



## **AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - "We need to get out of the logic of religious conflict, we are in front of criminal acts", said the Bishop of Bossangoa**

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - The Christian and Muslim communities "are held hostage by the criminal logic" of groups that are confronting each other in the Central African Republic, said Mgr. Nestor Désiré Nongo Aziagbia, Bishop of Bossangoa, in a message addressed to the faithful at Christmas.

Tracing the recent history of the Country, the Bishop recalls that just a year ago in December 2012, the rebellion Seleka initiated its offensive and President Bozizé was ousted by the rebels.

"The changes promised by these vendors of illusions have brought nothing but suffering to the people of Central Africa " denounces Mgr. Nongo Aziagbia. "Rapes, murders, kidnappings for ransom, robbery, burning of fields and homes, acts of vandalism against the administrative structures, destruction of the municipal archives, looting of church structures, desecration of churches. There is desolation everywhere". In reaction to the violence suffered, the population formed self-defense militias known as anti Balaka ("anti machete", referring to the weapon used by Seleka to maim and kill their victims).

Clashes between Seleka and anti Balaka have now degenerated into a criminal logic, and the population pay the price. In Bossangoa, the Bishop writes , "the city is now reduced to two main points: the Bishopric where about 50.0000 people are crammed and the Liberté school where over 8,000 displaced refugees from the Muslim community are situated. In Bouca about 3,500 people have been welcomed in the local mission". (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 08/01/2014)