



## **AFRICA/EGYPT-Catholic church has also been attacked and the father of a postulant killed, "Muslims must reject violence based on religion," says a missionary in Cairo**

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - Twelve deaths and a hundred wounded is the toll of the assault carried out by groups of Salafis against some churches in the district of Imbaba, in the north-west of Cairo, the capital of Egypt. " A Catholic church was also attacked, along with some Coptic

Orthodoxes " Fr. Luciano Verdoscia, a Comboni missionary who has been working in Cairo for several years says to Fides. "A group of Salafis came shooting in the church and killed the father of one of our postulants, who is in Uganda. The man was hit by several shots to the chest, " Fr. Luciano tells Fides.

"The excuse used by Salafis to commit these crimes is the story of Kamilia, the wife of an Orthodox priest who wanted to divorce her husband. Since the Orthodox Church is very strict in matters of divorce, the woman had converted to Islam to escape from her husband. The Salafis claim that the woman is held prisoner and was brought back to the Coptic faith against her will, " explains the missionary. The attack on the Church of Imbaba, where the woman is believed to held, gave rise to the violence on Saturday, May 7.

"Beyond the story of this woman, considerations must be taken to understand what is happening in Egypt" underlines Fr. Luciano. "The neighborhood of Imbaba is a poor area and fanaticism flourishes where poverty and ignorance reign. The Salafis are a group that is not the majority, but make themselves heard, even with violent actions. According to some commentators, these groups are controlled by the old regime, who want to make others believe: ' look what is happening without us. A strong government is needed to rule with an iron hand '. In my opinion – continues the missionary - it is Islam that must evolve. I hope that moderate Muslims can go beyond certain readings of Islam. These killings happen because in Islam when a group of people are expressed as "kuffar (infidels), they can be killed and deprived of all their property. Interpretations of this type should be reviewed by the same Islamists "said Father Luciano. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 05/09/2011)