



ASIA/IRAQ - ISIL rebels seize Mosul. Christians flee to the Nineveh Plain

Mosul (Agenzia Fides) - Insurgents of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), conquered in the late evening of Monday, June 9th the seat of the provincial government in Mosul, Iraq's second largest city. The governor Athel Nujafi was able to escape, before the building fell into the hands of the assailants armed with grenade launchers and machine guns mounted on all-terrain vehicles. Now the western part of the city is in the hands of the Islamists, who have already released thousands of inmates of a prison and are moving towards the army base with the intent to seize the military airport. On Monday 9, governor Nujafi, with a televised appeal, urged the people of Mosul and the province to organize themselves into self-defense groups to resist the ISIL attack.

As Fides learns, the attack of al-qaeda militants has accelerated the flight of tens of Christian families to the villages in the Nineveh Plain, where in recent days the presence of the militia "Peshmerga" Kurds has strengthened. Those who were unable to flee are now trapped in their own homes, with a curfew and constant interruptions in electricity and water supply. During the offensive of the al-qaeda militia – about several thousands – the clashes were concentrated in the western suburbs where there is also the Chaldean cathedral. Yesterday, the Chaldean Bishop Amel Shamon Nona and the other Bishops of Mosul launched an appeal to keep churches and mosques open to pray for peace, also inviting shopkeepers to ensure that people have access to food and basic foodstuffs. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 10/06/2014)