



ASIA/SRI LANKA - Christian Pastor attacked by Buddhist extremists

Colombo (Agenzia Fides) - In a social and political tense situation, in which sectors of civil society ask the government to stop the discrimination of ethnic Tamils in Sri Lanka, even the violence against religious minorities by Buddhist extremist fringes remains open. In recent days, a Protestant Christian Pastor and his wife were attacked by a mob led by Buddhist monks who enjoined them to stop the activities and services of Christian worship. The attack occurred in Asgiriya, in the district of Kandy, in the center of the island. The crowd of over 250 people, led by a dozen of Buddhist extremist monks of the organization "Bodu Bala Sena" broke into the couple's house, which belongs to the "Church of Grace". The two were beaten, called "traitors" and were threatened. Buddhist monks also threatened the villagers in the province of Sabaragamuw, ordering them not to support and not to spend time with the Pastor. In response to the aggression, some local Christians have written a petition and collected signatures calling on the authorities of the province to defend their right of freedom of religion.

As reported to Fides by the "National Christian Evangelical Alliance" of Sri Lanka, two churches and a Christian prayer center were attacked in January by a crowd of Buddhists, saying they were illegal buildings and were intended to carry out proselytism. After these incidents, a massive march for peace and religious freedom was held in the capital Colombo (see Fides 29/01/2014). In Sri Lanka, more than 70% are Buddhists, 6.1% Christians, 9.7% Muslims, 12.6% Hindus. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 11/03/2014)