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# AFRICA/ZAMBIA - The Bishops denounce serious violations of human rights, "the Country is not in a state of emergency"

Lusaka (Agenzia Fides) - "The respect and protection of human rights in our Country is deteriorating at an alarming rate," say the Bishops of Zambia in their last Pastoral Letter, sent to Fides Agency. The document makes explicit reference to an "arbitrary use of power by government officials; intimidation and threats of arrest against leaders and individuals who speak against Government; deportations, and even threats to Catholic priests for sermons seen as critical of Government. "
The Pastoral Letter entitled "To act justly and to walk humbly with your God", provides an overview of the situation of the Country in which, while recognizing the democratic change that began in 1991 with the adoption of the multiparty system, several signs of authoritarian involution and "political intolerance, both between parties and within them" are highlighted. Intolerance that sometimes leads to violence and ends with an impact "on the well-being of ordinary citizens." This climate also influences the action of the police, to whom the Bishops express their gratitude for the efforts against crime, but also noted that "over the years, each ruling party seems to have unlimited freedom to carry out any public activity, on any day and at any time, while the opposition political parties and some civil society organizations are literally discriminated against every time they try to carry out public activities " on behalf of the police.
The Bishops also recall the situation in Barotseland in Western Province. "We are aware of a climate of intimidation and serious violations of human rights in Western Province: kidnappings of citizens, arbitrary arrests of people to be subjected to long periods of interrogation, even torture. These acts are totally unacceptable. They must cease immediately. This Country is not in a state of emergency. " (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 29/01/2013)

*> LINKS*
*The full text of the Pastoral Letter (in English):*
http://www.fides.org/eng/documents/ACT_JUSTLY_AND_WALK_HUMBLY_WITH_YOUR_GOD.rtf:

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