



AFRICA/CAMEROON - "The future of Cameroon is in our hands" recall the Bishops on the occasion of tomorrow's presidential election

Yaounde (Agenzia Fides) - More than 7 million voters are called to vote tomorrow, Sunday, Oct. 9, to elect the Head of the State of Cameroon. Of the 23 candidates, the favorite is the outgoing President, Paul Biya, who has been in power for 29 years.

To contribute to a peaceful and smooth running of the consultation, the Bishops of Cameroon have decided to deploy within the national territory some independent election observers. On May 30, the Episcopal Conference issued a pastoral Letter in which thoughts on the election are expressed. "The future of Cameroon is in our hands", write the Bishops underlining the responsibility of every citizen of the country to work for peace and build the common good.

The Letter points out the fundamental values that "make the greatness of a nation and that are imposed on us". These include the dignity of each human being (which involves, among other things, respect for human rights, women and children and human life from conception to natural death); respect for the common good with a fair distribution of national resources "so that no citizen should feel excluded from the effects of growth"; the preservation of public goods "which should materialize in our case with the return of public funds by those who were convicted of their reversal" ; national unity in the diversity of tribes and ethnic groups "to build the new family that is the nation" and a system of social security and health care affordable to all.

In the pastoral Letter all voters are called to go to the polls and reject all forms of violence and provocation. Similarly, the authorities, candidates and political parties, as well as law enforcement and media representatives are invited to work for peace and for the proper conduct of the vote, avoiding any form of manipulation.

The Bishops then ask the international community to respect the sovereignty of the country and to observe a "total neutrality during the election process". (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 08/10/2011)