



AFRICA/CONGO DR - The instability of Katanga at the center of the Congolese political struggle

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - The failed assault on Kasapa prison in Lubumbashi by an armed commando highlights once again the insecurity in the province of Katanga.

The assault was carried out in the night between 22 and 23 June by a group of Mai-Mai Kata-Katanga rebels, but the reaction of the security forces prevented the commandos to make the inmates of the prison escape. Among them is a captain of the Congolese armed forces accused of being the point of reference for arms trafficking in the region in favor of local armed groups.

The Mai-Mai Kata-Katanga wanted to replicate the assault on the same prison in November 2011, which had allowed the escape of their leader, Gedeon Kyungu Mukange, who has been a fugitive since then.

The latter was guilty of several crimes in North Katanga, spreading terror among the population to the point that many residents were forced to take refuge in the forest.

The new assault in the center of the capital of Katanga once again poses the problem of complicity that the group led by Mukange seems to enjoy among the security forces. Also in March a few hundred Mai-Mai Kata-Katanga, fully armed, had challenged the authorities occupying for about 4 hours the central areas of Lubumbashi before retiring (see Fides 25/03/2013)

According to the Congolese press, the rich province of Katanga is at the crossroads of the political struggle in view of the upcoming 2016 presidential elections. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 26/6/2013)