



AFRICA/EGYPT - "The police have disappeared from the centre of Cairo while demonstrators march again": a missionary to Fides

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - "The police have retreated from the centre of Cairo. The army only protects the buildings of importance such as the Parliament. There is an atmosphere that has never been seen before," Fides was told by a missionary in Cairo, who for security does not wish to be named.

"At the moment demonstrators are marching again to appeal to President Mubarak to leave," continues the Fides source. "A large part of the population is peaceful, Yesterday, 28 January, during the protests I saw the demonstrators peacefully circling the police and I also saw various army officers fraternising with them. We can say that there is empathy among the soldiers and the crowd. At this time, the police have disappeared. There are not even the officers that usually guard the Christian churches. There is an absence of security which, in part, has calmed the civic sense of the people. The majority of the demonstrators are youth, who have an almost joyous character to the protests. However, beside them there are unfortunately groups of people who are profiting from the lack of security and are looting shops.

"We do not know how the situation will evolve," concludes our source. "The Muslim Brotherhood have stayed away up till now, but there are signs that they want to take part in the protest. The next few hours and the next few days could be decisive for the fate of Egypt." (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 29/1/2011)