



AFRICA/BURUNDI - "We are very concerned about the growing tensions" says local Church sources to Fides

Bujumbura (Agenzia Fides) - "We are very concerned about the situation of the Country", say local Church sources of Burundi to Fides Agency, where political tension continues unabated since the police suppressed the demonstrations of the opposition in past days. In the night between 16 and 17 March a manager of Uprona, one of the main political parties in Burundi, was slightly injured by the explosion of a grenade.

"The tensions are mainly linked to the attempt of the incumbent President, Pierre Nkurunziza to change the Constitution in order to present himself for a third term at the 2015 elections" the sources told Fides, which we will not mention for security reasons. "The current Constitution, which incorporates the Arusha Peace Accords of 2000, provides that the Head of State can hold only two terms. The opposition and civil society are demonstrating their opposition to this amendment to the Constitution".

The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon deplored "the growing restrictions on freedom of expression" and said he was "very concerned" about the growing tension in Burundi. "The Bishops of Burundi had intervened last December, stating that in their opinion, one must not change the Constitution before the 2015 elections. Only then, eventually, one will be able to make changes" say our sources. "The Bishops also ask not to close down the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) which helps to ensure the implementation of the peace agreements".

"Other tensions— continue our sources – regard land issue. A committee was appointed to verify the ownership of the land abandoned by those who were forced to flee to other areas of Burundi or abroad and then occupied by other people. The old owners, who have recently returned from Tanzania, claim the possession of their lands and this has created tension between old and new owners". "The situation therefore is very delicate and there is fear among the population. We are praying for peace to finally prevail in our Country", conclude the sources. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 18/03/2014)