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AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - The rebels continue to harass the population despite the dissolution of Seleka

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "What can you do, these things happen!". In an interview with Fides Agency Fr. Aurelio Gazzera, a missionary talks about what happened to him on September 16 when he went to negotiate with the rebels of Seleka for the release of some boys captured and brutally tortured (to the point that both lost an eye and have their arms paralyzed). "Once he arrived at the base of Seleka - says the missionary - there was only one gunman. Prisons were full. I began to ask when they intend to finish torturing people and keep them in prison. Other rebels came and I asked where he the boss was. They told me that he was in the house across the street, where "Colonel" of Seleka resides.
"The "Colonel" arrived" continues Fr. Aurelio. "I said that I came to protest against abuses, and I explained what happened. He replied that it is their job. I replied that it is not their job to arrest people, and in particular to beat them up. Then I asked the release of at least one prisoner, who was serious, but he refused. And it is at this point that another "Colonel" - (named Goni) arrived, screaming that he would have killed me. I had no right to come to intercede for people arrested. He threatened me with a gun, and then gave me a slap", concludes Fr. Aurelio. "My regret is that I did not manage to release at least one person", he says .
President Michel Djotodia, announced the dissolution of Seleka, but according to Fr. Aurelio "This is a window dressing. The rebels are here and intend to stay, trying to extort as much as possible from a poor population". "Even the disarmament of the members of Seleka in the capital Bangui, led to the recovery of about 150 weapons, when one knows that the rebels are at least 25,000" stresses Fr. Aurelio.
The Central African Republic remains in a precarious situation despite the deployment of peacekeeping force soldiers in neighboring Countries .
In Bossangoa, in the northwest of the Central African Republic, Seleka and men loyal to ousted President François Bozizé clashed in recent days (see Fides 12/09/2013) . "It is difficult to know the situation around Bossangoa, because phone lines are terrible and people fleeing from the area do not always knows what is going on", says the missionary. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 18/09/2013)

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