



## **AFRICA/EGYPT - Coptic disapproval concerning the Provisional Constitution**

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - The temporary constitution enacted by decree on Monday by the Egyptian President ad interim Adly Mansour causes the first, worrying negative reactions on behalf of a growing number of lawyers and militants of Egyptian civil rights belonging to the Christian Churches.

But in the coming hours official positions may emerge by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. "We are concerned. We are ridiculed. The provisions that in the old Constitution seemed bad in the eyes of Christians are highlighted in the new text. If we do not speak now, we will not be able to say anything", says to Fides Agency the Coptic Catholic Bishop of Minya Botros Fahim Awad Hanna.

The entry into force of the new provisional constitutional text - which should remain in force for at least 6 months - is an important step in the roadmap of the transition which started with the destitution of Mohamed Morsi.

Some of the changes introduced in the new constitutional text represent in the eyes of the critics even a regression in relation to the Constitution of Islamist nature approved under the government monopolized by the Muslim Brotherhood. What worries Christians is in particular Article 1 of the new constitutional declaration, which referring to the Sharia as a basic source of legislation adds that the interpretation of the Sharia law should be in accordance with the body of laws developed in the early centuries of Islam. In this step the content of article 219 of the previous Constitution is retrieved, which at the time was the center of the disputes of Christians - resulting in the withdrawal of their representatives from the Constituent Assembly. In addition, from the provisional Constitution enacted by Mansour, former Article 3 has disappeared, which guaranteed Christians and Jews the opportunity to use their own canonical principles to regulate personal issues and religious aspects of their communities.

To express the first criticisms of Christians regarding the Provisional Constitution were lawyers and former parliamentarians such as Naguib Gabriel, Susie Adly and Amir Ramzy. Controversial considerations also came from Maspero Youth Union, according to which the Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of "the 26 martyrs of the Coptic revolution on 25 January 2011, while Salafis are taking advantage of 7 of the Coptic martyrs of the revolution on June 30". (GV) (Agenzia Fides 10/07/2013).