



AFRICA/CENTRAL AFRICA - "The elections are valid, even if biased by irregularities" affirms the Commission for Justice and Peace

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "The elections are valid, even if biased by irregularities" affirms the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Episcopal Conference of Central Africa, defining the presidential and legislative elections of 23 January (see Fides 22/1/2011). A message sent to Fides states that, on the basis of reports by 504 Central African observers (and five international observers) from Justice and Peace, various irregularities took place: delays, delayed distribution of election material, not displaying the voter lists in some polling stations, intimidation by the administrative authorities and military towards voters and scrutineers, attempted fraud, etc.... "Despite these reports, we believe that the vote has retained its credibility because we are convinced that the ways of recourse under the law will do justice to the irregularities, especially since all parties concerned have recourse to legal action by the competent court," the statement said. The document also addresses a number of recommendations to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC): to improve the quality of its work before the second round of voting takes place; to rapidly announce the provisional results; to improve training for election officials.

The outcome of the elections of 23 January has not yet been announced. The Commission for Justice and Peace thus calls "Christians - and all citizens - to wait patiently for the results." (LM) (Agenzia Fides 1/2/2011)