



## **ASIA/AFGHANISTAN - Jesuit kidnapped: Fr. Moretti asks for "prayer and silence"**

Kabul (Agenzia Fides) - "Let us live this moment, after the kidnapping of a Jesuit priest, in profound, silent prayer and full of hope. It is a sad moment which we hope will soon evolve positively. We ask the media strict confidence, so that the institutional bodies can do their job and save father Alexis Prem Kumar": This is what Mgr. Giuseppe Moretti, Superior of the "Missio sui iuris" of Afghanistan says to Fides Agency with regards to the kidnapping of the Indian Jesuit Fr. Alexis Prem Kumar, who was kidnapped in Afghanistan on June 2 by an unidentified group of armed men.

Fr. Prem Kumar, 47, was kidnapped while on a visit to a school for returnees in the village of Sohadat, 25 km from Herat. The kidnapping was confirmed by the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in South Asia, Fr. Edward Mudavassery. Fr. Kumar has been working in Afghanistan for four years as director of the "Jesuit Refugee Service" (JRS), the service for refugees. The Jesuits have informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India and the Governor of Herat.

"The Jesuits - explains Fr. Moretti - have a community in Herat and carry out a service mainly in the field of education. They operate autonomously, via JRS, for humanitarian assistance". The Superior of the "Missio sui iuris" explains: "There is no concrete news concerning those who kidnapped Fr. Kumar. Kidnappings of foreigners are common throughout the country. We only know that he was kidnapped by armed men, they could be Taliban factions or common criminals".

The "Jesuit Refugee Service" is an international voluntary organization sponsored by the Society of Jesus. The South Asia regional office assists and takes care, on the whole, of more than 800 thousand refugees: the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, the Sri Lankan refugees in India, Afghan refugees. Services provided include medical care, education, professional training, psychological support, community development. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 03/06/2014)