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ASIA/INDIA - Two Christian girls raped in Orissa, one killed

Bhubaneswar (Agenzia Fides) - Horror and outrage in the Christian community in Orissa. Two 13-year-old Christian girls were raped and one was killed. The two separate mob attacks took place in the Kandhamal district about two weeks ago, but only now Fides received the news. The episodes occurred during the festival of "Dussehara" Hindu festival that celebrates the victory of God Rama over evil. According to local sources and witnesses, the attackers are young Hindus, possibly linked to extremist groups targeting Christian girls because they are more vulnerable and defenseless. Kandhamal district is known for its anti-Christian massacres which occurred in 2008. Today, says to Fides John Dayal, a Christian activist and collaborator of the Commission "Justice and Peace" of the Episcopal Conference of India, "there is panic in the Christian villages, but also a sense of disgust among activists, especially regarding the uncooperative attitude of the police."
Dayal, who met with the families of the two victims, told Fides that the first was a class VII student of the village of Dadamaha. She had gone to the nearby village of Simanbadi to attend a 'yatra' (theatrical performance). In the night between 25 and 26 October she was attacked by a group of young men who raped her. The girl tried to raise the alarm but she was tied to a tree and strangled. Her body was found on the side of the road the next day.
The second 13-year-old victim lived with her parents in Bhubaneswar. On October 27, she went to see the "Dussehara" celebrations, which attract a large crowd. On the way home, she was kidnapped by six men, led into the woods and repeatedly raped. She fainted, was abandoned on the spot and found the next morning. Despite the detailed complaints, "the local police did not move, rather they were rude and hindered the families" says Dayal. The girl was brought before the State Commission for the Rights of the Child, where she was interrogated, but was given little credit. The victim, still in a state of shock, was subjected to a medical examination only on 3 November, a week after her traumatic experience. What is striking, concludes Dayal "is the silence of the media and the authorities of such severe cases of violence against defenseless minorities." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 07/11/2012)

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