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ASIA/LEBANON - Patriarch Rai: the States arming the regime and opposition take on the criminal responsibility of the Syrian tragedy

Bkerké (Agenzia Fides) - The leaders of the States "that make war in Syria by providing money, weapons and means both for the regime and for the opposition," with their "evil work of incitement" are responsible before the court of consciousness and history of the "crimes of murder, destruction, aggression and deportation of innocent citizens" who have been torturing the Syrian people for almost two years. The vibrant complaint – gathered by Fides Agency - comes from Cardinal Bechara Boutros Rai, Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites. In his homily in the Patriarchal See of Bkerké during Sunday Mass, on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity organized by the Maronite Church in favor of Syrian refugees welcomed in Lebanon (see Fides 26/01/2013), Patriarch Rai blamed the international community for the devastating conflict in Syria. Citing Pope John XXIII's encyclical, Pacem in Terris, Cardinal Rai also called upon the UN and its "responsibility of an organization established after the Second World War with the essential aim of maintaining and strengthening peace between peoples."
The head of the Maronite Church also condemned the destabilizing effects that the Syrian conflict is likely to have on the Lebanese scene. Patriarch Rai told the various Lebanese Parties that with their divergent options "create obstacles to the public life of Lebanon and paralyze national decisions, including the ratification of a new electoral law." In this way - stigmatized Patriarch Rai - fears of an overflow of the Syrian conflict in Lebanon territory are incited, and encourages the trend of the Lebanese to emigrate.
Addressing the Syrian refugees, the Maronite Patriarch invited them to be grateful to the State and the people who welcomed them, calling them to conform to the "Lebanese culture based on openness, hospitality and unity in the variety" and to refrain from any detrimental conduct to civil peace. The Lebanese State, according to the Cardinal's opinion, is obliged to "control the borders, registering refugees and taking all necessary measures to prevent the infiltration of weapons in Lebanon." According to the Patriarch, it is essential "to block any form of internal and external plot and avoid any religious, communal or political exploitation of refugees." Even the flow of refugees is to be monitored: according to Patriarch Rai, it is necessary to coordinate with the UN and with other States in order to avoid a high number of refugees in Lebanon that the country of the Cedars would not be able to endure, economically and socially . (GV) (Agenzia Fides 29/01/2013).

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