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ASIA/PAKISTAN - The whole of Pakistan in prayer for Malala; she and Rimsha symbol of change

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) – While Malala Yousafzai, the girl victim of a Taliban attack is struggling between life and death and was transferred to a specialized hospital in London, the Pakistani nation is shaken and seems to have found unity. As reported to Fides by local sources, everyone is praying for her survival. Across the country, churches, civil society and human rights organizations have organized meetings and prayer vigils.
As reported to Fides, the Council for Interreligious Dialogue organized a prayer meeting in Lahore, led by Fr. Francis Nadeem OFM Cap, Coordinator of the Council and by the Dominican Fr.James Channan OP, head of the "Peace Center" in Lahore. More than 75 religious leaders of different faiths (Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs) have condemned the attack on Malala and relaunched the commitment to the growth, education and development of marginalized communities, saying "no" to the Talibanisation of the country. "Malala is a light among the shadows of illiteracy, poverty and terrorism," they said, noting that "her work is in the spirit of Islam and all other religions of the world."
The two NGOs of Christian inspiration, "Masihi Foundation Pakistan" and "Life for All", very involved in education, organized a celebration in the Cathedral of Lahore, where women and children lit candles to express solidarity with Malala. "Malala - said Rizwan Paul, responsible for "Life for All "- has become a symbol of unity and peace. Today she is an inspiration to reiterate the importance of education for all." The assembly stressed that "in opposing the Taliban ideology, Malala has shown more courage than the government of Pakistan."
In a joint statement sent to Fides, the two NGOs say: "Rimsha Masih and Malala Yousafzai, both 14 year olds are today a symbol of change for Pakistan: they have given to the nation the opportunity to rethink about blasphemy and extremism. For the Pakistani society it is time to choose between a life of fear or a courageous commitment against extremism. The example was given by two 14-year-old girls." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 15/10/2012)

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