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ASIA/LEBANON - Maronite Procurator Francois Eid: "orthodox" electoral law approval is instrumental

Beirut (Agenzia Fides) – Yesterday joint commissions of the Lebanese parliament approved with a majority, article 2 of the electoral law as put forward by the so-called "orthodox group". The article in question confirms the principal according to which citizens vote only for MPs belonging to their own religion, on the basis of a proportional model which turns Lebanon into one electoral circumscription This system has the approval of Shiite representatives of Hezbollah , and of Christian political groups usually in disagreement among themselves, namely the Free Patriotic Current (led by general Michel Aoun), Lebanese Forces led by Samir Geagea and the Kataëb Party.
In months of debate, harsh criticism of the "orthodox" proposal came from the Sunni "Future" Party led by Saad Hariri, from independent Christian members of parliament and even from Lebanon's president, Maronite Christian Michel Sleiman. "The consensus obtained by the 'orthodox' proposal, Fides was told by Mons. Francois Eid, Maronite Patriarchal Procurator to the Holy See, "should be interpreted. In itself the Law would appear to contradict the spirit of pluralism and co-existence among different religious communities which is the foundation of Lebanon's civil and political life. For this reason it could be rejected as anti-constitutional by the Lebanese President. In Lebanon any proposal of law which contradicts the principle of co-existence of Christians and Muslims is null. I believe that much of the approval obtained by the Bill is of instrumental character : many wish to use it as a means of burying the electoral law which is a return to the model in force in the 1960s considered as unjust and unsuited to present day Lebanese society, by all with the sole exception of the progressive socialist Walid Jumblatt Druze Party ". (GV) (Agenzia Fides 20/2/2013).

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