



AFRICA/NIGERIA - Boko Haram liable to prosecution by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity

Abuja (Agenzia Fides) - The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has released a preliminary report on the Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram, according to which it can be assumed that the acts attributed to its members are crimes against humanity

"The information available provide a reasonable basis for believing that in July 2009 Boko Haram launched a widespread and systematic attack that resulted in the deaths of 1,200 civilians, Muslims and Christians in different parts of Nigeria", wrote Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the 'ICC in the report. Her report was based on evidence collected up to December 2012.

Ms. Bensouda also states that among the possible crimes against humanity, there are murders and persecution, adding, however, that one can start a full-fledged criminal investigation only after further investigation. The start of a criminal investigation by the International Criminal Court also depends on the ability or inability of Nigerian authorities to pursue independently "those who appear to have the major responsibility" in these crimes.

Ms. Bensouda finally pointed out that even if the Nigerian government forces may have committed human rights violations during the conduct of operations against Boko Haram, at least until December 2012, there is no evidence that the military deliberately targeted civilians. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 06/08/2013)