



AFRICA/CONGO DR - Religious leaders call for a truly independent Electoral Commission

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - An Election Commission that is indeed "independent, autonomous and neutral" is what the religious denominations of the Democratic Republic of Congo through their spokesman, don Donatien Shole, Deputy Secretary of the Episcopal Conference of Congo ask for.

The leaders of the various religious denominations in the country met in Kinshasa on 1 February. At the end of the meeting don Shole reported the recommendations made during the debate on the law that revises the composition of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

"We call on the President of the Republic, who has the power to refer the law to the Parliament for further discussion, to take account of the profound aspiration of the Congolese people who want a truly independent, autonomous and neutral INEC," said the priest.

Religious leaders point out that the current INEC had been criticized during the presidential and legislative elections of 2011, in which numerous irregularities were found.

On 12 December 2012, the National Assembly had adopted a law amending the composition of INEC. The text states that the new Electoral Commission is made up of two bodies: the Office of Presidency and the Plenary Assembly. The latter is composed of 13 members (6 of the Presidential Majority, 4 of the opposition and 3 of civil society). According to the religious denominations this text that has no significant progress. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 04/02/2013)