



AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - 60 people die in new clashes; a missionary: "the people are exasperated while there are those who feed the religious clash"

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - At least 60 people were killed in a series of battles in different areas of the north-west area of the Central African Republic, in particular around Bossangoa, which took place between the 8th and 9th of September. This was stated by a spokesman of President Michel Djotodia, who states that the origin of the clashes seem to be men who remained loyal to the deposed Head of State, François Bozizé, who allegedly attacked the fighters of the coalition Seleka (which came to power in March).

In an interview with Fides Agency Fr. Aurelio Gazzera, a Carmelite missionary, who is in Bozoum, about 120 km from the area affected by the clashes, however, describes a more complex scenario.

"From what I can understand in these clashes there are different groups involved", said Fr. Gazzera. "We are facing a mix of military of the deposed President, and of rebels of the APRD (Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la Démocratie), at least according to what I have been told. This group had begun the process of disarmament and demobilization under the regime of Bozizé, but after the coming to power of the coalition Seleka, a part of the APRD reorganized and rearmed themselves. We must also add that the people are exasperated due to months and months of violence and looting by Seleka", said Fr. Gazzera.

The missionary also warns that "tensions between different religious communities are becoming more and more worrying. This is because unknown gangs attack Muslim populations, causing the reactions of Seleka that attack Christians". "There is someone who wants to provoke a sectarian conflict and that for now remains in the shadows, using local groups" concludes Fr. Gazzera. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 10/09/2013)