



## **AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - Imam of Bangui: "If we want peace, we must be impartial and condemn all forms of violence"**

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "We cannot ignore what Seleka has done, and provoked today's anti-Muslim reactions", said the Imam of Bangui, Oumar Kobine Layama in an interview with metronews.fr, stating that "some Imams present the situation in the Central African Republic with a partial view; they only denounce the violence of Christians against Muslims, without mentioning what Seleka has done. (..) When they were in power, they were not able to handle the situation in the Country, they looted and committed violence. If the Central African Muslims had not opted for complicit silence, all this would not have lasted more than a month. If we want peace, we must be impartial and condemn all forms of violence".

Seleka is a coalition of rebel groups, mostly composed of Muslims, who had seized power in Central Africa in March 2013 and then were thrown out by Anti Balaka groups, often described as Christians (although the history of these groups is more complex, see Fides 27/01/2014 ). The Anti Balaka were responsible, in turn, of crimes against Muslims, but also of Christians.

Imam Kobine reiterated that the Central African crisis is "political and military, not religious". "No religious leader in the Country has launched an appeal regarding religious clash: the proof is that we live together", added the Imam, who together with the Catholic Archbishop of Bangui continues to launch appeals for peace and to visit the displaced. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 05/03/2014)