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ASIA/INDIA - Combating human trafficking in Orissa: Priorities for the Year of Faith

Jharsuguda (Agenzia Fides) - A decisive fight against human trafficking, which mainly affects the poorest communities in Orissa, such as Christians; initiatives to ensure food security for the population: are the activities sponsored for the Year of Faith by a network formed by the religious congregations in the state of Orissa. As reported to Fides Agency, the network includes other Christian denominations, NGOs, self-help groups, diocesan team of social assistance, students. The network has identified two emergencies that are registered in the society of Orissa state in eastern India, the scene of anti-Christian massacres in 2008. The first is human trafficking, which affects mostly women and children, and the second is food insecurity: households do not have the certainty of the minimum daily sustenance, necessary for survival.
Among the religious Catholics working in the network, there are, among others, the Franciscan Capuchins (OFM Cap), the Divine Word (SVD), the Franciscan Clares Nuns (FCC), the Sisters of the Holy Spirit. The team is led by Fr. Nithiya Sagayam OFM.Cap, head of the Centre "Justice and Peace" of the Capuchins and the Secretary of the Office for Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). The Franciscan remarked to Fides "the option for the poor" as "a special theme for the communities that in Orissa live the Year of Faith."
The poor are especially the tribals, Dalits, the inhabitants of rural areas and slums. "One of the modern forms of slavery, that is say human trafficking is killing the fabric of society in Orissa and destroying the economic, social and cultural development of the people," said the network in a statement sent to Fides. The selling of children, child prostitution, child labor, forced labor, trafficking in persons, trafficking in organs are widespread. Traffickers recruit, transfer and keep people through threats, blackmail, kidnapping, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability. To respond effectively to these human rights violations, "we need to build a movement, through a network of government officials, lawyers, police officers, religious leaders, social leaders, teachers," says to Fides Fr. Nithiya.
The network proposes a text with "The 10 commandments against human trafficking", to be spread widely, through a leaflet, in villages, institutions, churches, temples, schools and other public places, giving it to the village leaders and the general public providing a useful guide to protect all potential victims of trafficking. A report on the issue will be posted in the coming months to the political and judicial authorities, proposing a concrete action plan. The religious also launched initiatives of assistance, cooperation and formation to ensure food security to the people of Orissa. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 16/01/2013)

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