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ASIA/INDONESIA - New decree in Aceh imposes sharia law to non-Muslims

Banda Aceh (Agenzia Fides) - The provincial administration of Aceh, in the north of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, has approved a law called the "Qanun Jinayat" which imposes both Muslims and non-Muslims to observe the Islamic law (Sharia). As reported by local sources of Fides, fears and concerns are widespread in the Christian communities of the province: so far, in fact, the application of Sharia law, already in force in the province, concerned only Muslim citizens. The provincial councilor Abdulah Saleh confirmed that the controversial decree was approved in December and signed by the governor Zaini Abdullah in recent days: in this way the measure has officially come into force.
According to the order, all those who violate the precepts of the Islamic law, regardless of their religion, will be judged according to the Islamic law. Non-Muslims who violate the criminal code will have the chance to be judged in civil courts or Islamic ones.
As reported to Fides, representatives of churches and human rights activists have defined the measure "harmful for human rights and religious freedom", criticizing the methods applied by the special "police of the sharia", that go around the streets to ensure compliance of the Islamic law, particularly in terms of customs and social habits. In recent days, 62 people, including two non-Muslims, were detained because "wearing inappropriate clothing". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 15/02/2014)

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