



## **ASIA/SYRIA - Bishop Audo: Easter in the tears of our Orthodox brothers**

Aleppo (Agenzia Fides) - "They sang 'Christ is risen', and while repeating those words of joy and victory, they all had tears in their eyes. All their prayers mingled with their tears." With this image the Chaldean Bishop of Aleppo Antoine Audo summarizes to Fides Agency the just celebrated Easter in Syria by the Eastern Christian communities who follow the Julian calendar. Not only do the Christian Aleppine communities have to deal with the suffering which the civil war inflicts on all the people, but there is also apprehension for the pastors who are in the hands of unidentified kidnappers. Two priests have been kidnapped for three months now, and two weeks have passed since the kidnapping of Mar Gregorios Yohannna Ibrahim and Boulos al-Yazigi, the Syrian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox bishops of Aleppo. "All the people" refers to Fides Mgr. Audo "continue to talk about them. Everyone is wondering what will become of the bishops and priests. The time that goes by is not a good sign." The daily struggle for survival also prevents one from having a clear overall perception with regard to the ongoing conflict, the consequences of Israeli air raids and the dangers of contagion at a regional scale. "We are often with no electricity, no water, it is hard to watch TV or find the time to be informed. As president of Caritas I spend all the time receiving people who are looking for help. And I also had to cancel every transfer from Aleppo, because every movement has become dangerous." (GV) (Agenzia Fedes 06/05/2013).