



ASIA/INDIA - Mass Attack against Christians in Orissa

Bhubaneswar (Agenzia Fides) - Nightmare for Christians in Orissa, eastern India is back. A Pastor and the entire community of a Christian village, about 12 families, were violently attacked and injured by an organized group of about 50 Hindu extremists. The local Churches remember with serious concern the incidents of mass violence that broke out in the Kandhamal district in 2008 and which resulted in a real anti-Christian massacres.

The violence this time took place in the district of Balasore. As reported to Fides by the "Global Council of Indian Christians" (GCIC), an ecumenical organization that monitors the condition of Christians in India, on June 15 the Christian Evangelist Pastor Baidhar, 50, leader of a community of prayer, was attacked and beaten for no reason, by a group of armed Hindu fanatics, while he was returning home from a prayer meeting at the residence of a believer in the village of Mitrapur Makhapada. The Pastor was left senseless on the ground, in the street, with many wounds that bled profusely. He would have died if some faithful had not found him and taken him to a nearby hospital. When the Hindu radicals learned that the Pastor had been saved by the faithful of the village, during the same evening, a group of about 50 Hindu extremists attacked the entire group of about 12 Christian families, causing injuries and serious injuries to about twenty faithful. The extremists also looted their homes and started to beat all the believers, the young and old, harassing some young women. After the assault, for fear of further violence, all the faithful fled and took refuge in the surrounding woods.

The GCIC, learned of the episode, contacted the local faithful and convinced Pastor Baidhar to file a complaint at the police station in Nilgiri. The police assured that they will take appropriate countermeasures and will find those responsible. According to investigators new violence is brewing in the state of Orissa, since only a few days ago, police in the district of Puri Brahmagiri discovered and seized an arsenal of more than 50 hand grenades and crates of dynamite in the village of Gambhari. According to Fides sources, the explosives were kept there, ready for another anti-Christian riot in Orissa, on the model of the one organized in 2008 in the district of Kandhamal. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 18/6/2012)