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Fondata nel 1927

ASIA/HOLY LAND - Bishop Shomali: any consent of the Church to the Wall in the Valley of Cremisan was denied in court

Jerusalem (Agenzia Fides) - "The lawyers of the Israeli army said the route of the separation Wall in the valley of Cremisan had received the consent of the Church. But this key issue of giving deposition before the judges has been denied, there has never been any kind of approval, by the Salesians or the Vatican." Bishop William Shomali, Patriarchal Vicar of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, reported to Fides Agency an important step in the hearing held yesterday in Tel Aviv on the case which opposes Palestinian Christian families and the Salesian Sisters to the Israeli army on the route of the Separation Wall wanted by the Israeli authorities in the Bethlehem area.
At the hearing - which saw the presence of Bishop Shomali, along with several priests of the Patriarchate - the legal representatives of the parties exhibited for the last time their arguments before three female judges of the special section of appeals of the Court of justice in Tel Aviv. The lawyers of the 58 Palestinian families and of the Salesian Sisters owners of the elementary school in the valley, with the aid of maps and topographical material, documented that the route of the Wall wanted by the army seriously damages their clients, offering an alternative route nearer to the 1967 border between Israel and the West Bank. "The judges – said to Fides Mgr. Shomali - gave the impression of listening their arguments with great interest. " The representatives of the Israeli army called for reasons of national security, and referred to previous approvals of the route from ecclesial subjects. The argument was firmly denied by the opposing counsel. In addition to the bishop and the priests, the hearing was also attended by the diplomatic representatives of France, Germany, Norway and the United Nations. "Now - said Bishop Shomali – we are waiting for the judgment. We pray that justice may be rendered to the sisters and their families who risk losing their farmland. " If the appeal is rejected, the case will be reproposed before the Supreme Court of Israel. (GV). (Agenzia Fides 13/02/2013).

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