



AFRICA/TUNISIA - "If a strong signal on the economy is not given there is the risk of a new crisis", says the Archbishop of Tunis one year after the Revolution

Tunis (Agenzia Fides) - "The average Tunisian wants two things: security and work. If the first is guaranteed, it is the second which is missing", says His Exc. Mgr. Maroun Elias Laham, Archbishop of Tunis, who in an interview with Fides traces a brief picture of the situation in Tunisia after one year since the so-called Jasmine Revolution, which deposed President Ben Ali and launched the Country on the road to full democracy.

"The problem is the economy. From the political point of view things are going well: the elections were conducted properly, we have a new President, a new government and a new Parliament. Security is guaranteed, but the economy has difficulty in getting off the ground", stresses Mgr. Lahham.

In addition to the international economic and financial crisis, which also affects the area of the Mediterranean, according to the Archbishop of Tunis the reasons of the current weakness of the Tunisian economy are essentially two. "Firstly – explains Mgr. Laham – to re-launch economy within a year is not easy. Secondly, as suggested by several local commentators, the new leadership, although serious and honest, does not seem to consider economy as its strong point. Local public opinion are rising doubts about whether the government actually has a business plan for the Country".

Mgr. Laham stresses that "people will wait another few months, but if immediately a strong signal on the economic front is not given, a strong social protest is to be expected. The unemployed are more than one million and the number is growing".

With regards to tourism, the leading sector of the local economy, the Archbishop underlines: " Tourists can easily come to Tunisia, because there is safety. The problem is that if other countries offer more competitive prices compared to ours, the main tourist flows are directed there and not here". (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 18/01/2012)