



ASIA/PAKISTAN - A Christian missionary victim of an attack, in serious condition

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - A lay Protestant Christian missionary was the victim of an attempted murder and is in critical condition in "Jinnah" hospital in Lahore, capital of the province of Punjab. Bargeeta Almby, 72, of Swedish nationality, was in her car when two armed men on a motorcycle approached and fired her repeatedly hitting her in the chest. The attack took place yesterday, December 3, at two in the afternoon, in Lahore. The missionary has been working in Pakistan for over 38 years and, as local sources of Fides report, was fully integrated in the community. She is responsible for the social programs of a Christian Church, the "Full Gospel Assemblies of Pakistan" (FGA Church). The Church is registered as a non-governmental organization, run by women, engaged in education and formation. Bargeeta Almby is responsible for an orphanage, works with disabled and poor children, runs a formation course in obstetrics and other technical subjects.

The police, who are looking into the case, are trying to determine the identity of the gunmen and the reason for the attempted murder. Pastor Liaquat Kaiser, head of the FGA Church, said that "it is a premeditated attack," recalling that the woman "had not received threats."

The Catholic Paul Bhatti, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister for National Harmony, told Fides: "I am deeply saddened. It is a terrorist act, anti-human and anti-Pakistani. In recent days, the imam of a mosque in Karachi was killed and a graveyard of Ahmadis in Lahore was desecrated. Now the attempted murder of this missionary. They are acts which intend to destabilize the country and fuel religious hatred. As Pakistanis we must remain united in condemning and combatting extremism. "

The Dominican Fr. James Chnnan, Director of the "Peace Center" in Lahore, committed to ecumenism and interreligious dialogue tells Fides: "We are shocked by this event. Behind them are extremist and terrorist forces who want to create panic in all foreigners working in Pakistan and expel all NGOs working for social justice and education. Let us pray and entrust Bargeeta's life to God ." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 04/12/2012)