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ASIA/SYRIA - An Orthodox priest kidnapped in Damascus

Damascus (Agenzia Fides) - The Greek Orthodox priest Fr. Fadi Jamil Haddad, pastor of the church of St. Elias in Qatana, a suburb of Damascus, was kidnapped by an unidentified armed group. According to information sent to Fides, the kidnappers, who three days ago kidnapped the priest and other two people, have asked the priest's family and his church a ransom of 50 million Syrian pounds (over 550 thousand euro). The greek orthodox Christian community is deeply concerned about the priest's fate and that of the other two kidnapped.
As reported to Fides by members of the greek orthodox community in Damascus this morning armed groups in the galaxy of the Syrian opposition launched mortar attacks on the Christian village of Kafarbohom, near Hama, killing two people and wounding two others. An armed group entered the village and kidnapped 20 women asking their families for a ransom of 10 million Syrian pounds (about 150 thousand euro), with the threat of killing them all.
According to Fides sources, these facts confirm that at this stage of the conflict the Christian communities are under pressure, for several reasons: because they are less and less involved in the ranks of armed rebels; for private vendettas; or even for simple reasons of speculation and research of money by armed gangs in the area.
Among the various Christian communities in Syria, the greek orthodox is the largest (with about 500 thousand faithful) and is concentrated mainly in the western part of the country and in Damascus. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 24/10/2012)

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