



ASIA/JORDAN - Archbishop Maroun Lahham: we open our churches to the Syrian refugees of the camp of Zaatari

Amman (Agenzia Fides) - In front of the humanitarian catastrophe that looms over the refugee camp of Zaatari - where snowstorms and freezing rain in recent days have swept away hundreds of tents - Archbishop Maroun Lahham, Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, opens the doors of churches and parish complexes to accommodate Syrian refugees. "All of our churches and church halls, starting from the premises of the old Notre Dame de la Paix in Amman - says to Fides Agency - are ready to welcome our Syrian Christian and Muslim brothers, so far kept in the camp of Zaatari. We will take care of all those who we will be able to accommodate."

Just yesterday, some representatives of the Assyrian community related to the Assyrian Human Rights Network had asked to open the doors of the churches in Jordan to welcome the refugees, where torrential rains and the cold weather in past days - says the appeal - have already caused some victims among children, the elderly and women. The appeal was also signed by representatives of the Syrian opposition, such as the Kurdish activist Abdul Basit Sida and the Syrian businessman Adib Shishakly, living in Saudi Arabia.

In past days, the director of Caritas Jordan Wael Suleiman, contacted by Fides Agency, hoped for the closure of the refugee camp of Zaatari, where storms have made the already precarious living conditions even more unbearable, causing riots among the 60 thousand refugees. The Syrian refugees who have found refuge in Jordan are already more than 280 thousand. Saudi Arabia announced yesterday that it had allocated 10 million dollars in their favor to finance emergency initiatives before the additional difficulties caused by bad weather.

The Syrian refugees registered by the UN in the Middle East are more than 600 thousand. According to projections by the UN, if the conflict continues, between now and June there will be more than a million refugees. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 12/01/2013)