



## **ASIA/SYRIA - The Apostolic Nuncio Zenari: the unification of the opposition favors a political solution to the conflict**

Damascus (Agenzia Fides) - The unification of various factions of the opposition to the Assad regime may be a "positive sign", provided that this initiative can "better serve the cause of finding a political solution to the conflict." This is what Archbishop Mario Zenari, Apostolic Nuncio in Syria highlights to Fides the criteria that inspire his judgment on the aggregation of a large part of the anti-Assad groups, as enshrined in the summit hosted recently in Doha, in Qatar, with the obvious involvement of some Western geo-politicians.

The unification of many symbols of the Syrian opposition in the "National Coalition of Syrian powers of the revolution and opposition" (Cns) found immediate recognition of the Arab League and the opening of major credit from France and the United States (though so far have not responded to requests to recognize a "Syrian government in exile"). While historical opponents of the Assad regime more favorable to look for ways out of the political diplomatic conflict have described the meeting as a "promotional theater" set up in Qatar, with no real political perspective and fully deployed on the line of the military solution. Nuncio Zenari recognizes that "the issue is complex and entangled" and that "it takes time to see in which direction the new coalition will go."

According to the papal representative, "the fact that many find themselves united to speak with one voice alone can help: with the previous dispersion one could not even grasp the real weight of representation of individual groups. The hope is that the new coalition may act as speaker at the negotiating table to find compromise solutions."

In fact, in their initial statements, the spokesman of the Coalition asked the international community legitimized and diplomatic weapons to make more effective military action against the loyalist army, giving the impression to reject the prospect of negotiations. There is also the Christian George Sabra, known for his opposition to the regime practiced in minority groups of communist militancy. His choice as the new leader of the Syrian National Council - one of the symbols opposing the regime - was emphasized in the Western media as a move to allay suspicions on the Islamist contagion of revolt.

Archbishop Zenari remembers that Sabra was invited to Rome in September by Mr Pierferdinando Casini to take part in the International People's Party, and believes that with his rise to the leadership of the Syrian National Council, the opposition wanted to give the impression of keeping in mind "all members of the ethnic mosaic and religious Syrian."

With regard to requests to increase the flow of arms, the Apostolic Nuncio notes that this line is proposed "as the antiphon by many Syrian opposition groups, and is different from the perspective of dialogue, compromise and reconciliation, hoped for a several times also in Syria by many Christian leaders." (GV) (Fides 14/11/2012).