



## **ASIA/PAKISTAN - Pressures of the police to save the rapists of a young Christian**

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - Sectors of the police have moved to save the rapists of a Christian girl, Fouzia Bibi, a 15-year-old in the district of Kasur in Punjab, brutally raped by two Muslim men Shabir Ali and Sher Mohammed, workers in the same agricultural farm where Fouzia's family works (see Fides 7/2 and 12/02/2013). Fouzia Bibi was abducted and raped repeatedly. After the the family had denounced what had happened, Shabir Ali was arrested for violence (Sher Mohammed remains on the loose), but the police had tried to close the case, declaring him innocent for lack of evidence. The man's lawyers have now filed a bail application to the High Court of Lahore. Meanwhile, Fouzia Bibi's cousin, Ashiq Alam, who is helping Fouzia's family in the legal case, was in turn falsely accused of rape, with the help of some Police officials of the city of Muridkey. As reported to Fides by the Christian lawyer Mushtaq Gill, who is following the case, it is an act of transverse intimidation to push Fouzia's father to withdraw the complaint.

Sexual violence against Christian girls is a practice that hundreds of girls suffer each year in Pakistan: in the general condition of subordination of women in the country, Christian girls are the most vulnerable and defenseless, as they belong to religious minorities. As Fides sources say, "they are often considered 'goods' by the powerful Muslim". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 04/06/2013)