



AFRICA/NIGER - National Pact among political and social representatives from Niger signed in Rome

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - "After a week of meetings and work, on October 15, the military junta of Niger (CSRD), the government, the parliament of transition (CCN), the major political forces and civil society signed in Rome at the headquarters of the Community of Sant'Egidio, a national pact which paves the way for a peaceful transition toward institutions elected by the people," says a statement that was sent to Fides.

The delegations, at the highest level, jointly launched an appeal to support the democratic transition underway. It calls on all political actors to conduct, in mutual respect, tolerance, and respect for the law, a peaceful election campaign, outlawing all forms of action and propaganda that incite violence, ethnic, regional, religious, or sexist hatred or hinder the free expression of opinion; to social actors and the media, to adopt responsible behavior and mechanisms that contribute to the success of the electoral process; the entire political class to accept and respect the results from the polls and to submit all disputes to the courts.

It also calls on them to adopt, as soon as possible, a pact that commits the Republican forces in the nation to defending the democratic and human rights framework, to promoting republican values, governance of peace and progress, and to establishing permanent mechanisms of prevention and conflict management, as well as to holding, as soon as possible, a forum on national unity, peace, and security in Niger, with the hope it will that ensure effective representation of all components of the nation.

Finally, there is an appeal to all stakeholders and government officials to promote inclusiveness in the conduct of public affairs and ensure better management of national resources for the benefit of the people of Niger. The transition authorities and candidates are asked to create the conditions for strengthening and consolidating peace and security throughout the country, particularly in the north. The institutional and socio-political authorities should promote citizenship education, civic duty, as well as the promotion of democratic culture and peace in Niger.

After the military coup of February, the military junta pledged to bring democracy to Niger. On October 31, there will be a constitutional referendum, followed by a January 31, 2011 presidential election.

The Niger, a country that in Africa has been a hub of interesting democratic progresses in the 90's, has long been in political instability. Country with precious resources such as uranium, it has become one of the hinges of stability and instability of Sahelian Africa and an international crossroad for the decisive struggle against terrorism, pivot of a geopolitical area sensitive to the battle being waged between the forces of stability and of law, international traffics, recruitment and training of terrorist forces operating internationally. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 18/10/2010)