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ASIA/SYRIA - Two faithful kidnapped and killed. Patriarch Laham: "Christians are exploited in the conflict"

Damascus (Agenzia Fides) - Two Christians were kidnapped and killed yesterday in Damascus, while a car bomb exploded last night near the church of St. Abramo, in the area of Jaramana, in the north of Damascus. The two faithful killed are Fr. Salami's brother and cousin, Fr. Salami is a greek-catholic parish in Damascus. As reported to Fides, yesterday the two were traveling from Qusair to Damascus. An armed group stopped and seized them, then demanded a ransom of 30 thousand U.S. dollars to their family. After two hours, the kidnappers announced that they had killed them.
Yesterday evening terror shocked the Christian and Druze residents in the area of Jaramana, already known to have suffered about a month ago other bombings. Local sources of Fides report that a violent explosion occurred near the greek-catholic church of St. Abramo, damaging the surrounding buildings, but it is still unclear whether it caused deaths and injuries.
Asked by Fides Agency, the Greek-Catholic Patriarch Gregory II Laham, at the Vatican for the Synod on the new evangelization, explains: "Christians are used as objects in a challenge to the government. There is no persecution, they are not killed for their faith, but they are vulnerable and are manipulated in order to achieve other goals." The Patriarch remembers with concern that "the brother of the Rector of our Seminary in Lebanon was kidnapped on July 15 and since then we have not had any news. These events create great anxiety among the faithful." (PA)
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