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ASIA/SYRIA - Caritas: schools midway between children and refugees, the humanitarian emergency widens

Damascus (Agenzia Fides) - As the conflict continues, "humanitarian crisis increases more nad more: although we do our best we are not able to meet all the needs of refugees. We urgently need other humanitarian aid ": is what the lay Catholic Pascal Kateb, Secretary General of Caritas Syria, who coordinates the work of the organization in Damascus says to Fides.
"We are present in Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and other areas affected by the conflict. We work in very difficult conditions - continues Kateb - But there are thousands of displaced who need assistance and Caritas is among the few organizations that has reached remote or dangerous areas by virtue of its neutrality, recognized in all the contexts where it works in the world. But the situation gets heavier every day."
The Director told Fides: "In Damascus alone Caritas assists 1,500 families who need everything, and many displaced come from the area of Homs . We are not asking refugees the ethnic group or religion they belong to: they are from all communities and religions. In Aleppo, currently, Bishop Antoine Audo, our President, is having to operate in difficult conditions, while we know that in some areas there is intense fighting. In Homs we work together with the Jesuits of the Jesuit Refugee Service, and we are very close to the people who suffer. "
"What happens in some schools – explains Kateb – is that the children follow lessons in the morning but in the afternoon and at night the same buildings house the refugees. It is a terrible situation. For the opening of the school year - books, pens, school objects were lacking: we used funds that Caritas had for its small office. Now we are looking for new donors that can cover these expenses for the Syrian children, of all denominations."
Kateb hopes for "peace and reconciliation, because the Syrian people have been suffering for too long. And, in this dramatic situation, we need to do more to help them, such as Caritas strives to do." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 10/10/2012)

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