



## **ASIA/JORDAN - The director of Caritas: among the refugees, the number of Christians increases**

Amman (Agenzia Fides) - Among the Syrian refugees in Jordan, Christians "are continuing to increase and prepare to live a Easter marked for them by discouragement and spiritual weariness". This was reported to Fides Agency by Wael Suleiman, director of Caritas Jordan. "We thought of celebrating liturgies for Syrian refugees of Catholic faith" explained Suleiman, "but they prefer to participate in the celebrations in the parishes of Jordan, in the midst of the faithful here. They are tired and are not interested in liturgies and celebrations reserved for them. They await the arrival of Pope Francis in Jordan with hope".

The director of Caritas Jordan confirms to Fides the progressive increase of Christians amongst the multitude of Syrian refugees present in the Hashemite Kingdom today: "It is not like in the beginning when the first waves of refugees were not Christians. Now", said Suleiman "there are definitely more than 20 thousand. A small number compared to the mass of one million and 300 thousand Syrian refugees. It is highly unlikely that the Christians who fled will return to Syria at the end of the war. This means that in some cities, like Homs and Aleppo, many Christian neighborhoods will remain empty".

Meanwhile, the opening of the new areas of the refugee camp of al- Azraq is expected by the end of April, which at full capacity can accommodate 130 thousand refugees, becoming the largest garrison made so far in the whole region in order to accommodate children, women and men fleeing the conflict in Syria. In al-Azraq refugees will not be accommodated in tents but in prefabricated buildings and containers. The first large camp of Zaatari has transformed over time into a "provisional city" with health centers, schools and a football field. "Although this transformation of camps into less precarious villages" notes the director of Caritas Jordan, "is an eloquent sign: no one can predict how long Syrian refugees will stay outside their homeland". (GV) (Agenzia Fides 14/04/2014)