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AFRICA/TUNISIA - "Whoever governs, will have to deal with the people's high expectations," says the Archbishop of Tunis to Fides

Tunis (Agenzia Fides) - "For being the first truly free elections in the history of Tunisia, held on October 23, it was a success", says His Exc. Mgr. Maroun Elias Lahham, Archbishop of Tunis to Fides. In the elections for the Constituent Assembly held on Sunday, October 23, the Islamist Ennahda party obtained 41% of the votes. The party leadership has announced the formation of a new government within 10 days and the drafting of the new Constitution within a year.
"The result must be accepted and let us give the winners time to put into practice what they promised during the campaign. It will certainly not be easy, because they only have a year to draft the Constitution and carry out other important reforms. People expect everything at once, something that Ennahda or any other party can hardly ensure" says Mgr. Laham.
To disturb the peaceful atmosphere of the elections, riots broke out on October 28 in Sidi Bouzid, where authorities imposed a curfew, then revoked. The demonstrators took to the streets to protest the exclusion of six lists of Petition Popoulaire, a formation led by Hechmi Haamdi, a wealthy businessman, said to be linked to the deposed President Ben Ali.
"It was a minor episode, which is now past", says the Archbishop of Tunis. "Hechmi Haamdi set up his campaign on demagogy, trying to entice the poorest part of the electorate with promises such as a subsidy for the unemployed. When his list was excluded due to voting irregularities, his supporters took to the streets provoking incidents, but now seems a concluded episode. This name is also too close to Ben Ali to be really popular among the majority of Tunisians", concluded Archbishop Laham. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 31/10/2011)

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