



AFRICA/SOUTH SUDAN - 5,000 refugees welcomed in the Cathedral of Juba

Juba (Agenzia Fides) - About 5,000 people have taken refuge in the cathedral in Juba, capital of South Sudan, for days in the grip of violent clashes between rival factions of the army, respectively loyal to President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar.

The Auxiliary Bishop of Juba, Mgr. Santo Loku Pio Doggale said that refugees are sleeping in the open air and that many of them, including several children, have contracted diseases. The presence of such a large number of people is also creating serious health problems, and there is a risk of a cholera outbreak.

The UN headquarters in South Sudan have welcomed tens of thousands of people (we are talking about 35,000 displaced persons).

In the meantime, there are political and diplomatic initiatives to defuse the crisis. A joint delegation of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Uganda and Sudan arrived in Juba to attempt for mediation. Even the United States have announced the sending of a special emissary.

This activity appears to have produced a first result with the statement of President Kiir who said that he is ready to talk "without condition" with Machar. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 21/12/2013)