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

ASIA/PAKISTAN - Burned effigies of the Pope and Minister Bhatti: dismay of Christians

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) – The radical Islamic groups gathered in the "Tehrik Tahaffuz Namoos-i-Risalat network" (TTNR, "Alliance to defend the honour of the Prophet"), burned effigies and mannequins representing the Pope and the Federal Minister for Minorities, Shahbaz Bhatti, as well as the Christian symbol of the Cross. As reported to Fides by the "All Pakistan Minorities Alliance" (APMA), an organisation that defends the rights of religious minorities in Pakistan, this is what happened last Sunday, 30 January, during the protest which saw the streets of Lahore lined with more than 40,000 Islamic militants against any amendment to the blasphemy law, the liberation of Asia Bibi (the Christian woman sentenced to death on charges of blasphemy), and against the Pope and the United States, symbols of the West, which "try to influence the country."
Archbishop Lawrence Saldhana of Lahore and President of the Episcopal Conference of Pakistan, commented to Fides: "The Islamic radicals have attacked the Pope, accusing him of interfering in the life of the Country. They burned his effigy and the Cross. For that we are very sorry. As faithful Christians this wounds us. We dissociate ourselves from every act of violence and we demand respect for all sacred symbols, whatever their religion."
Fides sources note that the same Islamic radicals who defend the name and the honour of the Prophet Mohammed – against every person or act considered "blasphemous" – did not hesitate to insult and give offence to the symbols of the Christian religion, such as the Cross and the Pope.
Further, the demonstration in Lahore confirmed the hatred towards the Minister for Minorities, Catholic, Shahbaz Bhatti. According to the "All Pakistan Minorities Alliance", this is the latest open threat against Minister Bhatti, whose life is in serious danger, and who has been left completely on his own at the political level." In addition, the APMA stresses to Fides that "security measures put in place to defend him are completely inadequate. It is urgent to provide him with greater protection."
Archbishop Saldanha said: "Minister Bhatti is experiencing a very difficult time, targeted by extremists. On behalf of all Christians in Pakistan, we wish to express to the Minister our complete solidarity and gratitude for his social and political commitment to defending religious minorities."
The Archbishop, recalling the Day of Prayer and fasting for peace, held by the Church on 30 January (see Fides 31/1/2011), said: "The prayer, fasting, sharing and words of peace we exchanged on Sunday give us hope and strength, even if we are a small community which experiences suffering and difficulties." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 2/2/2011)

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