



AFRICA/TANZANIA - The Government is doing everything possible to maintain peaceful coexistence between religions

Dar es Salaam (Agenzia Fides) - "The government is doing everything possible to maintain peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims," says to Fides Agency a source in the local Church in Dar es Salaam after the latest incidents which broke out last week in the commercial capital in Tanzania and the island of Zanzibar following the arrest of an Islamic leader, Sheikh Issa Ponda, accused of having organized the looting of some Christian churches, on 11 and 12 October. The depredations were originated after the news concerning a young Christian had spread who had desecrated the Koran. In addition to Ponda, about thirty people were arrested in connection with the looting.

"In the Country there is a latent tension that sometimes explodes," explains our source. "Since the union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar (1964), which gave rise to Tanzania, there are radical elements who are opposed to this union and use religion to demonstrate that the mixing does not work. So far, these radical elements were limited to the island of Zanzibar, but in recent times their presence has been noted in mainland Tanzania, although the situation is not as serious as in Zanzibar. " "In the background of tensions there are the 2015 elections, which although seemingly distant in time, are accentuating the struggle between the various parties," concludes our source. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 26/10/2012)