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AFRICA/TUNISIA - "Tunisia: a very interesting political laboratory " for the National Director of the PMS

Tunis (Agenzia Fides) - "Tunisia at the moment is a very interesting political laboratory. The political debate is very intense and lively," says to Fides Agency Fr. Jawad Alamat, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Tunisia.
"I have the impression that the left parties are reorganizing themselves to counter the victory of Ennhada (the party of Islamic inspiration in power, ed.) There is in fact some disappointment in the electorate of that party. The people expected that its leaders would have the solution for the Country's problems, even if they came to power in a very short space of time. We are in a time when there may be a rebalance in the Tunisian political landscape."
With regards to the violent demonstrations of the Salafis (attacks to hotels where alcohol is sold, occupation at the University of Tunis to protest against the law that banned the veil to the students, then the law was repealed, etc..), which have been widely reported by the international press, Fr. Alamat observes: "We must not give too much weight to the Salafists, because the more we talk, the more they become important. In reality they are not really so important, the fact is that they make more noise than others. They are a well organized minority and when they move they move en masse, thus obtaining a strong impact on the media."
"What is happening - the priest says- is a clash within Islam between extremists, such as the Salafis, and those who have a more balanced and more open vision. It is therefore interesting to watch this debate within the Muslim world that takes place later in political life, because in Islam there is no separation between religion and the State. The debate is between those who want a State and an open and modern society, as it has been so far in Tunisia, and those who want to assert their Islamic identity."
The Director of the PMS in Tunisia also stresses that "the Christian community continues to live quietly, carrying out its activities." "In short, the Tunisian society is moving and it is normal that there are slippages in this phase of democratization. However, the people remain vigilant and observe carefully what the government does or does not do, and will vote accordingly in the next election," concludes Fr. Alamat. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 10/09/2012)

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