



ASIA/PAKISTAN - False accusations of blasphemy against a Christian, the court invites him to "leave the country"

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - A Christian high school teacher has suffered false accusations of blasphemy by a student and some Muslim professors, because of dislike, revenge and hatred towards Christians. He was forced to leave his job and hide, he appealed to Court, but the laconic sentence of the judge of first instance invited him to "leave the country". It is the story reported by Fides sources in the Christian community in Punjab, that ask for anonymity for security reasons. The story - explains the source of Fides - is emblematic to give the idea of the conditions of violence and discrimination suffered every day by religious minorities, and brings attention to the abuses of the so-called "blasphemy law", used to attack Christians.

The case of Javed Masih (fantasy name) occurred in recent days in a city of Punjab, which Fides prefers not to make public, given the risks of the man's life: hunted down by extremists, and could be executed at any moment and therefore is forced to hide. Javed is 40 years old, married and father of 3 children: his life is now ruined and devastated and, note the sources of Fides, will be forced to rebuild his life elsewhere, perhaps changing identity. Javed taught in a public school, attended by mostly Muslim students. One of them, often reprimanded by Javed for study reasons, turned to other Muslim teachers. Together they organized a cahoot to discredit and throw Javed out: they burned pages of the Koran, accusing Javed of profane gesture. From that day on Javed was forced to resign, but continued to receive threats and insults, even at home. Given the dangers, he moved to a secret place with his family.

However, trusting in the judicial system of Pakistan, Javed wanted to present an appeal to the Court of First Instance, to prove his innocence. Fides sources report the negative outcome of the appeal: "Not only the court has not cleared him, has not issued an order to stop the extremists, but has also strongly advised him to leave the country. Coming from an organ that is supposed to represent justice in Pakistan, it is paradoxical. It is the proof of the helplessness of the system, unable to protect the rights of religious minorities. It is the proof of the subordination of the Courts to Islamic fundamentalist groups. And it is the proof of the State's responsibility in the persecution of innocent Christians, for whom justice is only a mirage". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 15/09/2011)