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ASIA/JORDAN - The leaders of Catholic schools: with the "Arab springs" negative impact on freedom of education

Amman (Agenzia Fides) - The so-called "Arab Springs" have had so far in many Countries of North Africa and the Middle East a negative impact on freedom of education, which has penalized the traditional educational work carried out by Christian schools in those regions. The non-reassuring picture of the situation was highlighted during the annual meeting of the national secretaries of Catholic schools in the Middle East and North Africa, held in Amman from Thursday 17th to Saturday 19th October. In general, no Country has opened new horizons in the field of freedom of education and the revision of the models of education. "Even in the most favorable situations, like the one we live in Jordan", explains to Fides Agency Father Hanna Kildani, head of Christian schools in the Hashemite Kingdom – we have been talking for some time with representatives of the Ministry of Education on the need to review school books enhancing the educational criteria of freedom of conscience, mutual respect, dialogue between religious communitie , including programs with references to the history of Christianity. But so far we have not had any real change". In other contexts - as the various national leaders in their reports have documented - the warnings are much more serious. In Countries such as Tunisia or the Gaza Strip, there is increasing pressure to penetrate Islamist ideology in the school program. "In Egypt, refers Fr. Kildani "Christian schools along with churches have become the chosen target of attacks and bombings carried out by Islamist gangs to terrorize the Copts: so now people are afraid to send their children to study in Christian schools". (GV)
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