



ASIA/INDIA - In Kashmir false accusations against Christians for "conversions of children"

Srinagar (Agenzia Fides) - Police in Srinagar, capital of Indian Kashmir, rejected as "false and misleading", a complaint by some mullahs (Islamic leaders) who accused the Christians of "conversion of children." As sources of Fides report, the complaint stated that the foreign staff that arrived at "Agape House," a social and educational center run by the Christian faithful Indians, "were trying to convert Muslim children to Christianity." The local police, after having carried out the investigation, dismissed the complaint of the mullahs. Fides sources note that the parents and relatives of children – all Muslims – who attend the center have expressed strong support towards Christians, praising their work in the field of education and denying any wrongdoing.

In previous months some mullahs had taken some children who attended "Agape House" to join them to their "madrasa" (Koranic school), even if the parents did not agree. The Christian faithful who run "Agape House" - part of the "Agape Mission" initiated in 2006 by a community of Christians of various denominations - were also threatened and intimidated with night raids. Some extremists also set the house on fire, and were stopped by the police.

In the past, the same accusation of "proselytizing of children" had hit C.M. Khanna, Protestant Pastor of the "All Saints Church" in Srinagar. The Pastor was arrested and an Islamic court, after a summary trial found him guilty (see Fides 13/01/2012). The High Court of Kashmir had then canceled the charges, releasing him (see Fides 13/2/2012).

The Kashmir region is 99% Muslim. Some local Islamic organizations would like it to be an independent Islamic state, governed by the Sharia law. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 17/04/2013)