



AFRICA/TUNISIA - "Arab Christians are hurt as much as and with Muslims," says the director of the PMS

Tunis (Agenzia Fides) - We as Christians of the East, as Christians of the Arab world feel hurt when things happen like this happen," says to Fides Agency Fr. Jawad Alamat, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies of Tunisia, referring to the film that offends the Prophet Mohammed and that sparked violent protests in different parts of the world. In Tunis, after clashes on Friday 14 September, which caused two deaths and fifty injured, the situation is still tense, especially around the area of the U.S. Embassy.

Fr. Alamat does not want to deal with the political aspects regarding recent events but would like to stress the fact that the western world must learn to respect the feelings of other peoples and cultures. "As Arab Christians, our daily effort is to create a dialogue of life, which then becomes cultural dialogue and even theological with our Muslim friends. This effort we do as fidelity to Christ who wanted to talk to the whole of humanity," said the priest. "In the Western world, even among Christians, we instead feel fear in the Muslim world, with whom we live in brotherhood, fueled by enormous prejudices, because they take a dozen violent fundamentalists as representatives of the entire Arab world. So we should consider the whole Christian world in the light of the first crazy person that makes a foolish statement against Islam."

"As Arab Christians we feel hurt because of what is happening as and with Muslims. Religion is an integral part of our culture. The West has to understand it well and respect us " says Fr. Alamat. The Director of the PMS in Tunisia finally points out that the Holy Father's visit to Lebanon demonstrates Benedict XVI's commitment to dialogue with Islam. "The fact that there will be a common prayer between Christians and Muslims in the presence of the Pope is an important sign of dialogue and attention towards Islam," said Father Alamat. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides, 15/09/2012)