



ASIA/INDIA - "Day of Martyrs": in 2012, 135 attacks against Christians were registered

New Delhi (Agenzia Fides) - In the year 2012, 135 attacks on Christians in India were officially counted, according to a new Report sent to Fides Agency by the "Global Council of Indian Christians" (GCIC), released yesterday, on the occasion of the "Day of Martyrs". The Day was proclaimed by groups and Christian communities in the country, on the anniversary of the massacre of Protestant Pastor Graham Staines who was burnt alive by Hindu extremists, with his two sons in 1999.

According to the Report, presented by Bishop Sampath Kumar, of the Methodist Church, to lead the tragic ranking of Indian states where persecution is most heated is Karnataka (Central India) with 41 cases of attacks. Followed by Orissa with 16, Tamil Nadu with 15 cases, Madhya Pradesh 14. In Chhattisgarh there are 7 episodes, but among others, there are also Kashmir and Kerala, each with 5 cases.

The Bishop, illustrating the Report, recalled that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians" according to Tertullian, saying that "the faithful killed are today in the presence of the Lord." "The persecution - he noted - allows us to participate in the sufferings of Christ; secondly, to lead a purified life; thirdly, to proclaim the Gospel of Christ." The Bishop, urging the faithful to "be strong in persecution", thanked all who work in defense of the Christians. He then reiterated that his purpose in writing the book "Burnt Alive" - dedicated to the memory of Pastor Graham Staines - is to "spread the message of forgiveness"

Yesterday, in spreading the Report, more than 600 Christian leaders from different parts of India, celebrated in Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, the "Day of Martyrs", launched since 1999. Many of them reported testimonies of persecuted Christians and details of attacks against Christian communities. Among the initiatives launched, the donation of blood, which can be "a practical way to help members in need," reiterated Sayan George, president of the "Global Council of Indian Christians." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 25/01/2013)