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Fondata nel 1927

ASIA/SYRIA - Radical Islamic groups fanning the conflict that plagues Lebanon

Beirut (Agenzia Fides) - Radical Islamic Groups are fanning the conflict and want to infect Lebanon: this is the alarm launched to Fides by Fr. Paul Karam, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Lebanon. Fr. Karam, commenting on the recent clashes between Alawites and Sunnis in Lebanon, said: "We are very concerned for two reasons: the flow of Syrian refugees continues in northern Lebanon, moreover the conflict is spreading in Lebanon. This happens because of political interests that trample human rights, and the fragility of our country, ethnic-religious composite mosaic. Herein lies the major component of fanatic Islamic movements that fan on the religious aspect, fomenting hatred among communities." Fr. Karam insists that "violence has never solved anything: the road to reconciliation is dialogue, respect for others, keeping in mind the good of the country."
On the conflict in Syria, Fr. Karam said: "Sending UN Observers is an act of responsibility on behalf of the international community. But should not be exploited at a political level by any of the warring parties. We hope it is a mission in the sign of truth, credibility and transparency. Only thus peace can be reached."
The Christian situation "is very worrying," says the priest. "In Syria – he recalls - the faithful have freedom of faith and public testimony which is not guaranteed in other states in the Middle East. We are concerned because the Christians, as a minority, are the easiest target. Syrian fellow priests tell us that the situation is dramatic: there are forces who want to turn the conflict into a religious war, and this would be a tragedy."(PA) (Agenzia Fides 15/5/2012)

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