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ASIA/INDIA-Anti-Christian violence in several states: community prays for peace and seeks volunteers

Mumbai (Agenzia Fides) - Incidents of anti-Christian violence have characterized the last days and even the Easter holidays: organizations like the “Catholic Secular Forum” (CSF) condemn the violence, and invitate to pray for peace and launch a recruitment of volunteers from all areas of the country in order to report back cases of persecution, to continue to keep the public's attention alive and defend the human rights of religious minorities.
According to what Joseph Dias, Director of CSF told Fides, the states affected by recent episodes of violence have been Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Kerala.
In Madhya Pradesh (central India) the Protestant pastor Ramesh DEVD was beaten and left unconscious by Hindu extremists in the district of Meghnagi. Brutal and unintended violence, took place on Good Friday, only justified by religious hatred.
In Maharashtra (west-central India) in the district of Palghar, the radical Hindus organized a raid against the assembly of a tribal Christian community, preventing the celebrations of Holy Thursday and Easter. The event provoked strong indignation and local Christian leaders call for religious freedom that the state must guarantee citizens. Following the incident, in addition, the police arrested six Christians accused of "illegal conversions".
In Kerala (South India), where there is a strong Christian presence, cases of violence are rare, activists of the extremist Hindu RSS stopped and beat some of the young Christians who were distributing copies of the Gospel to passers-by.
Dias told Fides: "As Christians we are not discouraged and will continue to proclaim that God is with us. The great march on Good Friday in Mumbai, with a prayer for the victims of the growing anti-Christian attacks, was a tangible testimony. But we want to put the matter to state authorities to guarantee the genuine freedom to worship in the country, for all believers of all religions”.
The CSF has also launched a recruitment campaign among young Christians who want to become "antennas" of the CSF in all states of the federation in order to contribute to the defense of human rights and religious minorities. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 04/28/2011)

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