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ASIA/IRAQ - Council of Christian Church Leaders: “We ask the government for peace and security”

Baghdad (Agenzia Fides) – "We're waiting to see which direction and what guidelines the new government will follow. We hope that the government's plans call for peace and security.” This is what Fides learned from Archbishop Avak Asadourian, Primate of the Armenian Orthodox Church of Iraq and Secretary General of the Iraqi Council of Christian Church Leaders, which brings together leaders of 14 Christian churches in the country. Commenting on the results of the elections, the Archbishop tells Fides about some good signs: "Many citizens have participated in the vote. There was a high level of participation among Christians, as well. Now all we are waiting to see is which direction the government will take. We hope that the guiding principle of action will be to ensure peace and security to the nation, as this is the basis for genuine democracy and for rebuilding infrastructure and work."

On the sentiments among leaders and the Christian community, the Archbishop told Fides: "The Christians have hopes for a stable and strong government. We are citizens of Iraq and we have been in this land, our home, for millennia. Politicians leading the country say they hope that Christians will remain in the country and continue to contribute. We ask them not to remain in good intentions, but to put them into practice through works," ensuring a peaceful life to Christian minorities, who are still under fierce attack.

On direct commitment in politics, Archbishop Asadourian says: "There are now 5 Christians in Parliament and this is a step forward from the previous Parliament, where there was only one. But it's not enough. We encourage lay Christians to become involved in social life and engage in good politics, to support Christian values such as respect for human dignity and fundamental human freedoms."

The Council of Christian Church Leaders in Iraq was established on Feb. 10 in Baghdad as a coordinating body among the Christian leaders in Iraq. It includes 14 communities: the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Assyrian Church, the Assyrian Catholic Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Syro-Catholic Church, the Armenian-Orthodox Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Greek Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Latin Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Assyrian Evangelical Church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, and the Coptic Orthodox Church. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 29/3/2010)

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