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AFRICA/SOUTH SUDAN - Bishop Kussala: "The military presence is not the solution"

Juba (Agenzia Fides) - "The military presence is never a solution. The international community should do more to stop the LRA leader, Joseph Kony, but does not seem to have much desire" is what His Exc. Mgr. Edward Hiiboro Kussala, Bishop of Tambura-Yambio, in South Sudan said at a recent conference in Germany organized by the foundation "Aid to the Church in Need" (ACS).
As is reported in a note sent to Fides by ACS, in his diocese, on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo, every day the population is the victim of violence by rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army, a group founded in 1987 and operating in Uganda, South Sudan, Congo and the Central African Republic.
"The guerrillas of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) - says the Bishop - kidnap our children, sett fire to homes and kill many people. The faithful are terrified and many prefer to leave their homes, with a worrying increase in the number of displaced persons". Msg. Hiiboro knows what it means to be a refugee. He was only nine months old when his village was attacked and his mother was killed: since then has lived in a refugee camp for many years.
To increase security level, the region where is the diocese of Tambura-Yambio is situated has long been under the control of the Ugandan and South Sudanese armies, as well as the U.S. contingent and the African Union: "Our politicians have placed great faith in the military, but so far their presence has proved to be useless".
Exactly two years after independence – on July 9, 2011 following a popular referendum - South Sudan still bears the scars of the long and wrenching civil war with the North, which lasted from 1983 to 2005, which claimed the lives to over 2 million people and created hundreds of thousands of refugees. The Bishop hopes that "the political class makes further efforts in dialogue for peace". The Church plays an important role in this long and arduous process, pushing for peace through diplomatic channels and educating the South Sudanese to reconciliation. (PA)
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