



ASIA/INDIA - A statue of Christ in Mumbai destroyed: an indirect message by Hindu extremists?

Mumbai (Agenzia Fides) - The statue of a crucifix dating back to 1880 has been desecrated and destroyed in Vile Parle, a western suburb of Mumbai. As reported in a note sent to Fides by the NGO Catholic "Catholic Secular Forum" (CSF), the statue was found in pieces yesterday morning, Sunday, December 15th. The Catholic faithful of the Church of St. Francis Xavier, where the statue was situated, have lodged a complaint to the police. The CSF condemn the acts of vandalism and desecration, it expresses the fear that the serious act is an indirect message on behalf of Hindu extremist for the Christian minority.

There is currently great concern in the community for a massive demonstration planned for 22 December in Mumbai, under the guide of Hindu leader Narendra Modi, of the "Bharatiya Janata Party". The event, in which thousands of Hindu extremist militants are expected to take part in, could be an opportunity for violence by fundamentalist groups against Christians and other religious minorities. According to the CSF, violence is intended to create discord and disharmony among believers of different religions in the Indian society. Acts of religious violence can be easily manipulated at a political level, in view of the general election, by May 2014: this is why an increase of attacks committed by Hindu extremists is feared. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 16/12/2013)