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AFRICA/KENYA - Growing fears of clashes over the announcement of politicians indicted by the International Criminal Court

Nairobi (Agenzia Fides) - “The Kenyan political class seems united in claiming national sovereignty and in making an appeal to the patriotic pride of Kenyans,” a source from the local Church in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, tells Fides. Here expectation and tension grows in anticipation today, 15 December, of the publication by the International Criminal Court (ICC) of the names of the six Kenyan politicians suspected of being primarily responsible for the post-electoral violence in 2008 that caused over 1,300 deaths. The crisis was resolved with the creation of a coalition composed of the two contenders in the presidential elections of December 2007: Mwai Kibaki, who became President and Raila Odinga, who under agreement was appointed Prime Minister.

“Because the people accused are from both the presidential camp and that of the Prime Minister, the fear is that we put at risk the stability of the coalition that put an end to the violence of 2008. The request for indictment of these Kenyans also falls at a delicate time because the electoral campaign for the 2012 President has commenced. Among the people that could be put in there may be charged, according to some thinking, even two presidential candidates,” says the Fides source.

The country is growing in concern that the publication of names of the persons indicted could provoke a new wave of violence similar to that of 2008. The violence feared by many people seems more a threat than a real possibility because at least, in the opinion of some observers, there does not seem to be the same organization on the ground that made the incidents of 2008 possible,” affirmed the Fides source.

“The call for indictment comes on the heels of an atmosphere of tension between Kenya and the United States following the publication on Wikileaks of some messages from the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, very critical of the level of corruption by Kenyan politicians. In part, the local political forces have seen this as an affront to national sovereignty. President Kibaki, in his speech on Sunday, 12 December, the anniversary of Kenya's independence, appealed to the people to defend the sovereignty of Kenya. The indictment of some local politicians by the ICC, risks creating new grounds for friction between Kenya and the West, to the benefit of other powers that are being inserted into African geopolitics,” concludes the Fides source. (LM) (Agenzia Fides 15/12/2010)

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