



## **ASIA/SYRIA - The Patriarchs of the bishops kidnapped: may God put an end to the tragedy of our people**

Damascus (Agenzia Fides) - A plea to the kidnappers so that they respect the life of the hostages, "refrain from any violence which is useful only to the enemies of our country" An appeal to abandon "all that allows or promotes sectarian conflict among those belonging to the same country"; an invitation to "our fellow citizens, of all Islamic sects, to work together, with each other, so as to show that we refuse to consider man as a product to purchase or sell, a shield useful in wars, or a political or financial commodity." These are some of the most eloquent passages of the statement in 7 points signed on Tuesday, April 23 by the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, Yohanna X Yazigi and the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Mar Zakka I Iwas in relation to the two bishops of Aleppo kidnapped the previous day. One of kidnapped, the Greek-Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo Boulos al-Yazigi, is the brother of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch Yohanna. The other bishop in the hands of the kidnappers is the Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim.

The sad story of the two bishops kidnapped and their driver killed during the kidnapping gives way to the two Patriarchs to express some considerations on the dramatic conditions experienced by the Syrian people and on the future of Christians in the Middle East: "The Christians of these lands" write Yohanna X and Mar Zakka I "are an essential part of the demographic composition of the people to which they belong. They suffer along with every person who is in suffering and work as operators of good, to prevent injustice against those who are mistreated." "We - continue the two Patriarchs - understand the concern of Christians as a consequence of such event. We invite them to be patient, to preserve their faith, relying on God whose strength is also active in our weaknesses. We believe that the stay in our homelands and to do everything possible to be a land of peace and coexistence, is a great and effective tool to defend them." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 24/04/2013).

### > LINKS

*Full text of the Patriarchs' Statement (in Italian):*

[www.fides.org/ita/attachments/view/file/comunicato\\_De\\_i\\_Patriarchi\\_greco-ortodosso\\_e\\_siro-ortodosso\\_di\\_Antiochia.pdf](http://www.fides.org/ita/attachments/view/file/comunicato_De_i_Patriarchi_greco-ortodosso_e_siro-ortodosso_di_Antiochia.pdf)