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AFRICA/CAMEROON - French priest kidnapped by Boko Haram: to Fides the testimony of the previous pastor

Yaounde (Agenzia Fides) - Fr. Georges Vandenbeusch was abducted by Boko Haram and was taken to Nigeria. This was officially announced by the Cameroonian authorities. The French priest was taken away by fifteen armed men who spoke English, Hausa and Kanuri on November 13 in his parish in Nguetchewe in the north of the country (see Fides 14/11/2013).
Fides Agency contacted the previous pastor of Nguetchewe, Don Felice Cantoni, of the diocese of Como. "Fr. Georges took my place when I left the parish of Nguetchewe, in 2011. We stayed in touch for a year and a half, because I went to found another parish a little further away, right on the border with Nigeria. Fr .Georges is a good priest who was working well", said Don Felice.
From the story of the Italian priest it is understood that the area has long been an area at risk. "I risked being killed too, but in my case they did not belong to the Boko Haram sect but common criminals who had come to rob a nun" says Don Felice. "At the cries of the religious I left my house to see what was happening".
"We are on the border with Nigeria, but so far the problem was local banditry. The mission of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux has been robbed several times. Unfortunately, I have often had to bury the poor peasants who had tried to object to the theft of cattle and killed", recalls Don Felice .
"Now we are faced with the Islamist sect Boko Haram that had already kidnapped a French family in Cameroon a few months ago (which was then released). But the Nigerian conflict already resented the presence of several refugees from across the border who were fleeing from the violence of the sect", adds Don Felice. "My prayers and my thoughts go out to Fr. Georges, so that he will soon be released safe and sound", said the priest. (L.M.)
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