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ASIA/INDIA - Christian missionaries denounced for "conversion of the tribals"

Bangalore (Agenzia Fides) - A Hindu group that works for the development of tribals in the state of Karnataka submitted a complaint to the police against Christian missionaries, accusing them of having converted over a thousand tribal families to Christianity. As Fides learns, the "Girijana Kriya Koota" social organization that works among the tribal Indians, accuses a group of Christian missionaries of "converting the tribal people of the villages in the district of Mysore and other neighboring districts in a fraudulently manner and with force". The police are called to "take appropriate measures to protect the culture of the Adivasi (indigenous), which has deep roots in the worship of nature and of ancestors". According to the complaint, the missionaries seem to have said to the indigenous "if they embraced Christianity, all their problems would disappear". "The government has a duty to prevent such conversions and protect the culture of the Adivasis", say the Hindus. The police said that they would look into the matter.
Local Christians are defending themselves by saying that these allegations are completely false and instrumental. The Hindu extremist groups, in fact, who have recently lost power in Karnataka, are seeking to regain the consent of the tribal populations of Karnataka, threatening and harassing the tribals who freely and voluntarily have chosen the Christian faith. The most common accusation is that of "forced conversions". The Christian missionaries explain to Fides that they have been subjected to cases of persecution and attacks during church services or prayer meetings organized by the Christian tribal communities for a long time. These are mostly poor and landless people, who find redemption in the Christian message.
According to Christian organizations such as the "Global Council of Indian Christians", now that Karnataka is no longer ruled by the nationalist "Bharatiya Janata Party" (BJP) but by the Congress Party, it is time that extremist groups and violence are brought to justice and that the rule of law and full respect of religious freedom, guaranteed by the Constitution of India are restored in the state. The state of Karnataka is known to be at the top of the list for anti-Christian violence. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 02/12/2013)

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