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ASIA/HOLY LAND -The appeal on behalf of the Custodian of the Holy Land for Syria: the weakest in society are hit so inescapable, there is no electricity and water, many companies have closed down

Jerusalem (Agenzia Fides) - "After the change in Egypt, the situation in which Syria finds itself unequivocally indicates how the landscape in the Middle East is transforming. Until a year ago it would have been unthinkable to foresee such scenarios. In these months of great tension, when Syria is torn by internal fighting and the conflict seems to have the characteristics of a civil war, the Franciscans, with a few other members of the Latin Church are committed to supporting the needs of the Local Christian population." This is how the Custodian of the Holy Land, Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM's appeal begins, of which a copy was sent to Fides.
"The Custody is present in various parts of the Country: Damascus, Aleppo, Lattakiah, Oronte. The medical clinics of the Franciscan convents, according to the tradition of the Custody, become a place of refuge and shelter for everyone, with no difference between ethnic groups of Alawites, Sunnis, Christians, or rebels and government. In a moment of utter confusion and bewilderment, many companies, especially in import-export, have closed their doors. Of the thousands of tourists, who fed a modern and thriving industry, with hundreds of jobs in transport, hospitality, services, no trace remains. Farmers are in serious trouble. The international embargo prevents any possibility of exports and prices have plummeted. The weakest sectors are affected so inescapable and suffer from lack of energy and water. In large cities there has been no electricity for several hours every day, if not entirely; diesel fuel is rationed. This creates enormous hardship to the population, forced to face the winter without the possibility of warming up.
Spending time with people, to accept and care for those in need, regardless of race, religion and nationality. To ensure, with confident presence, the religious service to the faithful so that they understand the importance of staying in their own country. This is the meaning of the Franciscan mission."
The appeal ends with an invitation to support with a concrete gesture many Syrian Christians and the charitable works of the Custody of the Holy Land. (SL) (Agenzia Fides 17/2/2012)

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