



## **ASIA/HOLY LAND - Patriarch Emeritus Sabbah: the great people in the world visit us, but our situation does not change**

Jerusalem (Agenzia Fides) - "All the great people in the world come to visit us. They arrive and depart, and our reality does not change. We are in the same situation." So says to Fides Agency Patriarch Emeritus of Jerusalem of the Latins, Michel Sabbah commenting on the first visit to Israel, the Palestinian Territories and Jordan, which U.S. President Barack Obama is carrying out these days. According to S. B. Sabbah, "regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict no external pressure can really change things. Only Israel can decide to proceed on the path of peace or to maintain the status quo. No one can change this situation from the outside. Everything is in the hands of Israel."

Patriarch Emeritus, in view of the upcoming liturgical celebrations of Holy Week, also refers to the difficulties that Christians and Muslims in the Palestinian territories face in gaining access to the Holy Places in Jerusalem: "Since 1993," says S. B. Sabbah to Fides Agency "Christians and Muslims of the Palestinian territories must obtain military permission to go and pray. Here to pray you do not go directly to God. One must first pass by the military, to ask for permission." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 21/03/2013).