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ASIA/SYRIA - New protests of the Christians of Mesopotamia against the scourge of kidnapping

Hassake (Agenzia Fides) - In the province of Jazira, in the Sirian upper Mesopotamia, the exponential increase in kidnappings - side effect of the Syrian conflict - continues to flog the civilian population even in areas not affected by the fighting between rebels and government troops. The last person kidnapped is a Christian pharmacist last Sunday, and an extortion of a million Syrian pounds (almost 11 thousand euro) has been asked. "For the bandits of all species - refers to Fides Agency the Archbishop Jacques Behnan Hindo, titular of the Syrian Catholic archeparchy of Hassaké-Nisibis - this is a good time to make money."
On Friday, dozens of Christians improvised a roadblock burning tires at an intersection in the city of Hassaké to protest against the kidnapping of the rector of the State University of Al-Furat, the Christian Jack Mardini, who was kidnapped in broad daylight by gunmen and released after two hours. In his case, behind the kidnapping there was not an extortion attempt, but issues related to the functioning of the University. A warning that now one resorts to criminal practice of kidnapping to resolve conflicts with the abuse of personal and social interest.
In recent weeks, in the city of Hassaké there were fifty kidnappings, and almost half against Christians. "Many of them are doctors, lawyers and professionals – stresses Mgr. Hindo - but now the poor are beginning to be kidnapped. " Nevertheless, the Syrian Catholic Archbishop denies that the practice of kidnapping has Christians as a privileged target: "In recent days - said Mgr. Hindo - some kidnapped Muslims tried to draw the kidnappers to a sense of pity, by talking about the pilgrimage made to Mecca. The bandits, in response, began to blaspheme the name of Allah and cursing the Prophet Mohammad, saying that their only interest is money." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 04/02/2013)

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