agenzia fides
Fondata nel 1927
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
http://www.fides.org

ASIA/PAKISTAN - Asia Bibi: the hearing of the appeal postponed, but lawyers remain confident

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - The first hearing of the appeal trial, scheduled this morning, March 17th, in front of the High Court in Lahore, has been postponed due to the absence of one of the judges. This was reported to Fides Agency by the Christian lawyer Naeem Shakir, head of the defense team of women. The lawyer explains to Fides that "according to existing procedures, in cases of appeal for a death sentence, there is a panel of judges composed of two judges. If one is missing, one cannot proceed". In the coming days, the lawyer will know the the new date of the hearing, which he hopes "by the end of March". Naeem Shakir is convinced, however, "of having a good chance for a full acquittal".
Commenting on the case, even the Dominican Fr. James Channan OP, Director of the "Peace Center" in Lahore, involved in interreligious dialogue and in works of social and pastoral character, is confident: "If judges apply the principles of justice and act without bias, Asia Bibi will be declared innocent and released. We cherish hopes because, in the past, when blasphemy cases reached the High Court, justice was carried out and the accused were acquitted, stating that it was a false or instrumental accusation. The courts of first instance are more inclined to pressure from fundamentalists" he explains. "But when these cases reach the High Court often these methods do not work, and this is a good thing. Unfortunately in the past honest judges paid with their lives. We want a fair and transparent trial".
"Asia Bibi - he continues - has become a symbol of persecution and how the blasphemy law is abused, with unfounded accusations. Today, her case has become the centre of attention of the government, NGOs and activists for human rights, the international community and Churches. Also Muslim Ong, that defend the rights of women in Pakistan, have expressed themselves in her favor". Fr. Channan expressed concerns about the current situation in Pakistan: "Terrorism continues to keep in check the country. Attacks are carried out and the government is under pressure due to radical Islamic groups and the Taliban. The government seems weak compared to these groups and the people are confused. We do not know how this situation will affect the case of Asia Bibi". (PA)
(Agenzia Fides 17/03/2014)

I contenuti del sito sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Common - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.it