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ASIA/IRAQ - Patriarch Sako to the Christians of Kurdistan: Do not sell your homes

Baghdad (Agenzia Fides) - The Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans Louis Raphael I Sako addressed to the Christians of Iraqi Kurdistan a strong reminder to "cling to their villages" and not to sell the houses and lands received from their fathers in order not to end up in the condition of "foreign migrants of the diaspora". The invitation is expressed in the letter of 26 August by the Patriarch addressed to the inhabitants of forty Christian villages in the ecclesiastical district recently established with the unification of the two small dioceses of Zakho and Amadhiya and entrusted to the Bishop Rabban Al-Quas.
Patriarch Sako was able to meet the Christians of the forty villages in the days of the recent visit he made to the new diocese from August 15 to 23. In the letter, sent to Fides Agency, the head of the Chaldean Church expresses his gratitude for the "faith, loyalty, perseverance, patience and joy" experienced in his many meetings with the Christians of Iraqi Kurdistan, who he defined as "indigenous citizens, with deep roots that cannot be uprooted and date back to two thousand years". With reference to this millennial roots, His Beatitude Sako encouraged everyone to follow the example of 35 families "who were in Mosul and moved to Duhok, buying a village called Romtha where they built beautiful houses, a church, a school and many orchards". To favor these dynamics of resistance to dispersion, the Patriarch also invited political forces animated by militants and Chaldean leaders to continue shared strategies. While the whole ecclesial sphere was solicited by His Beatitude Sako to involve more lay people in the management of activities and resources through parish and diocesan advice.
According to estimates of the Chaldean Patriarchate, 14,500 Chaldean Christians, 13 priests and 34 churches belong to the new diocese. Iraqi Kurdistan, which is traditionally considered a safe place for Christians in recent years has become for many just "the last stop" in Iraq before emigrating abroad.
According to many observers, from such a phenomenon one can deduce that violence is not the only reason for the exodus of Christians from Iraq. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 27/08/2013).

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