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ASIA/PAKISTAN - The Bishops: "With the truth concerning Rimsha's case, the whole of Pakistan gains"

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) - "To establish the truth concerning Rimsha Masi's case, and the false accusations, is a gain, not only for the Christian community, but for the whole of Pakistan: it is a boon for democracy, for justice, for the respect of the law and the rights of all citizens. False accusations of blasphemy, in fact, have affected religious minorities but also hundreds of Muslim citizens": This is what Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf, Director of the Commission "Justice and Peace" of the Episcopal Conference of Pakistan says to Fides Agency, expressing, on behalf of the entire Catholic episcopate, "satisfaction and hope that the truth and the good will win in the sad story concerning the young Rimsha."
Fr. Yousaf was present this morning, September 3, at the hearing in the Court of Islamabad that is dealing with the case and informs Fides that the Court has been adjourned to Friday, September 7. "We believe – he explained – that on Friday Rimsha will be free. Her release will be a victory of truth, but will also be a victory for the whole nation. Rimsha's case will become an exemplary case: for a long time, in fact, Bishops and religious minorities, human rights defenders, have reported abuses of the blasphemy law. Now this distortion is before the eyes of all."
The Director of the Commission "Justice and Peace" notes that "there have not been Islamic radicals demonstrations against Rimsha or in defense of the Imam arrested. Indeed, important Islamic leaders such as Tahir Ashrafi, of the 'All Pakistan Ulema Council', defended Rimsha and denounced the abuses of the blasphemy law, publicly condemning the Imam and asking to be punished." The Mufti Naeem of the Mosque "Jamea Bin Nooria" in Karachi has even expressed willingness to "accept Rimsha and to take care of her and her family," as a gesture of interfaith solidarity.
As reported to Fides, to give a national, legal and cultural prominence to Rimsha's story and to make it a warning to all, the Catholic lawyer Kahalil Tahir Sindhu has asked the 17 judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan to emit a verdict "suo moto"(on one's own initiative) by reiterating the key points of the case. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 03/09/2012)

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