



ASIA/JORDAN - The Summit on the plight of Christians in the Middle East has started

Amman (Agenzia Fides) –Bearing in mind the background of the Syrian tragedy, the international summit, convened by the Hashemite monarchy on the challenges faced by Arab Christians in the Middle East, has started in Amman. As Fides learned, the meeting - which sees the participation of over 70 Patriarchs, bishops, patriarchal delegates, priests, religious and lay people representing all the Churches and ecclesial communities rooted in the Middle East - will outline the future prospects of the Christian presence in the Middle East, facing so many difficulties and emergencies - wars , kidnappings, attacks, desecration - that push, especially young Christians to leave their homelands and emigrate to the West.

King Abdullah II of Jordan had mentioned the summit during his recent meeting at the Vatican with Pope Francis on August 29. The uniqueness lies in the fact that the initiative to convene a meeting on the plight of Christians in the Middle East was the Monarchy, that claims its function of protecting the dynasty of the Holy Places of Islam. The main sponsor of the meeting is - Prince Ghazi ben Muhammad, advisor to the King for religious and cultural issues". The Middle East is the cradle of Christianity, "reads the text of the presentation of the conference "but the recent upheavals have placed the Christian communities of the region in front of serious challenges". The aim of the summit is to study the problems in detail and suggest solutions that will help to get out of this emergency phase, so as to "ensure, God willing, the security and prosperity of Christianity in the Middle East, recognized as an essential and indelible part of the rich mosaic of the Middle East". The participants are invited to confront each other for two days in several study sessions dedicated to recent developments in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine. The summit will see the participation, among others, of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch of Damascus Yohanna X al- Yazigi and three Patriarchs of Jerusalem (the Latin Fouad Twal, the Gree -Orthodox Teophilos III and the Armenian Orthodox Nourhanne Maniougan). Also Cardinal Jean -Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interfaith Dialogue and the U.S. Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick will take part in the meeting. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 03/09/2013)