



ASIA/PAKISTAN – A young Christian boy converted from Islam reported missing

Peshawar (Agenzia Fides) - A 16-year-old boy, who converted to Christianity from Islam, has been reported missing since May 25 in Peshawar, capital of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to local sources of Fides, he may have been kidnapped by Islamic militants and his fate may already be marked, as he is considered "guilty of apostasy".

Aman Ullah (which means "Peace of God"), this is the young boy's name, according to witnesses was kidnapped by militants linked to the Taliban galaxy, but so far there has not been any claim of the kidnapping. The young man approached Christianity a year ago, he was part of a group of Christians converted from Islam. He attended Bible lessons in a Protestant Christian community in Peshawar and in some meetings he had given his testimony of faith. In a note sent to Fides, the local community asks all Christians to pray for the young boy's life and to invoke God's protection over him.

As in other Muslim countries, "apostasy" from Islam is considered to be worthy of death. Fr. Mario Rodrigues, a Pakistani priest and Director of the Commission for Youth Pastoral in Karachi, explains to Fides: "If a young Muslim converts to Christianity in Pakistan, he is forced to live in hiding. Every Muslim might feel compelled to kill him. The change of religion is not punished by the civil law, it is punishable by Islamic law. For this reason cases of Muslim conversion to Christianity are very rare and some convert in secret". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 21/06/2013)