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Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
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Fondata nel 1927

ASIA/JORDAN - The director of Caritas: revolt in the camp of Zaatari, devastated by the snowstorm; to escape the refugees chose to return to Syria

Amman (Agenzia Fides) - The storms of snow, wind and freezing rain that struck the Hashemite Kingdom have had devastating effects on the refugee camp of Zaatari, in the Jordanian desert, where 50 thousand refugees who fled from the Syrian civil war are crammed in an intolerable situation. "The storms - reports to Fides Agency Wael Suleiman, director of Caritas Jordan - have destroyed at least 500 tents in the camp. In the middle of the desert, the refugees live in an untenable state. We have not yet reports of deaths, but certainly many will feel ill and will need to be treated. Some have decided to go back to Syria. They prefer the risks of a war-torn Country to the prospect of seeing their children die in a refugee camp."
After three days of rain and snow, mud has swept the tents hosting refugees, including children and pregnant women where they lived. On Tuesday afternoon, January 8, some exasperated refugees attacked UN personnel and local organizations involved in the management of the camp with sticks and stones." The situation is explosive. We have been saying for a long time that the camp in Zaatari should be closed down. But the opening of a new facility in Zarqa area is postponed from time to time," Suleiman explains to Fides.
Caritas, which is not involved in the direct management of the camp in Zaatari, before the dramatic climatic situation, distributed in past days blankets, stoves and hot food to 30 thousand displaced families. But the relief efforts carried out in Jordan appear in trouble in front of a humanitarian emergency that is expanding every day. "If we talk to those of the government – the director of Caritas Jordan reports to Fides – they tell us that the refugee problem is not their direct responsibility. If we go to UN officials they tell us that resources are limited and one cannot do much. Meanwhile, things are getting worse, and are threatening to destroy everything." The Syrian expatriates in Jordan are more than 280 thousand. And the chronicity of the conflict foresees a new influx of refugees in the early months of 2013 which has just begun. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 09/01/2013)

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