



ASIA/INDIA - Hindu and militant extremists united to sow terror among Christians, denounces an NGO

Mumbai (Agenzia Fides) –There is a criminal alliance - between various leaders of the army and the Hindu extremist militia - behind the anti-Christian violence which has occurred in recent years in the States of Orissa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, and which continues to occur. This is the complaint made to Fides by the Catholic Secular Forum (CSF), a non-governmental organisation that brings together Christians of all denominations, at the forefront in defending the rights of Christians in India.

Today, the CSF officially called on the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the special anti-terrorism teams, to investigate the apparent relationship between military leaders and Hindu extremist groups who together may have planned the terrible violence against Christians in different places and on different occasions.

The CSF recalls that a few days ago, Hindu extremist leader Sadhvi Pragma Thakur, who was arrested on charges of terrorism, openly admitted, when speaking with the judges, the fact that General Shrikant Purohit was complicit in the violence in Orissa and in Karnataka. An earlier army report also revealed that another general, Prasad Srikant Purohit, admitted taking part in the campaign of terror against Christians in different states, directing the armed militias of 'Abhinav Bharat', the Hindu extremist movement known to be involved in acts of terrorism and in conducting the massacres in Orissa in 2008.

According to information gathered by witnesses and reported by the CSF, the general wanted to form a “real militia with clear aggressive intentions against Christians. The objective was to strike the places of worship, leaders and to eliminate the basis of their presence,” an extremist ideology that would allow only Hindus in India. This is why the FSC calls for a thorough investigation “that will finally throw light on the instigators and perpetrators and their motives behind the massacres in Orissa and Karnataka in 2008.... The Government of the Union,” the CSF tells Fides, “must act before it is too late. The investigating agencies should expose the links between the heads of the army and the leaders of the Hindu fundamentalist militia, responsible for the real terrorism against the Christian population.” The NGO has sent a memorandum to the Ministry of the Interior, which indicates that it is alarmed the state mechanisms, such as the judiciary, the army and the bureaucracy are polluted by Hindu extremism.

In 2008, the violence against Christians affected 13 districts in Orissa and resulted in over 100 deaths. In Kandhamal district alone, 6,600 houses were destroyed and 56,000 became internally displaced. In Karnataka hundreds of churches were desecrated and looted, hundreds of worshippers were beaten and injured, and more than 350 false claims were filed against Christians, according to a recent report that re-establishes the truth (see Fides 10/3/2011). (PA) (Agenzia Fides 28/3/2011)