



## **ASIA/PHILIPPINES - The people behind Fr.Tentorio's murder: investigation concerning the corruption of politicians and military**

Cagayan De Oro (Agenzia Fides) - The people behind Father Fausto Tentorio's murder are to be found among corrupt politicians and officials of energy companies, responsible for the project of a dam on the river Pulangi; and in the deflected apparatus of the army and among the paramilitary forces, engaged in the fight against communist rebels: these are the two aspects that the investigations carried out by the Task Force are focused on, set up by the Philippine government, to discover the people behind of the Father Fausto Tentorio's crime, who was killed on October 17 in Arakan, at Kidapawan, in North Cotabato province of the island of Mindanao (southern Philippines).

In past days, after about three months of investigation, investigators arrested two suspected perpetrators of the crime: Jimmy Ato, alleged killer, and his brother Robert, driver of the motorcycle on which the two fled.

According to Father Peter Geremiah, PIME also involved in the pastoral care of the indigenous communities in Mindanao, "the instigators and organizers of the murder remain at large, which is why witnesses are afraid and have no guarantee of protection".

As local sources of Fides say, after the first arrests, the investigatory commission are pursuing the investigation, which could also involve the police and local politicians, involved in bribery and corruption, linked to the project of the dam "Pulangi V" construction (fifth on the river Pulangi) and a relative power station. The plant will be the biggest in Mindanao, with an output of 300 megawatts, and will provide power to the provinces of Bukidnon and Cotabato. The project - proposed by a partnership between private companies "Greenergy" and the consortium of two public companies, the FIBECO (First Bukidnon Electric Cooperative) and BUSECO (Bukidnon Second Electric Cooperative) - is at an advanced stage, after "Northern Mindanao Regional Development Council" sent a positive opinion to the Ministry of Energy. With regards to the project Fr.Fausto had expressed strong disagreement, because the dam will flood cemeteries, holy places, agricultural and hunting land of the Maguindanaon and Manobo tribes (for whom Fr. Tentorio was working), erasing forever the identity, culture and lifestyle of a million of indigenous divided into 27 communities.

Another track on the murder investigation, reveal local sources of Fides, is the one that leads to military and paramilitary groups operating in the Arakan area, associated with the operation "Oplna Bantay", with which the Philippine government has committed troops and militarized the area of Kidapawan and Arakan, in order to flush out communist rebels of the National People's Army. Military operations have led to killings, displacement of thousands of innocents and serious violations of human rights, denounced by NGOs and missionaries such as Father Tentorio. The military, besides, have also formed and trained paramilitary groups, recruiting adherents even among the indigenous, creating divisions and internal conflicts even among the same communities. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 02/01/2012)