



ASIA/PAKISTAN - The Commission for National Harmony: death penalty for the false accusations of blasphemy

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) - False accusations of blasphemy should be punished with death penalty: is the conclusion reached by the Senate Standing Committee on National Harmony. As reported to Fides Agency, in a meeting held in recent days, after the attacks on behalf of Muslim groups against the Christian families of "Joseph Colony" of Lahore and the "Francis Colony" in Gujranwala, members of the Commission agreed that the attacks have damaged the image of Pakistan at an international level and it is urgent to take immediate measures to prevent the recurrence of similar cases of violence against Christians.

Kamran Michael, Christian senator and member of the Commission, pointed out that often the root of violence are allegations of blasphemy. And often these accusations, after Christians have spent years in prison, are denied and reversed (see the case of Younis Masih, Fides 03/04/2013) and this in itself causes great suffering and injustice. When one is released, victims of false accusations are "marked" as "blasphemous" and therefore their life is at risk of summary executions. "Currently, about one hundred Christians and several hundred Muslims are in prison because of their involvement in cases of blasphemy, but not a single one has been convicted. There should be equal punishment for the person who makes false accusations of blasphemy," said Michael. To impose life imprisonment or death penalty as a sanction to "false accusers" - concluded the Commission - would be a deterrent towards the abuse and manipulation of the law of blasphemy, which in many cases (such as Rimsha Masih) was clearly demonstrated. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 13/04/2013)