



## **AFRICA/TOGO - Agreement reached between the government and opposition with the mediation of the Bishop of Atakpamé**

Lome (Agenzia Fides) - Agreement reached between the government and the opposition to ensure transparent and peaceful elections in Togo.

The agreement was reached thanks to the efforts of His Exc. Mgr. Nicodème Anani Barrigah-Benissan, Bishop of Atakpamé, President of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, who mediated the negotiations between the parties, in the presence of the U.S. Ambassador in Lomé, Robert E. Whitehead.

After 5 meetings, on July 9, an agreement was reached which provides, inter alia: the provisional release of hundreds of people imprisoned for the fires to the markets of Kara and Lomé; the extension of the deadline for the filing of applications; strengthening the presence of opposition representatives in the Electoral Commission (CELI) and in the seats; the payment of subsidies granted by the State to support the campaign of the different parties and partisan coalitions.

The government in welcoming the agreement, announced the extension of the campaign until July 23. Elections will be held on July 25.

Tension in Togo has been going on for months because of disagreements between the government and opposition. The Bishops had recently expressed their concern about the situation of the Country (see Fides 06/25/2013).

Peace efforts led by the Catholic Church are also recognized by the fact that Mgr. Barrigah has been appointed to lead the Commission Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, which was created by the government in 2009 to try to address the problem of political violence that has long plagued the Togolese social life. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 10/07/2013)