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AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - "The whole country is terrorized": new testimonies on the drama of Central Africa

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - Fides received further dramatic testimony from the Central African Republic, gripped by clashes between former Seleka rebels and "anti Balaka" self-defense groups, while the French troops of the African Union are doing their best to ensure a minimum of security.
"The whole country is terrorised" refers to Caritas Internationalis Fr. Anicet Assingambi of the parish of St. Carlo of Lwanga, in the north of Bangui, the capital. Tens of thousands of people are seeking shelter in Bangui's church buildings and church compounds throughout the country.
"There are five thousand people hiding in our parish buildings. A woman told me she'd seen her brother gunned down. All men are shot at if they go outside. There is a young man dead on the street outside, but it's too dangerous to go outside to remove his body", says Fr. Assingambi.
"We have nothing to give them" - says Fr . Assingambi. "Their homes have been looted. They're mourning their dead. When they arrived in the church, the children were crying. We sang hymns and said prayers and that has helped calm people down. We have never seen anything as bad as this before. We're at the mercy of God, please pray for us".
The statement sent to Fides says that at the moment it is impossible for Caritas workers to reach out to the people in need.
In Bossangoa in the north of the Country , Caritas fears for the safety of over 40,000 people camped out in the Catholic mission compound and 1,600 people who are hiding in a school. Yesterday, December 6, a rocket landed in the mission miraculously not killing anyone.
The Catholic Church in Central African Republic is calling for an immediate cease-fire and for humanitarian aid to be allowed. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 07/12/2013)

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