agenzia fides
Fondata nel 1927
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
http://www.fides.org

ASIA/LAOS - Christian leader arrested because "he converted 300 people"

Muang Pakxan (Agenzia Fides) - The Laotian police arrested the Christian leader Bountheung of Nongpong village, in the district of Khamkerd, in the province of Borikhamxai (central Laos). The charge is "to have converted 300 Laotians to the Christian faith." As reported to Fides, the arrest took place a week ago, after twice before his arrest, in the month of August, the leader had been summoned and questioned by the provincial authorities. The questions focused on his faith and conversion of about 300 Laotians to Christianity, in May. The 300 faithful, all from the village of Nongpong, after having seen and met the man, freely decided to join. This alarmed local authorities. The warrant provides for the expulsion of Bountheung from the village and orders the 300 Christian residents in Nongpong to renounce their Christian faith in exchange for the right to continue to live in the village.
According to the NGO "Human Rights Watch for Lao Religious Freedom", the order violates a right of citizenship, since Bountheung lived and worked in the village, and is properly registered, along with the other 300, as "permanent resident". The NGO also adds, the measure violates the right to join any religion of their choice, guaranteed by the Constitution of Laos.
In another village, Nahoukou, about 40 km from the city of Savannakhet, in the same province, local authorities interrogated and intimidated Tongkoun Keohavong, secular leader of the Christian community of the village, asking him the reasons for the growth of Christianity in the village. Tongkoun explained that, since February 2012, more than 30 villagers, in exercising their right to religious freedom, embraced the Christian faith, becoming part of the community. The authorities ordered him and the other believers to renounce their faith and stop the meetings of worship, which could lead to the expulsion from the village.
As learned from Fides, four Christians arrested in June in the province of Luang Namtha (see Fides 07/06/2012) were released. The four, two of whom are Thai, a heavy fine was imposed. They had been arrested and had suffered the confiscation of personal property because they were explaining the Bible to a Laotian man.
According to the NGO Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), in the province of Luang Namtha, at least 15 similar cases have been reported, in which believers suffered abuse with regards to their religious freedom by the authorities, that generally consider acceptable religions Buddhism , Brahmanism and animism, while Christianity is considered a "foreign religion." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 28/08/2012)

I contenuti del sito sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Common - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.it