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ASIA/LEBANON - Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros Rai condemns the massacre in Beirut: "a criminal attack against peace and the joyful effects of the Pope's visit"

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - The Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites Bechara Boutros Rai "strongly condemns the horrific explosion which took place yesterday in Beirut", which killed general Wissam el-Hassan, head of the intelligence branch of Lebanon's Internal Security Forces, seven others were also killed and more than a hundred were wounded.
According to the head of the Maronite Church - contacted by Fides Agency in Rome, where he is attending the assembly of the Synod of Bishops - "this brutal attack directed against the head of the internal security forces, shows how the hands of Evil are criminal and that the perpetrators do not fear God or the judgment of History. Lebanon - continues Patriarch Rai – was still living on Benedict XVI's visit, during which the Pope signed the Apostolic Exhortation 'Ecclesia in the Middle East, Communion and Witness', and he proclaimed the peace of Christ from the Lebanese territory. Yesterday's was a criminal attack on peace and the joyful effects of the Pope's visit."
Before the deadly plans that again threaten the peaceful coexistence of Lebanon, Patriarch Rai invites all his countrymen to unite and work together for a peaceful future: "We are saddened and– says His Beatitude to Fides - the loss of life and material damage hurts us. But our faith and our hope, and that of all the Lebanese, will not collapse. The Risen Christ won over the Evil and sin. We beseech him for the dead, the wounded and the families affected. He alone is the great and true Comforter. We, together with all people of good will, will not cease to proclaim the Gospel of Peace and Hope, and will work with all our strength for the stability of our Country. Lebanon, wounded in its dignity, the dignity that was shown to the world during the Pope's visit, remains the land of Saints and the Oasis of peace and hope."
This morning Patriarch Rai received a telegram from Benedict XVI in which His Holiness, through the Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, expresses his closeness to the bereaved families and to all the Lebanese, condemning "the violence that generates so much suffering " and asking God to give Lebanon and the entire region, "the gift of peace and reconciliation." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 20/10/2012)

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