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AFRICA/KENYA - Bishops reject proposed Constitution: "To vote for the constitution is to vote for all of it, including its good and its bad provisions. It is impossible to separate them."

Nairobi (Agenzia Fides) – "We therefore repeat our advice to the people of Kenya to reject this proposed Constitution of Kenya," affirmed the Bishops of Kenya in their press statement issued today, May 11. The bishops observed, "We do not believe that a document that is fundamentally flawed should be passed only with a very vague hope that it will be amended later, especially when the process of amendment is more difficult after than before."

There are two objections that the Catholic Church, along with other Christian confessions, have to the new draft of the Constitution. The first concerns the clause that shifts the beginning of life from conception to birth. This proposal is seen by the Church as paving the way for the legalization of abortion. The second objection concerns the recognition of the Muslim civil courts, the Kadhi Courts. The new draft of the Constitution will be approved by a referendum.

"To vote for the constitution is to vote for all of it, including its good and its bad provisions. It is impossible to separate them," says the statement from the Bishops' Conference. "All people of good will who vote for the proposed constitution of Kenya because of some provisions that they like, are also responsible for voting for the morally problematic provisions in the proposed constitution of Kenya." "We cannot in good conscience advise Kenyans to vote for the proposed constitution of Kenya with the hope of future amendments. We also cannot in good conscience leave the matter to Kenyans without giving our considered advice in moral matters so that they can form their consciences in accord with the will of God expressed to us through the moral laws that form part of our cherished Christian tradition," the bishops affirm.

"The constitution is not a bag of potatoes for which one can remove five bad potatoes and retain the 95 that seem to be good. It is like an egg that is delicate and has to be well preserved. And if it begins to go bad, it goes bad wholly and you cannot separate the good from bad," concluded the statement. (LM) (Agenzia Fides 12/5/2010)

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