



AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - Joint appeal of the Archbishop of Bangui and the Imam "for a UN force"

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - Despite the intervention of French and African troops, the situation in the Central African Republic, remains precarious. "The Central African Republic remains on the verge of a war with religious aspects" warned Mgr. Dieudonné Nzapalainga, Archbishop of Bangui, and Omar Kobine Layama, Imam of the Central African capital, in a joint appeal published by the French newspaper "Le Monde". "Nearly half the population "desperately need aid", and about 40,000 people have taken refuge at Bangui airport where they are living without shelter or toilet facilities", write the two religious leaders who call on the UN to deploy a peacekeeping force "with the utmost urgency".

Meanwhile, Caritas networks have mobilized to bring aid to victims. Caritas of the United States (Catholic relief services - CRS), with the support of the French (Secours Catholique), has launched a program in favor of Bossangoa, a town in the north of the Country, where since the beginning of the fighting tens of thousands of people have taken refuge near the Catholic mission. The program, which will last until August, also provides for the distribution of aid to another site, where the majority of the displaced are Muslims. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 02/01/2014)