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ASIA/SYRIA - Rableh: 280 Christians held hostage

Homs (Agenzia Fides) – Christians kidnapped in the village of Rableh, on the border with Lebanon, in western Syria, spreads: after the maxi kidnapping which occurred yesterday, of 150 people (see Fides article 25/9), today another 130 civilians were detained and kidnapped by armed gangs in the area, creating a group of 280 hostages. As local sources of Fides report, the hostages were crammed into a school in the village of Gousseh, while the kidnappers released the women that had been stopped previously. The armed kidnappers announced that they intend to wait for their head and then discuss any possible ransom.
In the Christian community of Rableh there is a lot of fear as yesterday three Christians, who had been kidnapped in the village of Said Naya a few days ago, were found murdered on the side of a road. According to a local priest, who asked to remain anonymous told Fides, "This is not a persecution, but a maneuver to spread suspicion and mistrust and incite sectarian war." The local committee of the "Mussalaha", is looking for dialogue and a peaceful solution. The point is that we are talking about "unidentified armed gangs and out of control, they act independently and are not connected to the Free Syrian Army. This makes any negotiations much more difficult, " observes our source. According to Fides sources, in Syria there are currently about 2,000 armed groups not related to the FSE, with their own agenda, that try to pollute the ongoing conflict between rebels and loyalists. (PA)
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