



ASIA/PAKISTAN - A girl and a Catholic nun threatened and forced to flee: "women trafficking" is feared

Hyderabad (Agenzia Fides) - Tension, fear and the need to leave the country for a certain period: this is what a Catholic family in the village Padri Jo Goth, in the district of Sanghar, in the Pakistani province of Sindh is experiencing. As learned by Fides, the alarm reached His Exc. Mgr. Max John Rodrigues, Bishop of Hyderabad, in the diocese where the village is situated. The Bishop expressed his concern for the family, victim of harassment and threats. Among the members of the family, currently in danger, there is also Sister Marie Khurshid, responsible of the Catholic Hospital Santa Teresa in Mirpurkhas, a nearby town. The nun is the aunt of a Catholic girl, Nazia Masih, watched by a local Muslim, a landowner who tried to kidnap her, marry and convert her to Islam. Nazia and Sister Marie, who strongly opposed, intend to temporarily leave Pakistan. Nazia is a nurse who worked in the hospital in Cheniot. The Muslim Ghulam Muhammad began to harass her and put pressure to force her into marriage and convert to Islam, threatening to disfigure her with acid, if she did not accept. As reported to Fides, the man has already kidnapped and raped several Hindu girls from nearby villages. The fear is that Nazia may suffer the same fate and could be a victim of women trafficking who once kidnapped, then disappear to be sold. Nazia Masih received and denounced the first intimidations in May. Her parents then decided to speed up the engagement of the young woman with the Catholic Ejaz Joseph. But Ghulam Muhammad, with some police officers blocked the ritual and her father and brother were arrested, released only after the interest of some village elders. Nazia's whole family began to receive threats from Ghulam Muhammad, who boasted knowledge and influence in the police and the judiciary system. Sister Marie Khurshid also intervened in the affair, who has called for the protection of the authorities and who was also heavily intimidated. Nazia's family reported everything to the court. Ghulam Muhammad did not desist and, in turn, filed a complaint against the Catholic family, to increase the pressure, falsely stating that Nazia is already legally married to him. In this period of uncertainty, the whole family is terrified. To protect Nazia and her aunt Sister Marie, the local church is trying to organize for their stay abroad. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 25/07/2013)