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Fondata nel 1927
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
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ASIA/PAKISTAN - Missionaries: "Do not exploit the attacks on Christians "

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) - There is a political game in Pakistan that tries to exploit the attacks suffered by Christians: this is denounced by the missionaries contacted by Fides Agency, in the aftermath of the massacre in the Anglican Church of All Saints in Peshawear.
The incident has reignited the public debate on the situation of minorities in Pakistan. While the "Tahri - e-Taliban Pakistan" (TTP) terrorist group heve claimed responsibility, all major political leaders have condemned the violence: the President of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain, Prime Minister Nawaz Sahrif, Prime Minister of the province of Khyber Pakhtun Khawa, Pervez Khattak.
In an interview with Fides, Fr. Robert Mc Culloch, a missionary of St. Columba, for over 30 years in the country, recalls with dismay that "Imran Khan, leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e - Insaf (PTI) party, had declared during the election campaign that Pakistan is 'a land only for Muslims', giving breath to the extremists. We understood he is an opportunist, and will unite with any formation that will give him votes". On the other hand today Prime Minister Sharif is criticized for having proposed "negotiations with the Taliban". "I think his was an attempt to build peace in the country. Of course, how can one communicate with groups who want to destabilize the country with terrorism? And then, given the immense fragmentation of the Taliban galaxy, who can one dialogue with?" added the missionary, saying that "the fight against terrorism affects the entire country". "Today, Christians are called to respond with maturity otherwise it will lead to conflicts between Muslims and Christians", he concludes.
Fr. Gulshan Barkat, a Pakistani priest of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, resident in Multan (Punjab) reported to Fides: "The government is working to give protection to places of worship and Christian institutions. The Minister of the Interior, Chaudary Nisar said that a security plan for places of worship will soon be put in place. We have been invited in different cities, as religious leaders, to emergency and planning meetings, organized by the police or by the civil authorities". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 24/09/2013)

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