



ASIA/LEBANON - Patriarch Rai: sectarian militias will lead the country to ruin

Harissa (Agenzia Fides) - Any non-state army should be considered "illegitimate" and will result in the return of the country to the "law of the jungle and an increase in crime, a phenomenon that unfortunately we are already recording". The Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites Bechara Boutros Rai launched yet another warning about the fate of the Country of the Cedars during his homily on Sunday, July 14 in Harissa. The head of the Maronite Church has called on political factions to reconcile in a new social contract, based on the National Pact of 1943 with which Christians and Muslims agreed on the joint management of political power and institutional offices in Lebanon which became independent from France. According to the Patriarch, the conflict between the political factions is contributing to the "destruction of the Country". A drift that can be stopped only by returning to the foundational Covenant "with which the Lebanese built their Country on the basis of living together, preserving Lebanon against any loyalty to other nations of the East or the West".

According to the Maronite Patriarchal Procurator to the Holy See Francois Eid, the historical reference in Patriarch Rai's homily have a clear link with the dramatic situation experienced by the Country today: "Already in 1943", Msg. Eid explains to Fides Agency "the Lebanese chose to remain independent of the geopolitical blocs and regional powers that exercised their influence in the Middle East. Christians and Muslims signed the agreement on the management of power on an equal basis. This approach was confirmed by the Treaty of Taif, after the Civil War. But now many, on the basis of demographic considerations, say that the line should be set aside in order to pass on to a tripartite management of power, which divides the offices and positions of responsibility among Christians, Shiites and Sunnis". Moreover, the reference to the armies confessional content in the Patriarch's homily touches, according to Msgr. Eid the Lebanese crisis: "The Shiite militia of Hezbollah fell to the side of the Syrian regime. While the Salafis militia have gone to Syria to fight alongside the rebels. Our country is already immersed in that terrible conflict. And this, for Lebanon, can be devastating". (GV) (Agenzia Fides 15/07/2013).