



ASIA/SRI LANKA - Launch of the campaign "Not in Our Name" against religious extremism in Sri Lanka

Colombo (Agenzia Fides) - A public awareness campaign and a petition on the web against religious extremism in Sri Lanka: is the initiative of a forum of citizens and associations of all faiths, missionaries, journalists, activists for humans rights which, as reported to Fides, have launched a blog and a collection of signatures on the web (<https://notinournamesl.wordpress.com>).

The event that triggered this mobilization is the attack on mosque in Dambulla a week ago, when a violent crowd of about 2,000 Sri Lankans, including a group of Buddhist monks stormed and damaged a mosque, declaring it arbitrarily "illegal" (see Fides 27/04/2012).

In addition to physical violence, says the Forum in a statement sent to Fides, "what has to be underlined is the racist and derogatory language used by the Buddhist laeder Ven Inamaluwe Sumangala Thero and other Buddhist monks during the attack," documented in several videos.

"After this violence, there has been no condemnation on behalf of the President, the government or the media," notes the forum of citizens, denouncing "a growing risk of the explosion of an inter- religious conflict in Sri Lankan society. "There is a real danger: if not addressed, or if simply left out, this militant religious extremism can become very quickly and seriously a threat to Sri Lanka," he says.

The monks showed their "shameful behavior, far from the teachings of Buddha", the Forum invites citizens of all religions to sign for the campaign against religious extremism "Not in Our Name", urging government intervention in accordance with principles of justice, legality, respect and guarantees for religious minorities. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 28/4/2012)