

India: Orissa, Christian survivors to the EU: "Give us back our lives"

The EU delegation visited the districts tortured by anti-Christian violence in 2008. Local Christians, "refugees in their own home," seeking justice for what happened and ask the government to listen to their voice.

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By Asia news

G Udaigiri - The full respect of human dignity and human rights, a job and a home, a return to their villages and a restart to their children's education. This is what survivors of anti-Christian violence that erupted in Orissa in August 2008 are asking for today. Their requests were made to the European Union delegation that is currently visiting the Indian state precisely to control the situation.

The violence erupted in Kandhamal district, resulting in casualties among both the clergy and the faithful. False accusations of proselytism led to the destruction of churches and schools run by local Christians, who were then forced by the Hindu community to abandon their homeland to seek refuge elsewhere.

The delegation visited the camps where these IDPs are now living, who guided them to see the ruins left by the fundamentalists. A priest of the Archdiocese of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, Fr. Singh, says: "They should listen to our demands, which ultimately are only asking for the restoration of our former life."

The Association of survivors sent a memorandum to the Brussels group: "Although we are still homeless and dying, we welcome you in our beautiful Kandhamal. We hope that your visit will help to understand not only how we are forced to live, but also the circumstances that have detonated the violence against us."

During the clashes, says the note, "5347 homes were destroyed and 75 people lost their lives in the name of their religion or ethnicity. Over 50 thousand people were forced to emigrate, becoming refugees in their homeland. The culprits of all this are still at large: the authorities have not arrested them, let alone punished them. We hope that your visit will persuade the government to give us back our lives."

According to the Christian community, "the courts of justice established by the government with the purpose to shed light on what happened are actually a scam. The trials have gun, but the direct evidence and testimonies are not enough to send people to jail. Give us justice".