



ASIA/PAKISTAN – A young Christian girl killed by the Taliban for helping a Muslim converted to Christianity

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) - A young Christian girl was killed by the Pakistani Taliban in the northern region of Pakistan. The girl had spent a few months on the run and in hiding with her cousin, a Muslim who converted to Christianity a few years ago. Since the conversion, the man is considered an "apostate" and since then he has been the target of the Taliban. In past days, some militants discovered where the two were hiding: the girl in the escape was reached by a bullet and was killed, while the man managed to escape. In a note sent to Fides, the Christian community expressed outrage and dismay, asking for the intervention of civil institutions to defend the rights of minorities and all citizens against Taliban violence.

Pakistan has just announced the suspension of air strikes against the Taliban in response to the month of truce declared by "students of the Koran". The government has, however, stated that it reserves the right to "respond to any violent action" carried out by the Taliban. Dialogue between the government and Taliban in Pakistan is in a deadlock: in recent weeks, Islamic militants told the government that "there is no possibility of peace in the country unless Pakistan changes its political and legal system and officially adopts the Islamic law". Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government is looking for a "negotiated solution" after years of conflict with the militants, but the talks were interrupted in February after a series of terrorist attacks by the Taliban. Recently, the Pakistani government has introduced a bill in Parliament, entitled "Policies on national security" that intends to put an end to violence and terrorism in the country. The fight against terrorism provides daily activities of repression; strategic analysis. On presenting the law, Premier Sharif explained that "the government has promoted dialogue with the Taliban", but if they do not demonstrate of having adopted and respected the "cease-fire", "the army will respond in an appropriate manner". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 03/03/2014)