



ASIA/PAKISTAN - A sanctuary for the Christian victims of Peshawar, still without compensation on behalf of the government

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) - The Anglican Bishop of Peshawar, Mgr. Peter Humphrey Sarfraz, leader of the "Church of Pakistan", has released the complete list of the dead and wounded in the attack carried out on 22 September to the Church of "All Saints" in Peshawar: as reported to Fides, the attack of two Islamist suicide bombers caused the death of 126 Christians and 166 wounded.

In the church there is a memorial poster with pictures of the identified victims. In the courtyard outside the Church, site of the first explosion, a small shrine commemorating the dead was created.

Mgr. Peter Humphrey Sarfraz communicates in a note sent to Fides: "I am still shocked by the many human losses: this is the worst accident affecting a church in our diocese. The attack was a cowardly act of violence against innocent Christians, who are true martyrs. Christians consider themselves true Pakistanis: we have sacrificed a lot for this country.

The provincial government has promised to give compensation of 500,000 rupees (approximately \$ 4,70) to the families of the victims and 200,000 rupees (about 1,900 dollars) for the survivor, who are severely disabled. So far, the victims have received no compensation".

As reported by Anglican Pastor Ijaz, who led the liturgy in the church on the day of the explosion, about 500 Christian families reside near the Church. The residents are mostly poor and marginalized citizens. Many of them work as health workers or workers who are underpaid and exploited. With regards to the massacre, note local sources of Fides, there are still controversies. Many of the wounded, complain the local faithful, could have been saved. Many died due to the lack of emergency treatment and shortage of hospital staff. The victims were placed in coffins without any identification and the families of the seriously injured were not warned. Families, therefore missed the opportunity to pay their last respects to their loved ones, who then died. An accident, which has caused anger and rage and testifies the serious superficiality of hospitals: two injured were mistakenly considered dead and placed in coffins. In Peshawar, one wonders: if they had been Muslims, would this have happened? (PA) (Agenzia Fides 08/10/2013)