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ASIA/SYRIA - Archbishop Hindo's appeals to the Iraqi Premier al-Maliki and FAO: our wheat looted and sold to the Turkish

Hassaké (Agenzia Fides) - Two urgent appeals were addressed to the Presidency of the FAO - the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture, with headquarters in Rome - and to the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, with the request for immediate action in front of the humanitarian emergency that is crushing hundreds of thousands of Syrians in the region of Jazira, in the Syrian Upper Mesopotamia. Archbishop Jacques Behnan Hindo, titular of the Syrian Catholic archeparchy of Hassaké-Nisibis, placed the attention on one of the many sides obscured by the Syrian drama: things are getting worse quickly, and the situation - warns the Syrian Archbishop - "could soon become catastrophic."
In the appeal to FAO, also sent to Fides Agency, the deterioration of the conditions of survival of the population of the area is outlined in detail. At the beginning of winter, every economic activity appears paralyzed. The supply routes to the west have been interrupted for more than a month, and this causes the depletion of essential goods and soaring prices of all commodities. The lack of fuel prevents heating homes and leads to the complete closure of all agricultural activities, just as the planting season begins. "The grain silos - refers in particular Archbishop Hindo - were looted and wheat was sold to Turkish traders who conveyed it in Turkey, under the gaze of the Turkish customs officers. Our wheat was sold at a very low price." The region of Jazira was renowned for the production of high quality wheat.
In past decades, the precious low-paid wheat in the area was collected by agricultural policies of the central government in Damascus.
In addition to the grain plundered, Archbishop Hindo denounced the gradual disappearance of other vital products such as baby milk and medicines, starting from antibiotics.
The only route connecting the outside remains the international road to Iraq, which connects the Syrian Upper Mesopotamia to Mossul. In the text of his second appeal, addressed to the Iraqi Premier al-Maliki, Monsignor Hindo expresses to the political leader of the bordering Country a concrete request: "Please help us as quickly as possible, by sending 600 fuel tanks, 300 tanks of gasoline and some tons of flour."
The Syrian Archbishop, in the message also sent to Fides, combines the suffering experienced by his people with what the Iraqis experienced in their recent past: "We - wrote Mgr. Hindo to al-Maliki - suffer what the people Iraq suffered for the imposition of the embargo.
The first victims were children. You experienced on your body, in your soul and in your children all the injustice that was caused by such behavior. Because only the people are punished, not the government. The States therefore put their interests above the interests of men, and even above the rights that God has on what is His work."
The region of Jazira, with the urban centers of Kamishly and Hassake (main town in the governorate) had a million and a half inhabitants, who since the beginning of the civil war at least 400 thousand refugees from Aleppo, Homs, Deir- Ez-Zor and Damascus have been added. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 02/01/2013).

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