



AFRICA/SOUTH SUDAN - The facilities built in eight years have been destroyed in a month: denounces the Apostolic Administrator of Malakal

Juba (Agenzia Fides) - The Diocese of Malakal (Upper Nile in the capital of South Sudan) has been completely destroyed because of the fighting between the two rival factions of the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement, the ruling party), respectively led by President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar. This was denounced by the Apostolic Administrator of the diocese, Mgr. Roko Taban Musa, in his homily during Sunday Mass which he presided in the parish of St. Kizito in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, where he is to attend the Plenary Assembly of the Local Bishops' Conference.

As reported by Radio Bakhita, Mgr. Taban said that in a month of fighting all the facilities built in eight years of sacrifice in the States of Upper Nile, Unità and Jonglei have been destroyed.

Despite the ceasefire signed on 23 January in Addis Ababa, the UN Mission in South Sudan continues to record sporadic fighting in the Upper Nile and Jonglei State. Both sides accuse each other of violating the truce and crimes against civilians. The Sudan Tribune reported the allegations of a spokesman for Machar who accused government soldiers and an allied militia, from the southern Blue Nile State (in Sudan on the border with South Sudan) of having committed atrocities against civilians after the reconquest of Malakal. In particular, soldiers and militiamen loyal to the President seem to have killed civilians belonging to ethnic Nuer, Shilluk and Dinka Bor, by looking for them from house to house. Among the victims there is a Protestant pastor.

According to the rebels these atrocities are attributable, at least in part, to the lack of a clear chain of command of the forces of Kiir, who are divided into three distinct groups: the personal and tribal militia of the President, the regular army, and the force of Ugandan intervention.

The allegations of atrocities committed by the regular army were rejected by the authorities in Juba. (L.M.)

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