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AFRICA/MALAWI - Elections contested: the only thing certain are the irregularities and suspicions of fraud

Lilongwe (Agenzia Fides) - There is institutional clash in Malawi between outgoing President, Joyce Banda, and the Supreme Court, which quashed the decision of the Head of State to annul the vote on 20 May and to hold new elections within 90 days as a result of heavy irregularities in many polling stations. The Electoral Commission has, however, recognized the existence of serious fraud and has decided to recount the ballots in polling stations where there were obvious irregularities.
"In some polling stations there are more votes than the number of registered voters. There are marked cases, yet to be verified, of irregular ballots", says to Fides Agency Fr. Piergiorgio Gamba, a Monfortan missionary from Malawi.
At the request of one of the candidates for Presidency, Peter Mutharika, the Supreme Court, however, ordered the Election Commission to stop the recount of the votes in the colleges where irregularities were found and to conclude the counting instead on the entire national territory, announcing the results of the election.
"The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malawi, the Christian Council and several other local organizations invite to respect the expectations of the Commission. The voice of the churches and non-governmental organizations express a strong fear of the explosion of violence in this situation of tension and uncertainty", said Fr. Gamba.
On May, 20 the polls for presidential, parliamentary and local elections opened. On May 21, voting continued in different centers where the required material for the vote was missing. On May 22 voting continued in some centers, while the first data gave the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) Peter Mutharika as the winning party, second place for the evangelical pastor, Lazarus Chakwera MCP (Malawi Congress Party), the third for outgoing President Joyce Banda of the PP (People's Party). (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 26/05/2014)

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