



ASIA/PAKISTAN - Paul Bhatti: " Justice prevailed, the pro Rimsha ruling dedicated to Shahbaz"

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - "This is a victory for justice in Pakistan. We believed in this right from the beginning. The verdict of acquittal for Rimsha Masih is dedicated to my brother, Shahbaz Bhatti, who was so committed to the innocent victims of the blasphemy law " declares to Fides Agency Paul Bhatti, Minister for Harmony and leader of the APMA ("All Pakistan Minorities Alliance"), who handled Rimsha's case. Paul Bhatti is Shahbaz Bhatti's brother, the Federal Minister for Minorities who was killed by terrorists in March 2011 in Islamabad. Paul Bhatti, visibly moved after the pronouncement of the court, told Fides: "Rimsha's acquittal is great news. I am very satisfied. It is a historic step for Pakistan. It is a ruling that launches two clear messages to the country. The first is for justice. We have confidence in our judicial system. It is important to believe in the rule of law. The second is for those who have used or intend to abuse the blasphemy law for personal purposes. It is clear that from now on every abuse will be punished, and will prevent so many innocent victims."

Bhatti dedicates the ruling to his brother Shahbaz, who was killed because he had spent his energy in favour of Asia Bibi and victims of blasphemy: "I am sure that Shahbaz looked at this event with favor from up above. As a Catholic and as a believer, I am sure of his presence at our side. We have been working in memory of Shahbaz, also in the strategy: after Asia Bibi's case, in fact, we had agreed with him not to organize anti-blasphemy Christian demonstrations, but to follow the path of justice in court. In fact, demonstrations can generate the reactions of Muslim fanatics, and then a court case turns into a clash between Christians and Muslims, that does not help anyone. But in Rimsha's case we received the support of many Muslim leaders and this was very important for the final outcome, appreciated by all the public opinion." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 20/11/2012)