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AFRICA/MALI - Mixed reactions to the peace agreement for Kidal

Bamako (Agenzia Fides) - The agreement between the Malian authorities and the two groups of Tuareg rebels that control the city of Kidal in the north of the Country, the MNLA (National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad) and HCUA (High Council for the Unity of Azawad) was signed yesterday 18 June, in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso.
The agreement calls for a cease-fire, the return of the Malian army in Kidal and the cantonment of rebels and the deployment in the region of an international force of guarantee. Kidal was the only city that was not monitored by the Malian army.
"The agreement was welcomed in a different way by the Malian population. The opinions are divergent " says to Fides Agency Fr Edmond Dembele, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Mali. "A part of the public opinion is satisfied because the agreements signed yesterday will allow the Malian army to enter in Kidal, recovering the territorial integrity of the Country. This will also allow the holding of the elections throughout the territory of Mali, an important sign of the return of peace." "On the other hand - continues the priest - there are those who think that the State of Mali did not obtain, with the signing of the agreements, the immediate disarmament of the men of the two Toureg rebel groups. The impression, however, is that the majority of the population has welcomed the peace agreement, because it wants a quick return to normality."
"The challenge now is the preparation of the election that will take place in one month and 10 days time. The State shall, in particular re-establish its own administration in the northern regions, " concluded Fr Dembele.
(L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 19/06/2013)

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