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ASIA/LEBANON - Patriarch Rai: the existence of Lebanon at risk

Diman (Agenzia Fides) - The delay or postponement of the election of a new President of the Republic "threatens the very existence of Lebanon", because "only a Maronite President with broad consensus and appropriate personality, moral qualities and individual history" can ensure continuity of the physiognomy characteristic of Lebanon. The Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites, Bechara Boutros Rai, therefore raises the alarm on the political crisis that has paralyzed the Country's institutions where for months the two main opposing political blocks - the "March 8 Coalition" and the "March 14 coalition"- with their vetoes sabotage any chance of finding a shared candidate for the office of President of the Republic, reserved by the Lebanese political system to a Maronite Christian.
During yesterday's mass, celebrated in the church of the patriarchal summer residence in the village of Diman, Patriarch Rai accused the Lebanese politicians, who in his opinion seem to ignore the dire consequences of the power vacuum concerning the highest office of the State. The stalemate - the Patriarch said in his homily sent to Fides Agency - is favoring "the socio-economic decline of Lebanon and opens the way for the plundering of public resources and the rights of workers". Moreover, according to the Primate of the Maronite Church, "it is a disgrace" that the presidential office remains vacant while Lebanon is preparing to host major summits of the United Nations and the Arab League. "The Lebanese experience", Patriarch Rai added extending his gaze to the chaotic regional scenarios, "could help the Countries of the Middle East that suffer for the wars, violence, terrorism and the rise of fundamentalist movements" to avoid falling fatally under powers based on "religious, political and social monopoly", safeguarding the peculiarity of the Lebanese pluralistic system "in the midst of the Islamic theocracies that dominate in many Arab Countries and the Jewish theocracy of Israel." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 07/07/2014)

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