



AFRICA/ZAMBIA - "Why do so many by-elections deprive hospitals of the funds they need?"

Lusaka (Agenzia Fides) – A new appeal on behalf of religious leaders of Zambia to stop political violence linked to the partial renewal of the Parliament.

Like the previous one on 27 February (see Fides 28/02/2013), even this statement is signed by the heads of the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), The Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) and the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC).

The document, sent to Fides Agency, expresses a criticism related to "the strange phenomenon" of the increase of anticipated and by-elections held in Zambia in recent times "Whilst we acknowledge the fact that the Zambian laws provide for the holding of by-elections to fill a vacant seat in Parliament, or at local government levels, we are seriously questioning the justification and authenticity of many of these parliamentary by-elections," say the religious leaders who add: " Why are our leaders so ready to waste such colossal sums of money in the campaigns whilst our hospitals still face a critical shortage of medical staff, equipment and essential drugs? Many of our hospitals, schools and other service centres cannot offer quality services due to inadequate funding. This is because they are subordinated to wrong priorities as everyone seems to be pre-occupied with by-elections. " Religious leaders appeal to everyone (from the State authorities to the police, from representatives of the media to ordinary citizens) so that they avoid violence and the temptation of corruption and, instead, contribute to overcome political differences through dialogue. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 03/15/2013)

> LINKS

Statement of the Churches in Zambia (in English):

[https://www.fides.org/eng/attachments/view/file/Final Statement of the Three Church Mother Bodies issued on 15th March 2013.doc](https://www.fides.org/eng/attachments/view/file/Final%20Statement%20of%20the%20Three%20Church%20Mother%20Bodies%20issued%20on%2015th%20March%202013.doc):