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OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - "Hanging the criminals?": Intense debate on capital punishment

Port Moresby (Agenzia Fides) - The debate on the death penalty in Papua New Guinea is in full swing, at all levels: institutions, civil society, churches, the media, universities. Some sectors of society ask for a referendum on the issue, others are fighting for a moratorium or abolition. The Bishops have delivered a clear refusal, even in a recent meeting with the Prime Minister, stating that the death penalty is not a deterrent to crime.
In a note sent to Fides Agency, Fr. Giorgio Licini, Secretary of the Commission for Social Communications in the Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, spoke in the debate: "We must remember that the death penalty is already part of the judicial system in Papua New Guinea. And, according to the current laws, executions should be carried out by hanging. The hanging is what the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Kerenga Kua, clearly indicated in recent public speeches. However, the hanging was deemed inhumane and hoped for by the government. But the government and the parliament have not updated the legislation and how to carry out the death sentences. They would probably have chosen lethal injection, a more accepted procedure in so-called developed countries, but they have never done it, and one wonders why," the note said.
The spokesman of the Bishops explains: "The death penalty, which is still present in many parts of the world, goes against the general development of judicial practice and general thinking. The world tends to abandon the death penalty, not to promote it. Therefore, a country, introducing or implementing the death penalty, will not gain an international acclaim, but rather harsh criticism. Papua New Guinea – it concludes - should probably look at more effective tools. Life imprisonment joined to hard but redemptive labour, could probably be the best reward for the crimes committed." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 14/05/2013)

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