



ASIA/INDIA - "Profiling" Christians and churches: a wave of violence is feared on behalf of Hindu extremist groups

Bangalore (Agenzia Fides) – Just as Orissa is preparing to celebrate the anniversary of anti-Christian massacres of 2008 (see Fides 22 and 23/08/2011), in another Indian state, Karnataka, the community of the faithful launches new alert to Fides for a possible plan of "massive ethnic cleansing" against the Christian community. Local police, in fact, has organized a kind of "targeted census" of Christians and churches, according to local faithful, it is a clear and real "mass profiling". The operation, reported to Fides called "Global Council of Indian Christians" (GCIC), which is not just administrative, "but it is clearly an attempt to implement the hidden agenda of the Sangh Parivar", the organization of Hindu radicals also responsible for the attacks in Orissa. "It is a clear violation of Christians fundamental rights in the country, to practice and preach their religion freely, as guaranteed by the Constitution", said GCIC. Karnataka is a state of the Indian Federation governed by the Indian nationalist party "Bharatiya Janata Party" (BJP), supporter and ally of the extremist movements.

The initiative came from the local police and has already started in the district of Chikmagalur. Parish priests and pastors of churches have been given a card asking to indicate: the name of the church and its exact location; buildings and properties and the name and telephone number of office bearers; bank accounts; details on the frequency of the faithful and days and hours of celebration. A series of news that remind the suspect "census of Christians", conducted in Madhya Pradesh (see Fides 15/04/2011), state which is also ruled by the BJP, which has sparked fierce protests on behalf of the local Christians.

Karnataka continues to experience episodes of anti-Christian violence: in the last two weeks, for two Sundays in a row, the liturgies of some Pentecostal Christian communities were interrupted, the pastors were insulted and beaten, the churches ransacked. And as an act of intimidation towards the faithful, the Hindu radicals make false allegations of forced conversions by Christians, generating more violence and hatred. The state, where about 52.8 million inhabitants live, there are about a million Christians, the wave of anti-Christian violence in 2008 is already known, 113 attacks in 29 districts were recorded. And in the last two years, according to sources of Fides, an additional 138 episodes of anti-Christian violence occurred in Karnataka. To publicly denounce these facts and re-establish truth, that wanted to be denied, the Christian NGOs have asked Judge Michael Saldanha to draw up a detailed report, after a thorough investigation (see Fides 24/2/2011). The wave of violence was led by the Hindu fundamentalist groups, covered by the central government of Karnataka. "In Karnataka - note sources of Fides - Hindu extremists have immense power: they are in government, are infiltrated in the judicial, bureaucratic and police system. For Christians it is impossible to have justice". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 23/08/2011)