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AFRICA/SENEGAL - The Islamic brotherhoods in the electoral game

Dakar (Agenzia Fides) - "There is not a good atmosphere, especially here in Dakar, even if the rest of the Country, the situation looks better," say to Fides local Church sources from the capital of Senegal, where a week from presidential elections the tension rose after clashes in the mosque of Malick-Sy, belonging to the Islamic brotherhood Tidjane. The M23 Movement, which includes the various departments of civil society and those who refuse to participate in political elections, continue to want to demonstrate. The authorities are opposed to these events, saying that since the M23 is not participating in elections, they have no right to demonstrate. This gives rise to clashes with security forces.

Just during the clashes between police and demonstrators, on Friday, February 17 some tear gas grenades ended up inside the mosque complex, arousing the indignation of the members of the powerful Muslim Brotherhood. In one of the "holy cities" of Tidjane, Tivaouane (60 km from Dakar), some members of the fraternity attacked and burned the town hall. The Interior Minister apologized to the general Caliph of Tidjane, stating that it was "a regrettable incident"

Even Fides sources say it was an accidental occurrence, and not wanted. "The mosque of Malick-Sy is a small structure in the center of town where the streets are very small. Therefore a few hundred people are required to block roads and cause accidents. Besides, a similar incident had occurred some years ago in the Catholic cathedral of the capital."

"In Senegal, there are two major Islamic brotherhoods: Tidjane and Mouride" explain our sources. "The Tidjane is the most numerous but does not have the organization of the Mouride. The latter was born here in Senegal and is the brotherhood of reference for the Wolof, which is President Wade's ethnic group. The Tidjane instead is older and comes from Countries in the Maghreb. Its members are more numerous because within it there are all the other ethnic groups from Senegal. The Mourides, however, are better organized and can obey in block to their leadership, while in Tidjane there are several families and groups that make strict obedience difficult, even to the presence of many intellectuals. For this reason, President Wade seems to rely on Mouride, a vote that could guarantee him massive votes, although his Caliph refused to give some indication of vote " concludes the source of Fides. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 20/2/2012)

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