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ASIA/PAKISTAN - Damage to the church and bishop wounded in the attack in Quetta

Quetta (Agenzia Fides) - Severe damage to the church, the school and the bishop's house, who was slightly wounded: the suicide bombing that after the elections in Pakistan, hit the police station in Quetta, capital of the troubled province of Baluchistan, also had a major impact on the small Christian community. As reported to Fides by the local Church, the car stuffed with 2,000 kilograms of explosives, detonated in the evening of May 12 at 10.45, causing eight deaths and 97 wounded, also damaged the nearby structure of the Catholic Church. The Apostolic Vicar of Quetta, Mgr. Victor Gnanapragasam, OMI, who was sleeping in his room, was hit by the glass of the window. The doors and windows of the Chapel of the convent were broken. The doors, windows and walls of the Bishop's house, of the Caritas office, the schools and the convent of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) are badly damaged. Catholic schools run by missionaries and nuns (St. Francis High School, St. Joseph School and the Sacred Heart School) are currently closed and will remain uninhabitable for about a week, to remove debris and check the stability of the school complex. The Bishop is back to work, but the missionaries express to Fides great fear and ask for help in the restoration of the damage. Fr. Renard Lawrence, OMI, who lives and works in the structure affected, explains to Fides that "the attack was linked to electoral violence. Now we hope to return to a peaceful and constructive climate for the development of the society in Beluchstan." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 15/05/2013)

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