



ASIA/PAKISTAN-"Truth and Justice" for Farah, Catholic girl, kidnapped and converted to Islam

Lahore (Fides Service) - "On the case of Farah Hatim, we are seeking truth and justice": this is what Paul Bhatti tells Fides, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan for the affairs of religious minorities and leader of the "All Pakistan Minorities Alliance", committed to the defense of religious minorities.

The story of Farah, 24 year old Catholic kidnapped and forced into an Islamic marriage (see Fides 13/5/2011, 6/7/2011) is currently being investigated by the National Commission for "Justice and Peace" at the Catholic Bishops` Conference in Pakistan. The investigation, reports the Commission to Fides, intends to establish the truth of the facts and produce a detailed report on the case, which will be submitted to the leadership of the Church and civil authorities. Investigations are necessary given the different existing versions of the matter: the Muslim family where Farah is now insists that she has voluntarily left the family home. According to Fides sources, however, her case is a typical example of a Christian girl kidnapped and forcibly converted. "We record dozens", says a Catholic nun to Fides, who works in Punjab.

Another Catholic source of Fides in Punjab states: "Kidnapping and converting Christian girls and other religious minorities appears to become a tactic to eliminate Christians and Hindus from Punjab. One should always report such cases in order to bring them to the attention of the international community. The most serious problems are impunity and collusion of the police force, as in the case of Farah, they refuse to prosecute offenders. This attitude acts as a multiplier of such criminal acts." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 08/06/2011)