



## **ASIA/PAKISTAN - Christian girl held and abused: the indignation of the Church and civil society**

Faisalabad (Agenzia Fides) – Indignation and concern, but also worry and fear, within the Christian community and civil society following the latest case of violence and abuse on a Christian girl: Sehar Naz, 24 years old from Faisalabad, in Punjab, held captive for four days, abused and repeatedly violated by police officer, Major Arif Atif Rana who, he himself states, works for the Pakistani secret service (Inter Services Intelligence, ISI).

The event took place from 14 to 18 April, but only now has it come to the attention of the nation.

The report issued by the Justice and Peace Commission for the Diocese of Faisalabad and sent to Fides, reads: Ms. Sehar Naz, aged 24, from Christian Town, Faisalabad, Punjab province, works as a sales officer in the State Life Insurance, a government insurance company. She was going with her area manager and sales manager in their car to attend a conference on 14 April 2011. As the car reached the circuit road near the Serena Hotel crossing a person in a black shirt and trousers stopped the car and introduced himself as Arif Atif Rana, a Major in the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). He was standing with a traffic police official and asked the occupants of the car to show their identity papers. As he received the identity card of Sehar Naz he told the insurance officers that a call has been received by him against Sehar and that he wanted to take her for investigation. The insurance officers tried to prevent this but he threatened to kill them for interfering with his official work.

The insurance officers quickly lodged a police report on the same day at Civil Lines Police Station, Faisalabad, that she was abducted by an army officer who claimed that he was a Major in the ISI. The police lodged the FIR (First Information Report) with number of 454/11, but, as is common, did not pursue the case because of the involvement of the ISI.

Major Rana took her on his scooter to different places and then to his house in Samanabad, Faisalabad. He kept her at that location for two days and then took her to Lahore, the capital of Punjab province and raped her in his custody on each of these four days. On 18 April he dropped her at the Faisalabad railway station and threatened her that if she told anyone about the rape he would arrest her parents in a bomb blast case. He went on to say that it is easy to book Christians in any case.

When she was released her parents and the Pakistan's National Commission for Justice & Peace Faisalabad office took the victim to record her statement before the police, (which was recorded on 19 April) and according to Ms. Naz the rapist was from the ISI and claimed to be of the rank of Major. The police then issued a certificate for a medical examination which proved that she had been sexually assaulted. She again confirmed to the police investigation officer, Assistant Sub Inspector Basheer that Major Atif Arif Rana had kidnapped and raped her at gun point but the police have made no move to arrest him. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 29/4/2011)