



ASIA/PAKISTAN - Preparing a terrorist attack to eliminate Catholic Minister Bhatti

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) – Terrorist organizations in Pakistan are preparing an attack to eliminate Catholic Shahbaz Bhatti, Federal Minister for Religious Minorities: the alarm was issued to Fides by the “All Pakistan Minorities Alliance” (APMA), the network that unites religious minorities in Pakistan, of which the Minister is the founder and president

In the note sent to Fides, APMA reports information of a report by the Pakistani Secret Service which says it is “deeply concerned by the latest news circulating about the organization of an imminent attack on the Minister, who has become the number one target because of his commitment to the abolition of the blasphemy law. Those close to the Minister need to protect him and ask the State to afford the Minister maximum protection.”

Minister Bhatti had already received a “death sentence” from the powerful terrorist organization “Laskar-e-Toiba” (see Fides 04/12/2010). Now the new information confirms that the militants are actually implementing a plan to put him to death.

“Pray for me and for my life. I am a man who has burnt his bridges. I can not and will not go back on this commitment. I will fight fanaticism and fight in defence of Christians to the death,” Minister Bhatti told Fides. Fides sources in Pakistan deplore the fact that the ruling party, Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) – which chose and invited Minister Bhatti into the executive – “is not openly aligning itself with Bhatti and defending the Minister, as it is being place under pressure by lobbies from fundamentalist Islamic parties.” “The PPP,” the Fides source continues, “is leaving too much space to the fanatics in society: its leadership believes that his political survival depends in keeping the militant religious right happy. However, in doing so, the party is losing its traditional nature: moderate, secular, popular and pluralistic.” (PA) (Agenzia Fides 28/1/2011)