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ASIA/PHILIPPINES - Fr.Tentorio's murder: a year after his death the army has blocked the investigation

Davao (Agenzia Fides) - A year after the death of Fr. Fausto Tentorio, PIME missionary killed on October 17, 2011 in Arakan, on the island of Mindanao, the perpetrators are still unpunished. Fr. Peter Geremiah, PIME missionary, now in Arakan, reports to Fides: "While the National Department of Justice had initiated the investigation and indicated some suspects, it is the Department of National Defense that has blocked the investigation. We are at a standstill. We call on President Benigno Aquino to make a breakthrough in the investigation." "The witnesses - explains Fr. Geremiah - are undercover with their families, they live in the shadows and will not be able to resist for long. There are forces who want to cover up the case: the people behind this assasination are doing everything to delay the timing of Justice in order to obtain impunity. Some of the suspects are also candidates for the next elections. The political game could affect the case," explains the missionary. Fr. Geremiah, called by the Bishop of Kidapawan, has taken the place of Fr. Tentorio as diocesan Coordinator of programs for tribal peoples. The work of the missionary killed continues with the management of primary schools and small secondary schools, also in organizing tribal groups to gain recognition of their rights, the protection of their territory, justice and peace "
The population of Mindanao is preparing to celebrate F. Fausto's memory with a series of celebrations and activities. Today the meeting of all tribal organizations begins in Kidapawan. Tomorrow, October 16, in the church of Arakan, where Fr. Fausto lived, Fr. Geremiah will celebrate a Mass of his soul. After Mass, a silent march will lay 365 candles lit on the site of the murder and read a solemn "Declaration of shared commitment" to continue the work of the missionary killed. On October 17, a crowd of faithful from all the parishes of the diocese (4 thousand people are expected) will pay tribute to the memory of Fr. Fausto by going to his grave. Another Solemn Mass will be celebrated on the spot by Fr. Armando Angeles, Vicar General of the Diocese of Kidapawan (the Bishop is in Rome). In the afternoon, a caravan of thousands of people will go in front of the Court of Kidapawan and, in silence, will pray for justice, leaving in front of the building thousands of postcards. A group will go to the Headquarters of the 57th Battalion, where they will demonstrate with slogans and placards: as reported to Fides, the activists of the movement "Justice for Fr Pop's Tentorio " denounce the responsibility of paramilitary groups, supported and financed by the army. The movement calls for total disarmament. The crowd will then move to the Cathedral, where a concert and a play will be carried out to revive the life and mission of the missionary. Finally, on October 17, Bishop Broderick Pabillo, Auxiliary Bishop of Manila, will preside at a solemn celebration in memory of Fr. Fausto in the Church of the Nazarene in Manila. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 15/10/2012)

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