



## **AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - "The social fabric is completely torn" the Bishops write to the President of Transition**

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "The rebellion led by the coalition Seleka has shaken the foundations of national unity. The Central Africans live in fear and distrust." This is the cry of alarm launched by the Bishops of the Central African Republic in a message sent to the President of Transition, Michel Djotodia.

"Faithful to the Church's mission to proclaim Christ and to give voice to the voiceless" says the message, the Bishops trace an alarming picture of the state of the nation. At a social level "one has not yet finished counting the loss of human lives, and the rapes, looting, the burning of villages, the destruction of fields, violations and looting of private homes, families illegally dispossessed of their homes illegally occupied by a strong man or by an armed gang. The social fabric is completely torn." The same thing can be said in economic terms with the major sources of livelihood of the nation looted and destroyed, including the mining of gold and diamonds and the fauna (wild hunting of elephants and other species protected by gangs of poachers) and flora ( indiscriminate felling of valuable trees).

The Bishops also denounce that Seleka has created a parallel administration whose collection of tax benefits only those who control it. Added to this is the systematic destruction of the archives and the persecution of civil servants. "What lies behind this desire for destruction and annihilation of the national memory" is what is asked in the message. "These acts threaten the very existence of the nation."

In terms of safety, the Bishops denounce the uncontrolled dissemination of weapons and the strong presence among the ranks of Seleka of foreign mercenaries "who demand to be paid" and that systematically plunder the population.

But it is especially at a religious level "that the zeal and determination with which the elements of Seleka have desecrated Christian places of worship and looted the wealth of the Christians, have shaken the foundations of our social cohesion," denounces the message "

The Church reiterates its willingness to continue its cooperation with the State in education, healthcare and the search for peace and reconciliation, but calls for concrete measures to stabilize the situation (disarmament, repatriation of mercenaries, compensation to victims safety, etc.. .) to restore hope to the people of Central Africa. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 25/06/2013)