



ASIA/INDIA-A " saffron colored corridor " to attack Christians: two Memorandum to the President of India

New Delhi (Agenzia Fides) - There is a real "saffron-colored corridor" - the color used by militants of the Hindu extremist groups - which extends from one side to the other side in India, on the western and the eastern side, with only one aim: to strike in all possible ways the Christian communities, with open or insidious and underground acts. It is the complaint in two memorandum presented to the highest authorities in India by the Christian communities, through ecumenical movements such as the Global Council of Indian Christians (GCIC) and the "Catholic Secular Forum, organizations that both welcome the faithful of all confessions and build antennas on the Indian territory to protect the rights and freedom of believers in Christ.

Over the past three years it has become evident that more than a thousand anti-Christian incidents have occurred, as there is a "line of extremism" across the states of Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat in central India, but also Andra Pradesh and Karnataka in the southern part of the country.

"There have been over 100 cases of true martyrdom of Christians, thousands of displaced persons, hundreds of churches, communities and institutions attacked," comments the Memorandum submitted to the President of India Pratibha Patil, the day after the hunger strike held in Orissa (see Fides 05/05/2011). Just Orissa is the "crossroads of hatred" and the attempt to "ethnic cleansing" against Christians, the text notes. The document said that "the name of a Hindu extremist leader, Indresh Kumran, already blamed for numerous terrorist attacks, appears among the organizers of the massacres of Khandamal (district of Orissa, the scene of violence in 2007-2008), carried out thanks to the support of military authorities. "

The massacre in Orissa, therefore, observes the GCIC, "is a test for the government about its real capacity to promote justice," it is a test on the function of criminal justice, but also a test of the government's effectiveness in ensuring the rights to Christians, like all other citizens. The Memorandum asks the National Detective Agency to investigate and prove the involvement of extremist leaders and senior military leaders, and to put an end to creeping boycott in Orissa imposed on Christians by Hindu militants of radical groups like the "Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

A second document on anti-Christian persecution that took place in Karnataka was submitted to the Indian President Pratibha Patil and Vice-President Mohammed Ansari. The memorandum, prepared by the "Catholic Secular Forum", was delivered by the judge Michael Saldanha, drafter of a recent Report which restored the truth about anti-Christian violence in Karnataka which took place in 2008 (see Fides 24/2/2011).

The text expresses to the Indian authorities the increasing concern about the unsafe conditions, sometimes even terror, in which the Christian communities live, especially in the states of Karnataka and Orissa. Among the hot spots reported in the Memorandum: the rise of extremist militant Hindu; political support by the nationalist party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to extremist groups in many Indian states, the progressive weakening of the secular and tolerant character of the state; the delicate issues arising from the so-called "anti conversion law," measures that violate freedom of conscience, and false cases reported to attack Christians and the slowness of the state and the judicial institute on the protection of victims.

President Pratibha Patil said she was "shocked" to learn such cases of "authentic persecution," and she assured her personal support to promote in the Indian Union the protection of the rights of minority communities. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 05/09/2011)