



ASIA/PHILIPPINES - Vigil for peace in Zamboanga: on September 21: government, Church, civil society will unite

Manila (Agenzia Fides) - A massive event and a vigil for peace for Zamboanga and the southern Philippines will see, on September 21, in the capital Manila, the Philippine government, the Catholic Church and several civil society organizations united. As reported to Fides Agency, the Philippines will dedicate, therefore, the celebration of the "International Day for Peace", proclaimed by the UN on September 21, in Zamboanga, where in past days violent clashes between the rebels of the "Moro National Liberation Front" and government troops took place. The vigil, organized by the "Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process", OPAPP in southern Philippines, led by the Catholic Teresita Deles, was immediately extended to the Catholic Church, associations and to movements demanding and working for peace in the South of the archipelago. "Light a candle for peace in Zamboanga", reads the note, sent to Fides, which also cites the Biblical passage "I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me" (Phil 4:13), to remark that "peace is possible" and is a widespread desire. The event will conclude with a message of peace and a concert for peace.

Valeria Martano, responsible for Asia of the Community of St. Egidio - who will attend the vigil thanks to the members of the community in Manila - told Fides that "today in the Philippines, despite the difficulties and resistance, there is a desire for peace on both sides: government and rebel groups. Even in the Philippine society a culture of coexistence is becoming established. It is about setting an inclusive peace process, which takes into account all the components and the reality on the ground".

The Community of St. Egidio has officially joined the "International Contact Group", consisting today of four NGOs, which facilitate the negotiation sessions between the Philippine government and the rebels. The official negotiating sessions (one is in progress these days in Kuala Lumpur), besides institutional mediators (Malaysian government and organization of the Islamic Conference), there are also NGOs such as: "Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, based in Switzerland; "Conciliation Resources", based in London; the "Muhammadhya", historical Indonesian Muslim formation. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 18/09/2013)