



AFRICA/SOUTH SUDAN – East African Bishops: Appeal to ensure corridors for humanitarian access and expansion of the table of negotiations

Juba (Agenzia Fides) - Appeal to ensure corridors for humanitarian access to the peoples who have fled the fighting in South Sudan. This is the appeal by AMECEA (Association of Members of the Episcopal Conference of East Africa) in a statement sent to Fides Agency. "Let the international community know that there is a moral obligation to intervene on behalf of the many people in South Sudan whose very survival is threatened and whose basic human rights are seriously violated" the document stresses.

Despite the ceasefire reached in Addis Ababa between the representatives of the two rival factions of the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) that have been fighting since December 15, the situation in South Sudan is still unstable. The government and rebels accuse each other of various violations of the truce.

The statement of AMECEA stresses the need to "expand the table of negotiations" involving not only the government and the rebels, but also all the components of the south Sudanese society.

It is important to point out that the independence of South Sudan "should never be looked at as solely military success. It is the south Sudanese as a people who were fighting for liberation. It therefore means that every effort should be made to avoid the militarization of the management and day to day running of the affairs of South Sudan".

"The Church also played a crucial role in the struggles for their independence", the Bishops said and stressed that the majority of South Sudanese have been baptized, a fact that should help local people to overcome ethnic and tribal divisions. "We admire the strong ecumenical bond that has existed between the different churches in South Sudan. It is in the unity of the prophetic voice of the Church leaders that the people were inspired to find their identity as one united people of south Sudan" reaffirm the Bishops who conclude by entrusting the Country to the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace and Queen Africa.

AMECEA brings together the Bishops' Conferences of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 27/01/2014)