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ASIA/VIETNAM - Appeal of the Catholic media: "Stop the violence of the Government on the Catholics of Vinh"

Vinh (Agenzia Fides) – It is necessary that the government of Vietnam puts an immediate end to "the brutal acts of repression against the Catholic priests and the faithful in the parish of Con Cuong", in the diocese of Vinh. This is the appeal sent to Fides Agency from the "Federation of Vietnamese Catholic Mass Media", which brings together priests, intellectuals, journalists, Catholics Vietnamese publishers in different countries in the world, in Asia and Europe, America and Australia. Among the signatories of the appeal are Mgr. Vincent Nguyen Van Long, Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne (Australia) and Mgr. Peter Nguyen Van Tai, Director of the Vietnamese section of "Radio Veritas Asia" (Philippines).
The statement points out that, according to information from the diocese of Vinh, military and police force continue to persecute priests, religious and lay faithful in the parish of Con Cuong, preventing the normal practice of worship and the celebration of Mass. For this reason, the Federation "strongly condemns and denounces the persecutions to the international community," asks the government to stop the violence, "to ensure safety in places of worship of all religions" and "respect human rights and religious freedom." The Federation says it is "in communion and sharing with the brothers and sisters of Con Cuong" and invites all to pray for them.
In the area, note sources of Fides, a revival of religious feeling is in progress. As what happens in many rural areas, local authorities in the district of Con Cuong do not take kindly to this awakening of faith and discourage it in every way. Local Christians, however, do not yield to pressure and continue to celebrate liturgies and meet to pray.
On 1 July, over 500 police and military men broke into the chapel where Fr. Nguyen Dinh Thuc was celebrating Mass, and started beating those present, by carrying out acts of vandalism within the Chapel. The repression, says the statement Fides received, was attended by the President of the Fatherland Front Committee of the district of Con Cuong . Some nuns were arrested, while in the following days, the faithful of the surrounding parishes arrived to express solidarity with the faithful of Con Cuong. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 09/07/2012)

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