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ASIA/IRAN - Christians whipped: judgment accomplished for Eucharistic wine drinkers

Tehran (Agenzia Fides) - The sentence of 80 lashes for Christians convicted for "having drunk alcohol", during a Christian liturgy (see Fides 24/10/2013), was carried out. As Fides learns, Behzad Taalipasand and Mehdi Dadkhah received 80 violent lashes, on October 30. According to local sources, another of the condemned, Mehdi Reza Omidi, was whipped on November 2, while it is not yet known when Amir Hatemi will be punished. The charges at the base of the judgment are "alcohol" and "possession of a receiver and a satellite dish". As a note of the NGO " Christian Solidarity Worldwide" (CSW) reports to Fides, although the four had 10 days to file an appeal after the ruling of October 20, the sentence was carried out with extreme haste: it is not clear whether their appeals were dismissed or not even taken into account.
Mervyn Thomas, Director of "Christian Solidarity Worldwide", said in a statement sent to Fides: "These men were punished simply for attending a sacrament practiced for centuries by Christians all over the world. It is a terrible and unjust violation of the right to manifest one's faith in worship practices and rituals. Iran committed itself, adhering to the 'International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights', to supporting the freedom of religion or belief for all religious communities. In addition, the punishment violates Article 5 of the Convention, which prohibits inhuman or degrading punishment. We urge the Iranian government to act in line with its international commitments". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 04/11/2013)

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