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AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - Disarmament operations of the rebels start off slowly

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "It is estimated that in the Country there are about 25,000 rebels. Last week, according to local media, a hundred were disarmed. At this rate, it will take 5 years to disarm them all", says to Fides Agency Fr. Aurelio Gazzera, a Carmelite missionary, pastor in Bozoum, commenting on the start off of the disarmament of the rebel coalition Seleka in the capital of the Central African Republic, Bangui. "The rebels have disappeared from circulation, at least in Bangui, they took off their uniform and hid weapons, but they hide themselves among the population, waiting for the situation to evolve" adds Fr. Gazzera.
The disarmament of the rebels is led by the peacekeeping force in the countries of Central Africa (FOMAC). "The local press reported rumors spread among the population on the Chadian military that are part of FOMAC, during the day they confiscate weapons from the rebels, and then deliver them to the same groups at night", says the missionary.
The new authorities are committed to bringing the situation under control after former President François Bozizé was thrown out, "but the problem - as reported by the missionary - is that rebels are splitting into several groups that do not recognize any authority."
The Church that has suffered enormous damage due to the depredations of the rebels, continues its work to raise awareness on the situation of Central Africa, helping people to find hope again. "Here in Bozoum we have more limited damaged compared to other areas of the Country", said Fr. Gazzera. "But there are dioceses that have been completely destroyed; some do not even have a car (in a Country almost as large as France, ed.) while there are plenty of missions that have been destroyed...".
"Despite this, the Church is making an important contribution to raise awareness and give hope to a demoralized population," concludes the missionary. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 11/07/2013)

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