



## **ASIA/SYRIA - The nuns of Maalula, the Lebanese security chief in Qatar to try and find a solution**

Beirut (Agenzia Fides) - General Abbas Ibrahim, leader of the Lebanese security apparatuses, on behalf of the Lebanese President Michel Sleiman visited Qatar on Saturday, December 7 in an attempt to find a solution to the case of the nuns of Maalula abducted from the monastery of Santa Tecla and transferred to a place so far unidentified.

The mission - which takes into account the links between the Emirate and some armed factions in conflict with the Syrian government army - has been confirmed by Lebanese sources consulted by Fides Agency.

It seems that General Ibrahim also contacted the TV station Al-Jazeera to have news on the source of the video transmitted by the network on Friday, December 6, in which the nuns appear sitting on the sofa in a large room, solicited by a male voice who pronounced reassuring phrases on their conditions, presented not as an abduction but as a kind of humanitarian operation to protect them from the dangers, after the city of Maalula was again occupied by rebel militias.

So far, the only claim with regards to the "abduction" of the nuns comes from the anti-Assad faction that calls itself "Free Qalamun", whose spokesman Mohannad Abu al-Fidaa said that the nuns will not be freed only in exchange for the release of thousands of women held in the prisons by the Syrian regime. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 07/12/2013)