



## **AFRICA/EGYPT - "Coptic" quota? No thank you. The proposal to ensure seats "reserved" to the Christians in the upcoming elections does not find consensus**

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - The proposal to reserve seats to the Copts in the lists that will compete in the upcoming parliamentary elections give rise to negative reactions in the Christian communities in Egypt. The idea was first launched in past days by the activist for civil rights Naguib Gabriel, leader of the Egyptian Union for the human rights organization (EUHRO), who had presented it as a necessary measure to counter the political irrelevance of Christians in Egypt ruled by the Muslim Brotherhood. Dozens of well-known leaders and political activists of Coptic faith have expressed their opposition to the proposal in a statement re-launched by the Egyptian press. Among the signatories of the statement are also authoritative figures, such as former Minister of tourism Mounir Fakhry Abdel-Nour and George Ishak, leader of Kifaya, the opposition movement of the Mubarak regime established in 2004.

In their intervention, the Copts leader contrary to the proposal, describe the idea of the places guaranteed as a break compared to the traditional line followed by the Copts in the political sphere. "We – they write - refuse to divide the nation on religious basis, through any type of legal proposal. "

Contacted by Fides Agency, also the auxiliary Bishop of Alexandria of the Catholic Copts, Botros Fahim Awad Hanna, expressed his concerns to the idea of guaranteeing seats by statute or placed in a list to Christians: "The principle itself to reserve Christians in such a special political treatment seems out of place. It supports the design to divide the Country according to religious categories, choosing political representatives on the basis of these divisions. I prefer, for the good of all, that the most competent govern, whatever religion, sex, age and social status they belong to. The quota system, " adds Anba Botros" ends up exacerbating sectarian pressures and consecrates the condition of marginalization of minority groups. We are all Egyptian citizens. We have all the same rights and duties, to be exercised in the context of a Country that despite the differences must remain united. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 17/01/2013).