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AFRICA/CONGO DR - The Bishops: "the respect for the constitutional order must be observed by all"

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) - The Congolese Bishops say they are opposed to the revision of Article 220 of the Constitution which prohibits changes in the shape of the State. In a Memorandum to the President of the Republic, the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of Congo (CENCO) states that "respect for the constitutional order must be observed by all. This is the premise of national cohesion and unity."
Article 220 states: "The republican form of the State, the principle of universal suffrage, the representative form of government, the number and term of office of the President of the Republic, the independence of the judiciary power, political pluralism and trade union cannot be subject to any constitutional revision."
Bishops pledge to "sensitize the population to understand the importance of this article for the stability of the Country."
The Memorandum summarizes the opinion of CENCO about the political, economic and social development of the Country. The Bishops praise the initiative taken by President Kabila to start a national dialogue "to end the crisis that shakes our Country after the publication of the election results of November 2011", but complain about the extensive problems that still plague the population. In economic terms, for example, adequate efforts to put in value the huge natural resources of the Country by creating processing industries and a modern agricultural system were not carried out. "As a result - says the document - the degree of poverty of the population has reached proportions that afflict us and worry us as Pastors. In the meantime, we continue to assist an economy predator ".
The Bishops also call for serious reforms of the judiciary system, armed forces and police, and an effective fight against corruption, also to ensure the safety in the east of the Country, threatened by the presence of various armed groups. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 05/03/2013)

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