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AFRICA/EGYPT - A bill to ensure and regulate the construction of churches is being studied

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - A committee of inquiry called to outline a draft law to regulate and ensure clear legal procedures concerning the building of churches and Christian places of worship on Egyptian territory has begun. "In recent days", confirms to Fides Agency Anba Botros Fahim Awad Hanna, Coptic Catholic Bishop of Minya "delegated representatives of the various churches gathered with the officials of the Ministry of Justice have begun to outline concrete proposals to solve all the problems related to the construction of the churches that also marked the years when Mubarak was in power". In this preliminary investigation, the commission has the task of drawing up concrete proposals that will be evaluated by the Heads of the various Christian churches and communities to then be subjected - perhaps already within the August – to the Minister of Justice "pro tempore" Ibrahim Huneidi. The objective is to outline the same requirements for the construction of private buildings also for the construction of churches. In all likelihood, the new churches will arise at a minimum distance of 500 meters from the mosques and other existing places of worship, to avoid complications in the co-management of urban areas, especially in neighborhoods with high population density. The cubic capacity of the new buildings of worship - from 300 to 2000 square meters - will be calibrated according to objective criteria defined by the context, for example by avoiding to submit projects for very large areas in which a few Christian families reside. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 17/07/2014)

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