



AFRICA/MADAGASCAR - Agreement for the participation of former President Ravalomanana at the next meeting of reconciliation

Antananarivo (Agenzia Fides) - An agreement seems to have been reached between the malagasy political forces to allow the participation of former President Marc Ravalomanana with regards to the talks of national reconciliation. This was reported to Fides by Fr. Luca Treglia, Director of Radio Don Bosco in Antananarivo. The last meeting, which took place on July 3, saw the participation of former Presidents Andry Rajoelina, Albert Zafy and Didier Ratsiraka, but not Ravalomanana, in exile in South Africa for some time, due to the opposition of the authorities of Antananarivo concerning his return to the Country.

"There will be a new meeting between the three former Presidents and the President of the Transition (Rajoelina), here in Madagascar, but no one knows when or where," says Fr. Luca.

"The road to the stabilization of the Country is still a long process" continues the director of Radio Don Bosco.

"We do not know yet whether this year the presidential elections will be held as it is necessary that all parties reconcile."

The talks are mediated by the Ecumenical Council of Christian Churches in Madagascar ((FFKM), which brings together the 4 major Christian churches in the Country (Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and Protestant FJKM). The Malagasy political crisis exploded in 2009 in the aftermath of the resignation of Ravalomanana under the pressure of the people and armed forces. Since then a "transition" regime has been established that has not yet managed to find a way out of the political impasse.

In social terms, the political crisis has severely hit the population. "People try to carry on doing what they can," says Fr Luca. "Poverty and crime rate have increased. Robberies are not uncommon with violent shootouts in broad daylight. Theft of cattle by organized gangs continues, especially in the south."

"This is because the State does not have funds to pay the police. Because of the political situation in fact, international aid to government institutions were suspended even though direct donations to the people sent by some NGOs continue", concluded Fr Luca. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 05/07/2013)