible amnesty for Boko Haram. We are talking about certain prelates of the south-east of the Country, interviewed on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese of Oyo. "Why should the Federal Government grant amnesty to vandals of human souls and bodies, who have no justification for their nefarious actions?" asks His Excellency Felix Alaba Job, Archbishop of Ibadan, adding "they are doing it to satisfy their own selfish motives and possibly destabilise the country."

This concern is heightened by the threats of MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, a group that works in the south of the Country which had suspended military actions after the granting of an amnesty) to resume guerrilla warfare after the sentence inflicted on its leader, Henry Okah, by a South African court and that it would retaliate against mosques and faithful Muslims if Boko Haram does not cease its attacks against Christians. "These threats are a disappointing and has shown the level the Country has degenerated," said His Exc. Mgr. Felix Ajakaye, Bishop of Ekiti. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 24/04/2013)