



ASIA/MYANMAR - Over 2,000 newly displaced people in Kachin areas: alarm on behalf of Caritas

Yangon (Agenzia Fides) - Despite the ongoing peace negotiations, the skirmishes between the government and the armed forces of Myanmar the "Kachin Independence Army" (KIA) are increasing and have created over 2,000 new IDPs in areas where the ethnic Kachin people live, an ethnic minority composed of mainly Christians living in the north of Myanmar. This was reported to Fides Agency in a joint statement issued by "Karuna Myanmar" (which is the local Caritas), together with other humanitarian organizations in the area, such as "Kachin Baptist Convention", "Kachin Development Group", "Metta Development Foundation" , "Shalom Foundation".

As reported to Fides, recent clashes have forced Kachin residents of the area, near the village of Nam Lim Pa, to flee their homes. The refugees were cut off and surrounded in the area of war for more than three weeks without the granting of the creation of a humanitarian corridor. In the village there was a boarding school that housed 700 students and 34 teachers, surrounded by troops and freed only after the mediation of Caritas. The latest fighting has worsened the situation of people who were already displaced, forcing them to new displacements.

Karuna and other NGOs have launched an urgent appeal: "A peaceful resolution of conflicts in Myanmar is a key priority for the welfare of the population and the country's future: we demand an immediate cessation of hostilities". NGOs ask for "respect for international humanitarian law and international Conventions on human rights and on the protection of civilians in war zones. The warring parties must respect the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants and avoid civilian casualties", it said. It also asks the warring parties "to allow free access to humanitarian organizations in support of all internally displaced persons, regardless of their location". Caritas says it is "extremely concerned about the children who are traumatized, displaced persons and students, asking for more aid in order to face food emergency and education". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 19/11/2013)