



AFRICA/EGYPT - Al-Sisi to run for President. Bishop Fahim Hanna: he has the support of the people, but the Church does not take sides

Minya (Agenzia Fides) - The head of the Egyptian armed forces Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has publicly confirmed his candidacy for the presidential elections to be held in Egypt next April. "I have to succumb to the people's demand of running for the republic's presidency", said al-Sisi in an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper al-Seyassah. "al-Sisi's official candidacy" explains the Bishop of Minya of the Coptic Catholic Boutros Fahim Awad Hanna to Fides Agency "is an important fact for the whole Country, not just for Christians.

In the last year al-Sisi has had a key role in Egypt. His choices have been appreciated by most of the people. The growing consensus that surrounds him is also seen in the streets". The origins of al-Sisi from the military world according to Anba Fahim Hanna does not obscure the democratic legitimacy of his candidacy: "Al-Sisi", says the Coptic Catholic Bishop of Minya "will leave the army and the position of Minister of defense. As an Egyptian citizen, he is entitled to present his candidacy like everyone else. The important thing is that there are other prominent candidates to compete with him, so as to carry out a truly democratic election. Al-Sisi and the other candidates will present their own program, and then the choice will be up to the people".

According to bishop Fahim Hanna, the likely emergence of al-Sisi in the next presidential election should not be interpreted as the introduction of a military regime in disguise: "After what has happened in recent years", explains to Fides the Coptic Catholic Bishop "it is important to govern with justice, in accordance with the Constitution and the democratic method". The heads of the Christian churches are called to exercise proper discernment: "As men of the Church, at least as far as the Catholic Churches are concerned" explains Anba Fahim Hanna "one should refrain from addressing the faithful towards one or the other candidate. Every believer will choose in freedom and according to their conscience, based on the program that is most convincing. We bishops should keep a reserved attitude". (GV) (Agenzia Fides 06/02/2014)