



AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - "In Central Africa we risk a new bloodbath" says a missionary

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "The situation in the Central African Republic is very tense everywhere", writes Fr. Aurelio Gazzera to Fides Agency, a Carmelite missionary who has just returned from Bangui to Bozoum, where he lives and works. Fr. Aurelio took part in a session of Caritas in the capital, which was attended by the leaders of all the 9 dioceses in the Country.

The missionary was able to gather first-hand information on different areas of Central Africa.

"In Bossangoa (where at the end of September clashes between members of Seleka and armed groups linked to former President Bozizé forced the population to flee, see Fides 21/09/2013), there are still 41,000 refugees. In Bangui, the capital, there have been fights for more than a week every day always in different neighborhoods, with victims (killed by the Seleka rebels) and reactions from the people" refers Fr. Aurelio.

"In Bangui I managed to meet the management of several institutions, and all are very concerned because they expect something to happen from one day to another. Some indicate clear signs of preparation for the departure of government ministers" continues Fr. Aurelio.

The missionary stresses some hypotheses to explain the increase of such tension. "First of all, on 27 November the UN Security Council will have to decide on the possibility of an intervention in Central Africa. This intervention could be more than just a peacekeeping force, because they all have appealed to Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which opens the way for a military intervention with the right to use force (as in the DRC)". 3600 military of the Central Africa Countries will be called to act and in December they should begin to operate within MISCA.

In addition there are "always increasing reactions to crimes committed by Seleka rebels: the establishment of formations (called "anti Balaka") formed by civilians exasperated by the behavior of the rebels. The anti Balaka have been working in Bossangoa, in Bouar and elsewhere".

"Finally - says Fr. Aurelio - the dissolution of Seleka, announced by President Djotodjia, had no repercussion but provoked nervousness in the rebels".

"The consequence of these factors is the fact that many rebels appear busy to steal as much as possible, and leave at the right moment. There is also fear (and it is more than possible) of a bloodbath, with the elimination of any witnesses, who in one way or another have reacted or denounced the crimes of these 8 months", says the missionary. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 18/11/2013)