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# ASIA/INDIA - Bishops call for peace and write Minister for Education in response to blasphemous image of Christ

New Delhi (Agenzia Fides) – Indian Bishops are launching an appeal for peace and will write a formal letter of protest to the Federal Minister for Education, asking them to supervise publishing houses and the educational materials that are circulated in Indian schools. This is what Fides has learned from the Indian Bishops' Conference, after the terrible incident of the publication of a blasphemous image of Christ on a textbook published by Skyline Publications of New Delhi (see Fides 22/2/2010).
As for the publishing house which published the text, Fr. Babu Joseph, spokesman for the Bishops' Conference told Fides: "We cannot say that it is a direct expression of Hindu fundamentalist movements, but it certainly is sympathetic to them and is supported by certain rather extreme circles."
The Bishops of India, who will begin their Assembly tomorrow in Guwahati (Northeast India), renewed an appeal for religious harmony. Fr. Joseph told Fides: "The Bishops have condemned this blasphemous act and renew their appeal for peace in Punjab and across India. Violence is followed by more violence and other Hindu extremist groups seek only a pretext to unleash vengeance on Christians. The Bishops are now asking the government of Punjab to release the 25 Christians who were arrested following clashes (including some Catholics) over the publication of posters portraying the blasphemous image. Making posters with the image and distributing them throughout the city was an operation conducted by Hindu fundamentalist groups to create tension. The state government has ensured that it will prosecute those responsible." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 23/2/2010)

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