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ASIA/SYRIA - Endless slaughter in Damascus. Rumours of plan to strike Papal Nuncio

Damascus (Agenzia Fides) – The Papal Nuncio to Syria Archbishop Mario Zenari is still shocked by reporst and images of fresh violent attacks this morning in the centre of Damascus, beginning with the attack in al-Shahbandar Square, site not only of the Baath headquarters, but also the ministry of Finance, the ministry of Education and, not far away, the offices of the Central Bank: "It is a massacre; bodies charred and torn to pieces, strips of human flesh, fire fighters struggling to put out the flames" the papal representative told Fides. Walls and windows of the Nunciature rocked with the explosions. In the face of yet another slaughter, Archbishop Zenari confirms the impression expressed in recent statements : "We continue to walk on the dead. At this pont, wherever you go in Damascus, you come to places where innocent blood has been shed: civilians, women and children. The number of 70,000 war victims is even more appalling when we think how these people die. They die not in their beds, not with euthanasia. Their bodies are torn apart and it is difficult even to collect enough fragments for a funeral".
According to Nuncio Zenari, in the face of the sacrifice of the Syrian people "the international community continues to play the part of Pontius Pilate", whereas the only way to stop the spiral of death and destruction would be to "force the sides to find a negotiated and peaceful solution to the conflict".
Nuncio Zenari expresses surprise at rumours – taken up by Alef Agency – about a possible attack on his person which is said to be planned in Syrian military and intelligence circles, in retaliation for recent statements of his regarding the conflict: "I have no idea how much credibility is due to these rumours. Usually people planning an attack would not first leak the intent to the press. My appeals are prompted by what I see, the suffering the conflict inflicts on the Syrian people. Suffering which is prolonged by the indifference of the greater part of the international community ". According to the rumours, picked up by various Syrian blogs, the criminal plan aims to attack the Nuncio when he moves around in his car.
Archbishop Zenari says it is better to avoid alarmism in reports regarding the situation of the local Christians: "The Christians" says the Papal representative "in this tragic situation suffer like all the rest of the population ".
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