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ASIA/PAKISTAN - Progress in justice for the case of a Christian girl raped

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - The High Court in Lahore rejected the bail application for the Muslim man accused of having beaten and raped Fouzia Bibi, a 15-year-old Christian girl in the district of Kasur in Punjab. The young girl was raped in February 2013 by two Muslim men, Shabir Ali and Sher Mohammed, who work in the same place where Fouzia's family works (see Fides 7/2 and 12/02/2013). After the family's allegations, Shabir Ali was arrested, but the police had tried to close the case, declaring him innocent for lack of evidence.
As reported to Fides by the young girls' lawyers, the case is emblematic of how cases of violence against Christian minorities, especially those of women are treated by the police and considered in society. In fact, in recent days there have been tremendous pressure on Fouzia's family, even by a police officer near the family of the accused, in order to withdraw the complaint (see Fides 04/06/2013). The police agent had even accused one of Fouzia's family members of rape. The agent has now been discharged and the false accusation deleted. At the suggestion of the lawyers, the girl's father has asked to move the case from the local court of Pattoki to the High Court in Lahore, which should ensure greater impartiality.
In a note sent to Fides the Christian Association "Lead" ("Legal Evangelical Association Development"), that is following the case, says it is "confident that the culprits will be punished by the law and justice will be done to a innocent Christian family." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 20/6/2013)

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