agenzia fides
Fondata nel 1927
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
http://www.fides.org

ASIA/PAKISTAN - Rape and murder of Christian girls

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) – Brutal violence has been committed against two Christian girls: Lubna Masih, age 12, was raped and murdered by a group of Muslims in Rawalpindi and Kiran Nayyaz of Faisalabad, a 13-year-old Catholic, was raped by a Muslim youth and is now pregnant, under the protection of the local Catholic Church. The Christian community in Pakistan is in shock.

Reliable local sources of Fides reported the case of Lubna Masih, daughter of Saleem and Gudde Masih, a Christian family living in Dhoke Ellahi Buksh, a district of Rawalpindi. Saleem Masih works as a taxi driver and worked hard to pay for the studies of his only daughter. On September 27, at 6:30 am, the girl left the house to buy milk. A group of five young Muslims stopped her and forced her into a car that drove swiftly away. She screamed, but nobody came to her aid. They took her to the cemetery of Dhoke Ellahi Buksh, where they rape and murder her, leaving the body. A few hours later, passers-by call the police, who verify the death.

Luba's parents are in shock and terrified, which is why they still have not wanted to press charges or release any official statement. In disbelief and appalled, Fides sources who have met with them say, "they just think of leaving the city and rebuilding their lives elsewhere." Some non-governmental organizations and the Christian Lawyers Foundation have condemned the incident, offering material and legal support to the family, hoping to convince the parents to file a complaint and start a legal process. According to Fides sources, "episodes of violence and abuse of Christian girls are part of daily life. Those that make the news are just the tip of the iceberg." Behind the murder there may be threat, denial of a marriage proposal from a Muslim, or the intent to take the girl on the way to slavery or prostitution. Christian families, very weak on a social level, are the main victims of this violence.

Another case directly involves the Catholic Church: in Faisalabad, Kiran Nayyaz, a 13-year-old Catholic girl who worked as a maid in the home of a wealthy Muslim landowner, was raped by Muhammad Javed, a Muslim young man employed as a driver in the same family. Kiran is now pregnant. The incident happened in the village of Chak Jhumra, 35 km from Faisalabad, in April of last year, but only on October 2 was a formal complaint against the rapist submitted to the authorities, thanks to the "Justice and Peace Commission" and the "Commission for Women" of the Diocese of Faisalabad.

"The situation is dramatic: the local Catholic Church has assumed the defense of the family and has reported the case to the police, who are currently investigating," Fides was told by Fr. Khalid Rashid Asi, Vicar General of Faisalabad. The girl is under the protection of the Church, which is taking care of her. "The family is traumatized and the entire Catholic community fear reprisals. But cases of violence such as these are unfortunately common," notes the Vicar. "Then there is the added drama of a teenager who gives birth to a child who is the result of rape. As Catholics, even in this tragedy, we are in favor of life."

According to the Center for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS), abductions and sexual violence against Christian and Hindu girls are growing in the country, often with the goal of conversions and forced marriages. CLAAS, which provides free legal assistance to victims, recalls other recent cases that have gone unpunished: in July 2010 in Farooqabad, in Punjab, a 16-year-old Christian girl was kidnapped, raped, and tortured by three Muslims, while another 12-year-old Christian was raped by a group of Muslim students in Gujar Khan, in the Rawalpindi district. Today, a Christian family near Lahore mourns death of Samina Ayub, she also worked in the house of a wealthy Muslim. Police suspect a case of conversion and forced marriage. In Lyari, a 13-year-old Hindu named Poonam has been kidnapped and forced to convert to Islam. The suffering of Christian girls has recently entered more into the light, mainly due to the cases of Shazia Bashir (see Fides 01/25/2010), Sumera Pervaiz (see Fides 29/4/2010), and Ashraf Magdalene (see Fides 17/07/2010) . (PA) (Agenzia Fides 13/10/2010)

I contenuti del sito sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Common - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.it