



AFRICA/SOUTH SUDAN - Christian leaders' appeal: "Stop the violence, this is not the future for which the people of the Country voted"

Juba (Agenzia Fides) - "The current situation can never be resolved through military means; instead the war lengthens and aggravates it to undesirable situation. The warring parties should therefore put the interest of the people of this country first than individual ambitions", reads a statement from South Sudan Council of Churches, the body that brings together leaders from different religious denominations in South Sudan (including the Catholic Church).

The statement was sent to Fides Agency following reports that the country's rival forces lately clashed in various parts of the oil-producing Unity and Upper Nile States.

Religious leaders urged the warring parties to respect the terms of the ceasefire agreement, which they signed on 23 January in Addis Ababa (see Fides 24/01/2014). "It is a very fragile ceasefire and the international community should demonstrate strong commitment towards making the two sides respect the terms" the document states.

The current crisis has caused a very serious humanitarian crisis; this is why Christian leaders ask not only for the end of hostilities but especially international aid "for the displaced, whose properties have been destroyed".

Referring to the 2011 referendum which led to the independence of the country from Sudan, the document concludes that "this is not the future for which the people of the Country voted. People want a free and independent state. The people voted to live in peace and in communion of love with one another as brothers and sisters and people of God". (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 15/04/2014)