



ASIA/NEPAL - No agreement on the Constitution: instability is the spectre

Kathmandu (Agenzia Fides) - The Constituent Assembly of Nepal, four years after its creation, has not yet reached an agreement on the drafting of the new Charter, as the deadline for the completion, May 27 next approaches. As stated by the Supreme Court of Nepal, the deadline cannot be postponed, as has happened many times. There are many unresolved issues: the form of government, the structure of the federal state, the number of districts, and many others. While particular interests triumph, political parties, note sources of Fides, cannot find an agreement for the good of the country. Civil society and religious communities are strongly concerned about the fact that if an agreement is not found in the next twenty days, the country could fall into instability and in a bleak future. The final transition of Nepal from Hindu kingdom to a secular democracy is at stakes.

Public opinion is quite disheartened though, according to observers, it is possible that a Constitution skeletal project can be produced in extremis, by May 27: to this end yesterday the Premier Baburam Bhattarai, leader of the Communist Party of Nepal, has announced the formation of a new broad coalition government, which will include the two main opposition parties, "the Nepali Congress" and "Marxist Leninist Communist Party" of Nepal.

In this phase of uncertainty, the international community should put pressure and support the efforts of the Constituent Assembly, notes the NGO "Christian Solidarity Worldwide" (CSW) in a statement sent to Fides, insisting that one should pay due attention to the protection of fundamental human rights of Nepalese citizens, including the right to freedom of religion, and keep in mind "a healthy culture of religious pluralism." (PA)
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