



## **AFRICA/KENYA - Assault on Mpeketoni: "If who was stopped on the street was a Christian, he was killed", says the Bishop of Malindi**

Nairobi (Agenzia Fides) - "I was in contact with our pastors and our religious sisters during the course of the attack", says to Fides Agency Mgr. Emanuel Barbara, Bishop of Malindi and Apostolic Administrator in Mombasa, where yesterday, June 15, an armed commando caused deaths and destruction, attacking the local police station, hotels and other buildings.

"There are three parishes and four convents of nuns in Mpeketoni. A convent is located in the center of town. Thank God, the sisters were not involved in the assault. I told them to turn off the light and not to move from the convent", said Bishop Barbara.

According to the reconstruction of the Bishop, "the attack began at half past eight in the evening yesterday, when about 50 guerrillas arrived in the center of Mpeketoni, immediately attacking the police station, where they looted the armory and killed a policeman. Then they destroyed an antenna for mobile phones, but fortunately there was another, so I was able to stay in touch with the priests and nuns. Finally, the guerrillas attacked two hotels and stopped passing motorists and pedestrians, asking them whether they were Muslims or Christians. If they were Christians they killed them".

"As far as we know, so far there have been 48 victims, but it is still not a final toll", adds Bishop Barbara. "The police reinforcements arrived an hour later, when the assailants had fled. Now they are looking for them in the forest. We do not even know where they came from. Some say from Malindi, while others claim they come from Somalia. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack, but the modus operandi is that of the Somali Shabaab. Everything was well organized, the commandos knew the city very well".

"We are very concerned, because the attack comes at a time of tension between the government and opposition. At a social level, despite the country's economic growth, the wealth produced does not reach a good part of the population. For this reason I ask you to pray for us, so that Kenyans do not let themselves be carried away by the temptation of hatred", concluded Mgr. Barbara. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 16/06/2014)