



## **ASIA/IRAQ - Bishops meet with Prime Minister: priority given to security**

Baghdad (Agenzia Fides) – Security, solidarity, and commitment to building a country where prosperity and peace reign are the themes being discussed in an emergency meeting taking place in Baghdad this morning, November 4, between Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and a delegation of bishops and Christian leaders of all denominations.

Fides sources present at the meeting report that the bishops told the Prime Minister of their dismay and suffering for the attack suffered by the Christian community in Iraq on October 31, remembering that in recent months across the country, Christian places and faithful have suffered threats, attacks, and violence. The delegation, which also included the Cardinal of Baghdad, Emmanuel Delly III, has also expressed concern for the future, telling of the precariousness and shock of the Christian faithful and the widespread desire to leave the country. The Premier, who yesterday visited a number of the injured faithful in the hospital in Baghdad, has promised that the state will do everything to ensure their protection, considering the presence of Christians in the country as important and valuable. Among the immediate strategies was the decision to reinforce security measures around churches and monasteries, especially during liturgies and prayer meetings.

Prime Minister Al Maliki will travel on Saturday, November 6 to visit the Syrian Catholic Church of Our Lady of Deliverance in Baghdad, to honor the victims, to offer a further testimony of closeness and solidarity to the Christian community, and to reaffirm respect and esteem for the Christian component of Iraqi society has always been committed to the good of the nation.

The summit ended noting the unanimous opinion that the whole country - politics, civil society, religious communities - must act to protect the presence and contribution of Christians in Iraq. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 04/11/2010)