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ASIA/PAKISTAN - The Commission "Justice and Peace" on the political tensions: "Let's give a chance to democracy"

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) - "The situation is fluid and changes every day. The warrant of arrest of the Premier, issued by the Supreme Court, has added tension on the political scene. And the big anti-corruption demonstration threatens to plunge the country into anarchy. We ask to give this country a chance for democracy": is Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf's analysis, National Director of the Commission "Justice and Peace" of Catholic Bishops.
In an interview with Fides, Fr. Emmanuel explains his point of view on the political crisis in Pakistan: "I do not believe in the conspiracy theory against the premier. It is a coincidence, the case against him has been going on for some time. Also because the judiciary system has no interest to destabilize the country. " The decree came while a big "anti-corruption" movement was marching in Islamabd, led by the leader Tahirul Qadri. Fr. Emmanuel's judgment is not sensitive: "Qadri is a leader with his agenda, has been in Canada for several years, now he has reappeared. We wonder: where was he while the Pakistani people were suffering? Qadri is not a new name: he was here with the former dictator Musharraf, now I think he was put there by someone else. The protesters, who continue the sit-in, will be in Islamabad for a couple of days, but every day new demands for reforms are added."
"The way in which these issues arise is not the right one: it cannot be a square. Corruption is a serious problem, we all criticize it and there are movements in civil society that have been fighting it for years. As Commission "Justice and Peace" we have launched awareness programs against corruption, that has to be fought with education and training of the conscience of citizens. "
The Director continues: "In the village there is a Constitution and we all have to follow it, rather than stir the masses. This kind of fight could lead to anarchy in the country, and it is not good. The Qadri's movement has coagulated thousands of people because there is economic crisis, social unrest. People lack electricity, water, gas, there is much social discontent. While many seek to exploit this discontent for their electoral gain, in this moment of tension and uncertainty, we cannot but say: Let's give a chance to democracy in Pakistan. Hopefully everything will be resolved peacefully. We call for peaceful and transparent elections that, due to the expiry of the Parliament, are expected in March. We hope that democratic and constitutional procedures are respected, and nothing serious happens. Reforms are needed in order to really help people in their basic needs. But one can promote them through a democratic way, without the risk of returning to the martial Law."
In conclusion Fr. Yousaf points out: "In Qadri's movement there is also the use of religion. Qadri is the leader of his charitable organization of Islamic inspiration, the "Tehreek-e-Minhajul Quran." As Christians we believe that politics and religion should be kept distinct." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 16/01/2013)

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