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ASIA/TURKEY- The problematic crucial points for religious minorities and for those who have converted to Christianity

Istanbul (Agenzia Fides) - Despite the openess of Premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the restitution of properties to churches and other communities, the problems that Turkey's religious minorities live are significant. According to what is reported by the Turkish newspaper "Begun", these are issues that have clear historical and social roots, notes a source of Fides in Turkey.

Decades ago, there were areas in the country in which minorities such as Christians or Jews were the majority. The Ottoman Empire - writes "Begun" – was able to maintain the balance between religious groups, although the Muslim community was the majority, allowing cultural and religious autonomy for all groups. But the Republic of Turkey, since 1923, has radically changed this approach, creating "a hierarchy based on the ethnic politics of centralization". Because of this ideology, minorities have had many problems in the country and, as it is well known, many have left the country, living in conditions of marginalization.

"The problems of those converted to Christianity are no less important", the paper said. The Turkish Muslims citizens converted to Christianity are not even considered "minorities". "They cannot enjoy the same rights and are ignored by the Turkish State". They are always monitored by the police, because considered 'traitors of the country'. For this, notes the source of Fides, religious minorities hope for a new constitution that is more tolerant towards people who have converted to Christianity so that they can freely practice their religion. Above all, concludes the newspaper "Begun", in respect of the secularism that characterizes the Turkish legal and administrative system, of which politicians do not miss a chance to boast about. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 19/11/2011)

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