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ASIA/IRAQ - Archbishop Matoka: Terror knocks at the door of the Christians; the government is paralyzed

Baghdad (Agenzia Fides) – “What can we do, what can we say? A deep sadness envelops our community. The wave of attacks is increasing. Ten days ago, the carnage in our cathedral. Today, they've come to our doorstep. The families are mourning. Everyone wants to escape. It is a terrible thing.” These are the words recently spoken to Fides by Archbishop Atanase Matti Shaba Matoka, Syrian Catholic Archbishop of Baghdad, after the attacks this morning on many homes of Christians in Baghdad. Ten bombs and mortar shells hit the homes of Christian faithful in different parts of Baghdad between 4 and 6 o'clock in the morning. The provisional assessment following the violence is 3 dead and 26 wounded, said an official in the Ministry of the Interior, pointing out that last night 3 Christian homes were targeted by attacks in the district of Mansur, without causing casualties.
The Archbishop, shortly before going to visit the affected families, told Fides: "Despite the proclamations, the government does nothing to stop this wave of violence that overwhelms us. There are policemen in front of the churches, but now the homes of our faithful are being attacked. Christian families have been affected: Chaldeans, Syriac Catholics, Assyrians, and other denominations in the district of Doura. Terror knocks at our doors. Families are upset. This is no life, they say. They want to drive us out and they are succeeding. The country is in the throes of destruction and terrorism. The suffering of Christians increases and they want to leave the country. We are left speechless."
The Archbishop concludes with a heartfelt appeal: "We plea for prompt action from the international community and beseech the Holy Father and the Universal Church to come to our aid. Today we can not help but hope and pray, entrusting our lives in God's hands. Iraqi Christians, amidst their tears, cry out: In manus tuas, Domine."
(PA) (Agenzia Fides 10/11/2010)

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