



ASIA/PAKISTAN - A Minister offends the Pope, the Christians want an official apology

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) - Pakistani Christians protest with the Minister of Interior, Rehman Malik, that "offended the Pope and should give an official apology": In the context of political tensions related to the massive anti-corruption movement, led by the Islamic leader Tahirul Qadri - who has led thousands of people to the streets of Islamabad - meshes also a controversy among Christians of Pakistan and the government. Minister Malik, in fact, personality known for his frequent use of ironic tones, compared provocatively Qadri to the Pope, calling him "for his hat and his political aims."

"The link is useless and wrong: the Pope has no political ambitions. These statements defame the Papacy office. We demand an official apology from Rehman Malik, who has a task of great institutional responsibility," said to Fides Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf, Director of the National Commission "Justice and Peace", pointing out that "Christians in Pakistan have always been known for the support of democracy and human rights." Even the Christian Senator Kamran Michael, in a note sent to Fides, has condemned the words of the Minister who "hurt the feelings of the Christian community", asking for immediate clarification. According to the senator, such words "are disrespectful and can undermine efforts for religious harmony and brotherhood in the country." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 17/01/2013)