



ASIA/HOLY LAND - Appeal for Christian schools in Gaza

Jerusalem (Agenzia Fides) - "It is high time that Parliaments, educational institutions around the world raise their voice on what might happen soon in Gaza, making themselves be heard even by Palestinian political leaders: our schools are in crisis due to the new measures taken by those who wield political power in the Gaza Strip." So father Faysal Hijazin, head of the schools of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, contacted by Fides Agency calls the educational world for international mobilization at the defense of 5 Christian schools in the Gaza Strip, which are likely to be severely affected by the recent rulings of the government monopolized by the Islamists of Hamas. A law passed last April by the local Ministry of Education - and due to enter into force in September - states that henceforth the classes of all schools of all levels are obliged to be divided according to sex, while teachers - men and women - cannot give lessons to students of the opposite sex over the age of 9. "This" notes Fr. Faysal "will create management problems in our schools: we have to find new spaces, employ new staff." The measure is upsetting for the closed-mindedness that it expresses: "We" notes Fr. Hijazin "work to enrich Gaza, opening to the variety of cultures. People send their children to our schools because it has an open-minded approach. "The person in charge of the schools of the Patriarchate instead denies the rumors according to which the government in Hamas wants to prevent Muslim students to attend Christian schools. "So far I have not heard anything like that," repeats Fr. Hijazin. Even the Ministry of Education in Gaza has denied these rumors to the Israeli press – saying that these rumors are a "baseless lie" aimed at creating tension between Muslims and Christians - and reiterated that in the Gaza Strip each student is free to choose the school to attend. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 19/06/2013).