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ASIA/PAKISTAN -Argument over religion: Muslim kills Christian in cold blood

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) – Roshan Masih, a 45 year old Christian, was shot dead after an argument over religion in Lahore, capital of Punjab Province. Fides learned that the episode, on 16 February, brought bewilderment and grief ito the local Christian community : it was an act of murder in cold blood: Roshan's defence of his Christian beliefs compared to Muslim beliefs, may have been considered 'blasphemous'. Roshan Masih had converted from Hinduism to Christianity and about 20 ago settled in Lahore. Days before the murder he had a heated argument over religion with a local Muslim, Sohail Akhtar. The latter waited for his opportunity, and, on 16 February, seeing Roshan sitting outside a shop run by Sadiq Masih, another Christian, Sohail Akhtar, armed with a rifle, shot him dead there and then. The case was reported to the "Legal Evangelical Association Development" (LEAD), which in turn filed an official First Information Report with the police, accusing Sohail Akhtar of premeditated homicide. The assassin was arrested and taken into custody by the local police which has undertaken a serious investigation, after which the case will probably pass to the Legal Courts.
"This is truly a tragedy: an innocent man is slain for defending his faith in a simple argument. The episode is emblematic of the conditions of Pakistani Christians. The authorities have a duty to guarantee the basic rights of Christian minorities", Fides was told by lawyer Sardar Mushtaq Gill, of LEAD, the organization which defends and promotes Pakistan's religious minority groups. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 20/2/2013)

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