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AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - Bishops Message: "Let us rebuild our Country together in peace"

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "It is important to re-create the conditions of harmonious coexistence, in the interest of each one of us and of our beloved nation, by taking courageous measures, with the help of the international community". This is the appeal launched by the Bishops of the Central African Republic in their message entitled "Let us rebuild our country together in peace", published on 8 January and sent to Fides.
Remembering that Christmas celebrates the birth of the Prince of Peace, "the one who frees man from his fears", the Bishops stressed that "sadly we have made it a day of tears and mourning. While the world, was celebrating this happy event, we were spending our time killing one another. The people of Bossangoa, Bouar, Bozoum, Gaga and Bangui have been particularly traumatised by this fratricidal violence". The message expresses sorrow for the nationals from neighboring Countries "who have been settled for decades in Central Africa and have contributed to the development of our Country" forced to flee the violence. "It is equally disheartening to hear some of our countrymen speaking of the partition of the Central African Republic", the Bishops added.
The message was published shortly before the resignation of President Michel Djotodia and the Prime Minister Nicolas Tiengaye (see Fides 01/11/2014). The President of the National Transitional Council, Alexandre -Ferdinand Nguendet, has assumed the position of ad Interim Head of State.
According to the Bishops to lead the Country out of this "unprecedented crisis" we must rebuild the military and police apparatus to secure the lives and property of all; minimize the transition period and to organize new elections as soon as possible; create an independent international commission of inquiry to investigate human rights violations in Central Africa; reconsider the presence of Chadian troops ("because for 10 years, relations between Chad and the Central African have led the people of Central African to mistrust the Chadian army and to regard it as a threat"); to disarm, demobilize and repatriate Chadian – Sudanese; promote dialogue between believers of different religions living together in Central Africa.
The Bishops finally thank the international community for the help offered to the Country. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 13/01/2014)

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