



ASIA/PAKISTAN - The long trail of Christian children raped or killed

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - The last case reported to Fides happened a few days ago in Islamabad: the 14-year-old Christian Waiz Masih was killed by young Muslims, after a "discussion on religion." The boy was savagely beaten and then thrown, unconscious, in a channel.

There are stories, besides this one, that emerged on the international news: the case of Sunil Yaqoob Masih, a 14-year-old Catholic orphan from Faisalabad, whose body was found mutilated and without any internal organs, and that of Rimsha Masih, a Christian 11-year-old arrested on false charges of blasphemy.

We are talking about a long trail of Christian children killed for different reasons: hatred towards minorities, attempts to convert to Islam (over 700 girls a year), organ or human trafficking, enslavement. All crimes have a common denominator: Christian children are considered "goods" and deprived of their dignity.

Fides Agency recalls high-profile cases in recent years:

- Amaria Masih, an 18-year-old Catholic, raped and murdered on November 27, 2011 in the village of Samundari (Punjab) by the young Muslim Arif Gujjar, who wanted to marry and convert her. She has been defined the "Maria Goretti of Pakistan" (see Fides 02/12/2011). The family has forgiven the murderer.
- Sabir Bashir, a Christian teenager, tortured and killed in October 2011 in the territory of the district of Khanewal District (Punjab), by Muslims because of "land grabbing": the criminals wanted to steal the land which belonged to Christians and this is why they attacked the children. Other children were injured in the attack.
- Anna, a 12-year-old Christian girl, Arif Masih's daughter, scavenger in Shahdra, a small town near Lahore (Punjab): kidnapped and raped repeatedly for eight months by a gang of Islamic militants. Annihilated and traumatized, was converted and forced to an Islamic marriage (Fides 11/10/2011).
- Four Christian children killed in 2011 with their mother near Jehlum (Punjab) because they refused to leave a village which was predominantly Muslim.
- Farah Hatim, the Catholic girl kidnapped, forced to marry and convert to Islam in the city of Rahim Yar Khan, in Punjab. Some non-governmental Organizations in Pakistan and outside the country officially brought the case to the United Nations (Fides 22/08/2011).
- Rebecca Masih and Saima Masih, two Christian girls kidnapped by a group of Muslims in the district of Jung, in Faisalabad (in Punjab), and forced to convert to Islam and forced to marry a rich local businessman (Fides 27/05/2011).
- Shazia Bashir, a 12-year-old Christian girl, who was raped and murdered in January 2010 (Fides 08/02/2010). Chaudhry Naeem, the rich Muslim lawyer, responsible for the crime, was acquitted. Behind the event there is a sinister turn of sale, trafficking and enslavement of children.
- Lubna Masih, 12 years old, raped and murdered by a group of Muslims in Rawalpindi (Fides 13/10/2010).
- Kiran George, a girl from Sheikhpura (Lahore) who died on March 10, 2010 from burns all over her body, after the Muslim Ahmad Raza, a police officer, poured gasoline on her and lit her on fire. The young woman had been enslaved by a woman, Sama, a dealer of youth to be sold as prostitutes or slaves to wealthy Muslim families (Fides 22/03/2010). (PA) (Agenzia Fides 24/08/2012)