



ASIA/PAKISTAN - Trial for Rimsha has concluded: waiting for the verdict

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) - Pakistan is waiting with bated breath for the final verdict in the case of Rimsha Masih, a Christian girl, mentally disabled, accused of blasphemy and released on bail because the evidence against her had been fabricated. The High Court in Islamabad today held the last hearing, receiving a written report with the final arguments of the two parties. Rimsha's defense asked for the annulment of the complaint ("First Information Report") and therefore "full acquittal because the crime does not exist", saying that the girl was "framed" by the Imam Khalid Jadoon Chishti, already pleaded guilty on the basis of three witnesses. The prosecution alleged that the medical report on the child (which declares her mental disability) was false and tried to remove the charges against Imam Chishti, presenting a retraction of the three witnesses. Court Judge, Iqbal Hamid Khan, welcomed the positions of the parties and reserved his decision. As confirmed to Fides, Rimsha's lawyer, the Catholic Tahir Naveed Chaudhry, the judgment is expected soon, in the coming days.

Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf, President of the "Justice and Peace Commission" of the Episcopal Conference of Pakistan, present in court, told Fides: "The defense of Rimsha presented solid arguments. We hope and pray for her acquittal. We are confident that this tragic event comes to an end and that it can be a lesson for the whole nation, on how to deal with false cases of blasphemy." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 14/11/2012)