



ASIA/PAKISTAN - Attack on Christians: a move of the Supreme Court, solidarity from political and religious leaders

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) - This morning, March 11, the Supreme Court of Pakistan began the hearings to shed light on the attack at the Christian area of Joseph Colony, which took place on Saturday in Lahore, where 178 Christian houses were burned for a case of alleged blasphemy. The president of the Supreme Court, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry has taken upon himself the examination of the case by means of a measure "his motu" ("own initiative"). To submit reports on the incident were the chief of police in the province of Punjab and the Attorney General of the State in the Punjab province.

Meanwhile, given the increasing pressure of public opinion, the political and religious leaders have spoken about the case. In a note sent to Fides, Paul Bhatti, Minister for Harmony, called for "a transparent investigation" and "the immediate arrest of the culprits," stigmatizing "a mindset that will create a wedge between the different communities in Pakistan" and "to those who put themselves above the law." Bhatti calls for "a collective effort to promote harmony and stop the growing intolerance." Imran Khan, leader of the "Pakistan Tahrik-e-Insaf," condemned the violence remarking: "If the perpetrators of the massacre of Gojra (similar incident a few years ago, Ed) had been brought to justice, the attack in Badami Bagh would not have happened." In Karachi, members of the "Mutahida Quomi Movement" (MQM) have formed a human chain with Christians, to protest against the incident, demanding the resignation of the Government of Punjab.

As reported to Fides, Christian leaders have the solidarity of Muslim leaders of 30 Sunni Islamic schools, members of the movement "Sunni Tehreek". Even leaders of Muslim movements "Jamat-e-Islami" and "Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam" of Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) have condemned the act as "alien to the Islamic religion." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 11/03/2013)