



ASIA/PAKISTAN - No to bail: the appeal of Christians allowed, the Lahore High Court does not release extremists

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - The extremists who set fire to the "Joseph Colony" Christian area in Lahore a year ago will not leave prison: in fact, as reported to Fides, in recent days the High Court in Lahore has declared the appeal filed by Christian lawyers, and promoted by the Christian Pakistani NGO "Lead" ("Legal Evangelical Association Development") "admissible". The appeal stood opposite to the release of extremists involved in anti-Christian violence that occurred in Joseph Colony, in Lahore, on 8 and 9 March 2013. In the mass attack, about 180 buildings were burned: Christian homes, shops and two churches.

The Court considered the overwhelming evidence brought by witnesses, noting that the incident "damaged the image of Pakistan in the world" showing it as a "dangerous place for minorities". Among the 83 people arrested in May 2013, all Muslims, under investigation for acts of terrorism, 36 had had the benefit of bail, despite the evidence against them. The attack was unleashed due to a false accusation of blasphemy against the Christian Savan Masih, who seems to have insulted the Prophet Muhammad. Masih denies any wrongdoing but is still in prison awaiting trial. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 04/02/2014)