



Franciscans International

A voice at the United Nations

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Mr. Heiner Bielefeldt

Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

cc. Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions
Independent Expert on Minority Issues
UN Human Rights Committee (HRC)
UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
UN Committee against Torture (CAT)

Geneva, 10 May 2011

Re: Letter of allegation: killing of Mr. Jamil Sardar (24) and Mr. Younis Masih (45); and serious injuries of Mr. Siddiq Masih (40) and Waseem Goerge (20) at Hurr Camp, a minority Christian locality in Hyderabad, Pakistan

Following reliable information received, Franciscans International would like to inform the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief about the recent killings of the two Christian minorities and seriously injuring two more in Hyderabad, Pakistan.

The following events have been reported:

- After a brawl over interrupting a church gathering, two Christians were shot dead and two others were injured by local Muslims at Hurr Camp, a locality of the Christians in Hyderabad, Sindh Province on March 21, 2011.
- According to the reports Christians were celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Salvation Army Church when a few Muslim youth interrupted by playing music on their cell phones in high volume, they also teased the Christian women when they came to the Church.
- A few men tried to stop the Muslim youths asked them to respect the sanctity of the prayer service and refrain from teasing the Christian women. The argument turned into a clash between the two parties.
- According to witnesses around six Muslims opened the fire and killed Mr. Jamil Sardar (24) a newly married and Mr. Younis Masih (45) on the spot. Siddiq Masih (40) and Waseem George (20) got serious injuries and were admitted to the hospitals in Karachi and Hyderabad respectively, till this report.
- Hundreds of Christians staged a protest against the incident in-front of the Central Jail, Hyderabad on March 22, 2011. They blocked the highway for the whole night along with the dead bodies and demanded arrest of the culprits and justice to the families. Two Catholic priests Fr. Samson Shukardin OFM, Diocesan Director, National Commission for Justice and Peace and Fr. Sabir Sadiq, the parish priest led the protest.
- The Superintendent Police, the Station House Officer and the local political leadership of MQM visited the Christian community for condolences at the protest spot and requested them to vacate the highway. The protestors dispersed peacefully on assurance by police that the culprits will be arrested and brought to justice.

- Three out of six culprits were arrested till this report, and the police officials reportedly have assured the community that other three will also be arrested soon.

Recommendations

Franciscans International calls upon the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the International community at large to:

- Ask the government of Pakistan to immediately address violence against the Christian community in Pakistan, and to commit to remove those legal basis that lead to discrimination on the basis of religion included in the Constitution, as well as in laws and State policies.
- Ask the provincial government to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the attacks on minorities; and take urgent steps arrest the remaining culprits.
- Ask local governments, particularly those where populations have been affected, to take the necessary steps to prevent further violent attacks, and pay particular attention to the vulnerability of minorities;
- Encourage the Government to invite the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Independent Expert on Minority Issues to visit Pakistan in a joint mission and to assess the situation.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ms **Francesca Restifo** f.restifo@fiop.org or Mr. **Morse Caoagas Flores**, m.flores@fiop.org if you have any further questions.

Thank you in advance for your attention.
Sincerely,



Sr. Denise Boyle, fmdm
Executive Director