



AFRICA/CONGO - Bishops' appeal for the end of the war in Congo: conclusion of the Assembly of SECAM

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - The Bishops of Congo launch a strong appeal to African political leaders so that they "put an end to the war that has bloodied the Democratic Republic of Congo" and "not to work for their own interests, but for the good of all". These are the recommendations expressed at the conclusion of the General Assembly of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), held in Kinshasa (see Fides 10/07/2013). In the final message, sent to Fides Agency, the Bishops also invited all African citizens "to urgently commit themselves in the struggle for fair social order where everyone can enjoy the rights associated with their human dignity."

A strong denunciation of the African Bishops is pointed at the conflicts in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), resulting in deaths, atrocities, violence and rapes.

Remembering a war that has caused six million deaths in twenty years, and destabilizes the DRC causing serious human rights violations, the Bishops "call on all parties involved in the search for a solution to this war and to work actively for peace, " launching an appeal in this regard to the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union. A strong invitation is addressed to political leaders: the Bishops agreed to having to "raise awareness and educate political leaders in their respective countries to commit themselves to "the return of lasting peace in the DRC".

In order to fulfill their commitment to justice and reconciliation, the Bishops of SECAM adopted a "five-year strategic plan" for the period 2013-2018, which includes projects in the areas of governance. "We are determined to give strong signals: now it is up to each Episcopal Conference to identify specific interventions, empowering everyone involved," explained the vice president of SECAM, Mgr. Gabriel Mbilingi, Archbishop of Lubango, Angola.

"Today Africa needs a Good Samaritan in politics, able to think about the organization of society, so that the common good is the priority", said the Bishop of Kinkala (Congo), Mgr. Louis Portella Mbuyu, in his homily during the closing Mass of the Assembly. The attention to the common good, he remarked, means that political and economic leaders "have to manage the wealth and power not for themselves, but for their brothers and sisters, with the pride to bring well-being to everyone". (CE) (Agenzia Fides 15/07/2013)