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ASIA/MYANMAR - Amnesty for 650 political prisoners; the Bishops: "a sign of hope and peace for the future"

Yangon (Agenzia Fides) - The president of Burma Thein Sein has today issued a measure of amnesty, ordering the release of 650 political prisoners. Among those released are important prisoners such as former Prime Minister Khin Nyunt; the Buddhist monk Ashin Gambira, one of the promoters of the "Saffron Revolution" launched by monks in September 2007, sentenced to 63 years in prison; Min Ko Naing, one of the leaders "88 Generation Students Group", who in 2003 had sponsored a project of democratic reforms.
The amnesty was also welcomed by the Bishops of Burma, who today conclude the Episcopal Conference assembly in Yangon. In an interview with Fides, His Exc. Mgr. Raymond Saw Po Ray, President of the "Justice and Peace Commission," of Bishops, said: "We hope this is a sign that leads to further developments and improvements for the respect of freedom in the country. The release of political prisoners of conscience is a focal point, remarked several times in the international community. We believe it is a sign of hope for justice, peace and human rights. One of the monks leading the protests in 2007 was also released: I think it is very important for the government's future approach towards the population. In the assembly of Bishops we faced pastoral issues, but we are attentive to the evolution of Burmese society. We are confident that the Church and all Christians will have an important role and contribute to building a future of peace, freedom and justice in Myanmar". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 13/01/2012)

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