



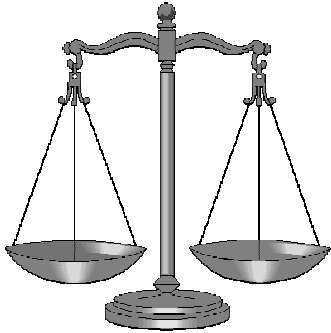
Blessed be Egypt my People



Volume (3) Issue 10 (April/ May/ June 2009)



Free Father Mattaos



Without Justice .. There Will Be No Civilization

العدالة أساس حضارة الشعوب



Court refused Ex-Muslim request to convert to Christianity on his ID



The disappointing verdict by the High Administrative Court in Cairo has dealt a severe blow to Freedom of Religion to Muslims who would like to come out of Islam and convert to Christianity in a country who persistently and relentlessly claims to be secular and apply "civil Laws".

The judge Hamdi Yaseen rejected Maher Ahmed Al-Mo'tasem Bellah Al-Gohari application to change his religious affiliation from Muslim to Christian on his ID card; the verdict was based on the Islamic Sharia which prohibits conversion of Muslims to any other religion and "disruption to Public order".

The Egyptian constitution carries the two paradoxical statements, article 2 stipulates that Islamic Shari'a, which prohibits conversions to any other religion is the as the main source of legislation while article 46 states that the State guarantees the "Freedom of

Religion". In the court case, again, the converts to Christianity in Egypt have fallen victims to the Egyptian government appeasement to Islamist radicals to say the least.

The Egyptian government agents, the court in the case, are considered in the eyes of the international law as "Agents of Persecution" which can open the door to an era of international condemnation of the Egyptian

government position regarding Freedom of Religion.

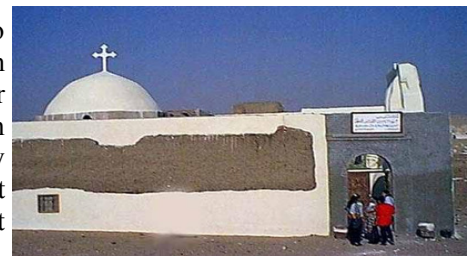
Al-Gohari and his daughter Dina 12, live in hiding in continuous fear since radical Islamists such as Sheik Youssef El-Badri and Dr Hamid Sardiq incited Radical Muslim mobs to kill Al-Gohari for his apostasy.

If there is no justice there will be no civilization, there will be no freedom of religion.

Two Copts Re-Arrested In Abu Fana Murder

The Egyptian Police released the two Copts brothers Refaat and Ibrahim Fawzy Abdo wrongfully arrested for killing a Muslim during an attack on Abu Fana monastery in Egypt in May 2008, but then re-arrested them as part of an intimidation campaign against Christians, their lawyer said.

More worrisome to the Christians in custody is that their fate most likely will be decided outside of the justice system, in "reconciliation meetings." The state prosecutor investigating the case has not announced the results of his findings on the true identity of the murderer, as he is awaiting the outcome of the out-of-court talks between Copts and local Muslims. Brothers Refaat and Ibrahim Fawzy Abdo have been incarcerated for a year. On May 3 the two brothers were released on bail, but the Minya State Security Services issued a new detention order and rearrested them on May 20 for "security reasons." Egyptian security forces can incarcerate people without reason according to provisions in criminal law. Advocacy groups say the interior ministry is working with local police and the investigating officer to keep them detained, force a confession and make the Copts look guilty in the Abu Fana attack. "Police arrested them for reasons of 'security concerns' in spite of no evidence," said **Ibrahim Habib, chairman of United Copts of Great Britain**. "They are comforting Islamists by scapegoating Christians." When there is no justice there will be no civilization, and no freedom of religion.





USCIRF Expresses Concern over Reported Attacks on Coptic Orthodox Christians in Egypt

فيليس " إن تمرير وتنفيذ هذا القانون يمكن أن يساعد في القضاء على بعض من أعمال العنف التي تستهدف المسيحيين خاصة أولئك الذين يضطرون لتحويل منازلهم الخاصة إلى كنائس لتعذر إمكانية الحصول على تصاريح لازمة لبناء الكنائس ."

وأضافت اللجنة أن مصر موضوعة على قائمة المراقبة بوصفها بلداً ينتهك الحريات الدينية بشكل خطير وشيوع التمييز والتعصب وأشكال أخرى من انتهاكات حقوق الأقليات الدينية .

جدير بالذكر أن لجنة الحريات الدينية الأمريكية هي لجنة مستقلة مكونة من الحزبين الرئيسيين ويقوم الرئيس الأمريكي وقادة الحزبين الرئيسيين بمجلسي النواب والشيوخ بتعيين مفوضي تلك اللجنة التي تراجع انتهاكات الحرية الدينية على الصعيد الدولي ، وترفع التوصيات إلى الرئيس الأمريكي ووزارة الخارجية والكونجرس . وفيما يلي التقرير باللغة الانجليزية.

انتقدت لجنة الحريات الدينية الأمريكية الإعتداءات الأخيرة على أقباط قرية عزبة بشري التابعة لمركز الفشن بمحافظة بني سويف وأعربت عن قلقها إزاء قيام السلطات المصرية بالإفراج عن المتورطين في الإعتداءات قبل الانتهاء من التحقيقات . وقالت اللجنة " إن الحادث الأخير هو أحدث مثال على تصاعد وتيرة العنف الموجه ضد الأقباط التي شهدناها في السنوات القليلة الماضية " وقالت الدكتورة فيليس غاير رئيسة اللجنة " لظالما أعربت اللجنة عن قلقها من أن الحكومة المصرية لا تفعل ما فيه الكفاية لحماية المسيحيين وممتلكاتهم في مصر ، ولا تقدم المعتدين للعدالة بشكل كافٍ " . وأشارت اللجنة أيضاً إلى معاناة بناء وترميم الكنائس بمصر و إلى تعنت جهاز امن الدولة المصري وتدخله لمنع تنفيذ تصاريح قد تصدر لترميم بعض الكنائس . وأوصت اللجنة بأن تنفذ الحكومة المصرية الإجراءات اللازمة لضمان خضوع دور العبادة لنفس المعايير بشفافية ودون تمييز . وفي إشارة إلى أهمية تمرير القانون الموحد لبناء دور العبادة قالت الدكتورة

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is concerned at reports of attacks targeting Coptic Orthodox Christians in the small Egyptian village of Ezbet Boshra-East.

USCIRF has learned that Egyptian authorities reportedly have released from custody all those suspects who were originally arrested earlier this week. Local authorities reportedly are conducting an ongoing investigation even though persons involved in the violence appear to be free.

"This latest incident is another example of the upsurge of violence against Coptic Christians we have seen in the past few years," said Felice D. Gaer, chair of the Commission. "The Commission has long expressed concern that the Egyptian government does not do enough to protect Christians and their property in Egypt, nor does the government adequately bring perpetrators of such violence to justice."

On June 21, Muslim villagers looted and attacked private homes and a building used for Christian gatherings and religious services in Ezbet Boshra-East. According to reports, a group of Christians from Cairo were visiting a pastor who lives in the building. This apparently caught the attention of local residents, particularly Muslims. Soon after, it is alleged that a group

of Muslims began looting. Several Christians and Muslims sustained injuries and some of the homes and the building were damaged. In addition, crops were uprooted by Muslim rioters on property owned by Christian farmers. A curfew reportedly is in place, although most Christians remain in their homes for fear of additional attacks.

Initial reports say that state security services did little to prevent the violence from occurring. This repeats the established pattern that security services do not adequately protect Christian citizens in many localities.

For all Christians in Egypt, government permission is required to build a new church or repair an existing one, and the approval process for church construction is time-consuming and inflexible. Even some permits that have been approved cannot be acted upon because of interference by the state security services at both the local and national levels.

"The Commission recommends that the Egyptian government implement procedures to ensure that all places of worship are subject to the

same transparent, non-discriminatory, and efficient regulations regarding construction and maintenance," said Ms. Gaer. "If the Egyptian government would pass and implement such a law, it may help in stemming some of the violence targeting Christians who are forced to convert private homes and buildings into churches because they cannot get permission to build an appropriate place of worship." Egypt has been cited by the USCIRF "Watch List" as a country with serious religious freedom violations, including widespread problems of discrimination, intolerance, and other human rights violations against members of religious minorities, as well as non-conforming Muslims.

USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission. USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the President and the leadership of both political parties in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

USCIRF's principal responsibilities are to review the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom internationally and to make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress.

President Obama addressed the “Muslim world” from Cairo on 5th June 2009



President Obama gave his much-anticipated speech at Cairo University in Egypt. The speech was eloquent and powerfully given. The theme was a “new beginning” in the relationship between the U.S. and the Muslim world, and was well-received by its intended audience-building important bridges.

In it, the President spoke of the need to “speak the truth” and avoid a “self-defeating focus on the past.” Well, on that score I wish that the President had taken his own words more to heart. The next morning, David Brooks of the *New York Times* wrote that the President’s speech combined “idealism” and “cunning,” and included “historical distortions, eloquent appeals and strained moral equivalences.”

Some of the President’s rhetoric was simply flattery, as when the president said that “Islamic culture has given us majestic arches and soaring spires; timeless poetry and cherished music; elegant calligraphy and places of peaceful contemplation.”

Well, I know from my own experience that complimenting a person you’re trying to win over is part of diplomacy. Acknowledging a society’s achieve-

ments is a way of saying “we respect you.” Similarly, while the President made the Treaty of Tripoli sound much more important than it really was, this was part of an effort to put his audience at ease.

But more troubling is what the President had to say about Islam and religious tolerance. The President spoke of how Islam had demonstrated “through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance . . .”

Well, it’s true that some Islamic societies have embodied the tolerance the President spoke of. The sixteenth-century Mughal emperor Akbar was so renowned for his commitment to tolerance and equality that he received a letter from Queen Elizabeth I of England telling him that reports of his “humanity” had reached her.

But folks, that was 400 years ago. Since then, you would be hard-pressed to find another instance of this kind of genuine religious tolerance in the Islamic world.

Take the President’s Egyptian hosts: Persecution of Egypt’s Christians, the Copts, ranges from systematic harassment to murder.

An example of the former was Egypt’s

response to the “swine flu” scare: It ordered the slaughter of its pigs - the only country to do so. Since Muslims don’t eat pork, the effect was to further impoverish the Coptic minority. As one Muslim Moroccan writer put it, “the Copts are victims of the flu without ever having been contaminated.” Why? Many Arab intellectuals-Muslims and Christians-believe it was to appease the Muslim Brotherhood, which opposes raising pigs on “Islamic soil.” Then again, they’re not crazy about raising Christians there, either: Copts are murdered and seminaries are burned. The Egyptian government’s response has been less than vigorous. Now to be fair, if you are a Christian, there are much worse places to live in the Islamic world than Egypt. But what does that say about Islam and religious freedom today? “Speaking the truth” means acknowledging this reality. Avoiding what’s called a “self-defeating focus on the past” requires acknowledging that Akbar has been dead 400 years-and that it’s time for the Islamic world to demonstrate *today* “tolerance” in deeds, not just words.

Congress asked Obama to indict radical ideologies and human rights abuses in his speech to the "Muslim World"

Ten of the Congress members (Frank Wolf, John Shadegg, Sue Myrick, Ted Poe, Zack Wamp, Trent Franks, Dan Burton, Paul Broun, Joe Pitts, Patrick McHenry) sent a letter to President Obama urged him to take important issues into his consideration in his speech to the Muslim world in Cairo.

1- Religious freedom for all people of faith, including Muslims, and call upon all governments to declare al Qaeda and the Taliban as a threat to humanity, and urged to fight them .
2- Basic human dignity to the people of the Middle East by their governments>

3- To raise the individual cases of dissidents in prisons.

4- Advocate the struggling religious minorities as is consistent with our own rich tradition of religious freedom.

5- Defend freedom and democracy in pluralistic Lebanon, call for stopping political assassinations.

6- Ask the Arab League to help the mostly Muslim population of Darfur. Also ask to help Pakistan in its war against the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other terrorist organizations.

7- Ask the governments of the Middle East to commit to a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

via a two states solution.

8- Helping the Muslim minorities around the world and ensure that all other minorities inside the “Muslim world” having their basic rights.

9- We urge you to ask them to help Egypt fight the scourge of terrorism and stand by its own Coptic minority, often targeted by extremists’ violence. We urge you to ask them to speak out against radical Islamists all around the world and not condone their behavior with complacency.

10- To highlight the contributions of the American people to ameliorate suffering in Muslim communities around the world. Such as Indonesia during tsunami, Pakistani earthquake, Bosnia and Kosovo, also in Iraq and Afghanistan.

At the end of the letter they said: Mr. President, you have a great opportunity to engage and inspire Middle Eastern governments and Muslims around the world with your words. We urge you to consider including these important recommendations in your speech.

Christian Freedom International Challenges Obama's Silence on Christian Persecution in His Address to Muslim World

Christian Freedom International (CFI), a humanitarian organization that assists persecuted Christians around the world, is dismayed about President Barack Obama's failure to address the monumental crisis of Christian persecution in Muslim-majority nations during a speech he gave earlier today in Cairo, Egypt.

"We're very disappointed in what he said...and more so about what he didn't say," says CFI president Jim Jacobson.

In his speech, Obama promised the Muslim world a new relationship with the United States based on mutual interest and respect, although CFI questions why the President did not place a stronger demand on Muslims to reciprocate the effort. "According to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 17 of the 27 countries targeted for religious persecution contains a Muslim majority – including Egypt," says Jacobson. "President Obama has said that the West has been perceived by Muslims to be hostile to the traditions of Islam, but the fact is that no Christian majority society anywhere today op-

presses Muslims."

Jacobson has cited other omissions of religious persecution in Obama's speech, saying that while the President claimed that "Islam has a proud tradition of tolerance," there is no freedom in Muslim-majority countries for Christians to freely practice their own religion, attend publicly funded universities such as Al-Azhar, or even freedom to wear clothing other than Islam's traditional head scarves and burqas.

"At the conclusion of his remarks, Obama stated that 'there's one rule that lies at the heart of every religion – that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us,'" says Jacobson. "These words are clearly from Matthew 7:12 in the Bible, however, not every religion has the words of Jesus Christ at its heart. The truth of the matter is that Muslim nations must reciprocate that mutual interest and respect that President Obama speaks of...and that means treating Christians the same way Islamic governments demand that Western nations treat Muslims."

[Source: Christian Freedom International](#)

A statement Issued by The Union of Coptic Organizations in Europe On the American presidential, address to the Muslim world

The Union of Coptic Organizations in Europe expresses its support for the American President's speech, which was to open a new page in relations between the United States, the West and the Muslim world. The EU expresses its hope for the implementation of recommendations of the American President, especially as regards the rights of religious minorities in the region as the Copts in Egypt and the Maronites of Lebanon and the fight against terrorism in the region including funding extremist groups to division between the citizens of that country, and violate the honor and the lives of others. The Union of Coptic Organizations in Europe is

committed to using all peaceful means, legal and public information and rights to limit the criminal crimes of religious extremism and their instigators and that the claim of a free society to defend the vulnerable and marginalized populations and women.

The Union is to appeal to all organizations of the rights of Copts and global organizations, on the work of democratic dialogue and the act of giving permission to civil society to exercise its functions to determine the transparency and rule of law in Egypt so that our country, Egypt, become the oasis of security for its citizens, Copts and Muslims.

Abstract from Obama speech

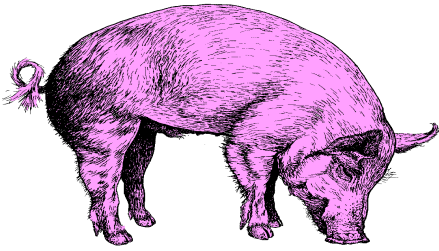
you must respect the rights of minorities, and participate with a spirit of tolerance and compromise; you must place the interests of your people and the legitimate workings of the political process above your party. Without these ingredients, elections alone do not make true democracy.

The fifth issue that we must address together is religious freedom.

Islam has a proud tradition of tolerance. We see it in the history of Andalusia and Cordoba during the Inquisition. I saw it firsthand as a child in Indonesia, where devout

Christians worshiped freely in an overwhelmingly Muslim country. That is the spirit we need today. **People in every country should be free to choose and live their faith based upon the persuasion of the mind, heart, and soul.** This tolerance is essential for religion to thrive, but it is being challenged in many different ways.

Among some Muslims, there is a disturbing tendency to measure one's own faith by the rejection of another's. The richness of religious diversity must be upheld – whether it is for Maronites in Lebanon or **the Copts in Egypt.**



A few weeks ago news surfaced about the H1N1 influenza that was spreading from Mexico. This kind of influenza was known but largely ignored. It appeared to be a mosaic of a wild bird form of flue, a human type and a strain found in pigs. It's interesting to notice that in 2006 the American Association of Swine Veterinarians reported that humans were passing the H1N1 viruses to pigs; this caused widespread illness in swine, especially in the American Midwest. One year later in Ohio an outbreak occurred, sickening many of the pigs but not their human handlers. The cause was a type of H1N1 that was a close match to the Wisconsin strain that may have been spread from human to pig.

A reporter from Los Angeles Times wrote on 29 May 2009 about the slaughter of the pigs in Egypt, he said: "Egypt is the only country in the world that is slaughtering its pigs over the swine flu. Ninety percent of the people in this neighborhood are illiterate. You take these garbage collection jobs away and you'll end up with thugs and bandits."

In Cairo, tens of thousands of trash collectors whom they are known as "zabaleen", who raised pigs lost most of their income upon the government, order to kill the pigs.

In spite of the fact that there was no case of influenza among Egyptians at that time, the regime made the decision to conduct a mass killing of all the local swine.

Various international organizations, scientists from Egypt and elsewhere are curious about this fast and drastic decision. The fact is the regime does not care about the

Egypt killed the pigs .. And the problem of swine flue increasing day by day!!

health of its population. The main reason is to damage part of the Coptic source of life, the following are a few examples:

- The water is a vital element for mankind; Egypt had a great gift of water which is the Nile. When in the past the Nile water was potable, now the same water is a great danger for the health.
- The government allows the use of certain fertilizers that turned out to be dangerous; in fact various people developed cancer due to eating certain vegetables.
- The level of air and sound pollution is over the limit of the international scale.
- Egypt has the highest number of deaths resulting from the Avian Influenza (H5N1).

Pigs are not to blame for the so-called swine flu, which Coptic Christian garbage collectors who fattened them with trash and sold them to non-Muslim butchers .

The government of Egypt has ordered the pigs to be killed under the guards of the armed police.

The total number of pigs to be killed are about 300,000.

The question is why the government decided to destroy all Egyptian pigs?

The answer is simple, its part of the forced Islamization which has been planned for over fifty years.

The Zabaleen is one of the sad Coptic realities of Egypt . They are the result of discrimination and oppression.

The plan to remove the swine from the land of Pharos has been pending for over three years in the parliament. When the regime found the right opportunity they were able to kill two birds with one stone:

- The pig is an insane animal as per Muslims, killing it satisfied insisting requests made by their leaders.
- Oppressing that trade would result in making the zabaleen even more poor so they would have to leave the country or their religion.

The Coptic Christian garbage facing a very difficult situation after they lost their source of income to feed their children and families.

Copts in Egypt have the right to live their life with dignity and respect.



العقوبات الدولية تهدد مصر بسبب إعدام الخنازير هيئة الخدمات البيطرية تخاطب الاتحاد الأوروبي لتفسير إعدام الخنازير

على دول الاتحاد الأوروبي وأمريكا ويمكنها الضغط لمنع التصدير أو الاستيراد من مصر التي تعتمد على الاستيراد من الخارج وليست لديها ثروة حيوانية استراتيجية.

ومن جانبه رفض الدكتور حسن شفيق رئيس الإدارة المركزية للصحة العامة والمجازر والرفق بالحيوان بـهيئة الخدمات البيطرية ما يتكرر عن خضوع مصر لحملات تفتيش مؤكدا أن الوفد جاء لزيارة مصر لتفقد الأماكن التي كانت تربي فيها الخنازير، مشيراً أن الوفد أبدى استياءه منها.

وعن مغزى حضور الأنبا سمعان إبراهيم والدكتور هاني عزيز برفقة الوفد باعتبارهما ليسا من أعضاء هيئة الخدمات أو وزارة الزراعة اعترف شفيق بحضور عزيز وسمعان للعديد من الاجتماعات والزيارات التي نظمتها المنظمات لمصر بوصفهما من المهتمين بهذا الشأن.

المصدر: جريدة اليوم السابع ٦/٧/٢٠٠٩

إلى أن الوفد لم يبد اقتناعاً بتقارير هيئة الخدمات البيطرية التي أكدت فيها ضرورة الإعدام لعدم تحور الفيروس وأصر على لقاء وزير الزراعة أمين أباظة بمقر الوزارة لمعرفة وجهة نظر الوزارة في الإعدام.

بدأت علامات القلق بمقر هيئة الخدمات البيطرية التي بدأت في مراسلة العديد من الدول لشرح وجهة نظرها في إعدام الخنازير منها رسائل إلى ألمانيا وبريطانيا وبعض دول الاتحاد الأوروبي، حسبما أكد أحد المصادر بالهيئة، مشيرة إلى أن هناك مخاوف من فرض عقوبات تجارية على مصر، التي سبق وتعرضت لعقوبة من أستراليا قبل عامين عندما امتنعت عن تصدير حيوانات حية، اعتراضاً على التعامل مع الحيوانات بطرق غير رحيمة. لافتاً إلى أن هذه المنظمات شاهدت الصور التي عرضتها الصحف المصرية لدفن الخنازير حية.

وأشار المصدر أن هذه المنظمات لها تأثير

في الوقت الذي يزور فيه وفد المنظمة العالمية للرفق بالحيوان مصر للتحقيق في واقعة إعدام الخنازير بطرق وصفتها منظمات دولية لصحة الحيوان بغير الرحيمة، أصبح هناك هاجس لدى الكثيرين بأن عقوبات دولية تجارية تهدد مصر التي تعرضت لحملة قبل شهرين من منظمات الرفق بالحيوان اعتراضاً على قرار رئيس الجمهورية بإعدام الخنازير وأن المنظمات الدولية تحركت بعد شكاوى منظمات الرفق بالحيوان المصرية وكبار مربى الخنازير ونظمت زيارة لأماكن التربية والإعدام.

استدعى وفد منظمة الرفق بالحيوان الدولي الدكتور هاني عزيز عن المنظمات المصرية للرفق بالحيوان، والأنبا سمعان إبراهيم رئيس جمعية جامعي القمامة بمنشية ناصر والذي رفض الحديث عن هدف الزيارة أو إمكانية فرض عقوبات على مصر بسبب إعدام الخنازير. خاصة أن بعض المصادر أشارت

Invitation from



To Human Rights Organizations in Europe and America ,
to writers, activists and journalists

١١ July 2009

Speeches of the Heads of European Coptic Organizations and participants in the Conference and the Action Plan of the Union for the coming year . The invitation is general for all the activists in the world and all Coptic organizations to participate.

A selection of journalists from Egypt and Europe, a number of legal and professionals from Europe and America will participate.

Note:

The deadline for submission of the interventions that will be received in the Conference is on 6 July 2009. For further information, please contact:

1- Dr. Awad Shafik The President of the Union

Email: ch.awad@gmail.com This e-mail address is being protected from spam bots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it

For communication and reservation please contact:

2- Mr. Kamal Abdel-Nour, The President of the Organization of Copts in Austria

Email: kimo_46@hotmail.com This e-mail address is being protected from spam bots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it

3- Mr. Medhat Kelada Email:

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With continuing patterns of violations of the rights of the Copts and the persecution of Copts in Egypt and attempts by individuals, groups, officials and non-officials employees to reduce the activity of defenders of Coptic issue.

The European Union of Coptic Organizations for the Human Rights with the cooperation of a number of European Organizations for Human Rights in Austria and in Germany invite you to attend and participate in the First Conference of the Union,

after its establishment, under the title: Human rights and minorities in the Middle East: A future vision to restore the rights of the Copts in the light of the international political changes , On 10 and 11 July 2009 in the Hall of the Political Academy, Austria .

Agenda:

10 July 2009

١١h00 The press conference for Austrian, European and Arabic newspapers

١٢h00 An hour meeting with members of the Austrian Parliament

١٥h00 An extensive meeting with students of the Austrian Political Academy

Egyptian State Security Forces Demolish Church Services

The Egyptian State Security forces attacked and demolished on 26/04/09 at 7.30 am the services building belonging to the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Masrah Matrouh, assaulting the Coptic priests and Coptic women and men. More than 1000 Copts have surrounded the remains of the demolished building, ready for martyrdom, said a church member. Officials at the Marsah Matrouh Local Council denied any knowledge of issuing an order for demolition.

A member of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Marsah Matrouh confirmed the news that the State Security forces attacked and demolished the services building of the Coptic Orthodox Church there. He added: "They have also assaulted the Coptic priest, Father Matta Zakaria, who tried to defend the demolition of the services building, as well as those present in the building", added the Church member.

Thirteen Security lorries with a 700-man force of the State Security went into the one storey services building, attacked a homeless Coptic family who was sheltering there, and whose head was assigned to guard the building. They tied up the screaming women to chairs after beating them, until the full demolition of the building was undertaken. The family men, including the guard who were outside the building were beaten, tied and then loaded unto the State Security lorries. The matter deteriorated further when the Christians knew of the news, and flocked to the place, in order to prevent the demolition work. They clashed with the government forces. The forces have beaten them with sticks, and the people retaliated in self-defence.

But why the Government demolished the services building? A Church member said: "After a few days of purchasing the building, the Government had the suspicion, just a suspicion, that this building might become a church. Although this building is still in an unfinished state, just because it had no balconies, they got the suspicion that it might become a church!".

He added: "Following their suspicion, and as a trick, they arrived before 8.00 am to demolish the building, knowing



quite well that it is Sunday and all the people and the priests would be at Church. However, they found the family of a poor man living there, and guarding the building. When the man's daughters opposed the forces and screamed, they were assaulted and thrown to the ground".

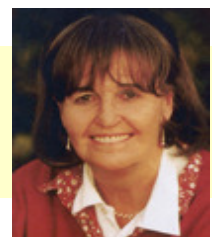
Although the services building has all the necessary documents and licenses, the demolishers said that the fence on the roof is a 'bit high', so rather than contacting the church to lower the roof fence by a couple of bricks or even demolishing the entire fence, instead the Government took the draconian action of demolishing the whole building including the construction columns.

The Marsah Matrouh Dioceses bought this building to help the poor who cannot pay for treatment and medical charges. This building is in a very poor area, all people living there are poor, out of work, and have an income of below zero; they cannot afford to feed themselves, so the Coptic Church supports them financially. The Church arranged for this building to be a day-clinic for the poor, as they are unable to pay for their own treatment and medicine."

A question at the House of Lords about the demolition of the Service Building in Egypt

Baroness Cox asks a question at the House of Lords about the demolition of the Service Building in Marsa Matroh. She asked Her Majesty's Government whether they will make representations to the Government of Egypt about reports that their state security forces demolished the services building belonging to the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Masrah Matrouh, assaulting the Coptic priests and Coptic women and men, on 26 April at 7.30 am.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Malloch-Brown) said: The facts of this case are not totally clear. We understand from informal contacts, however, that the building in question was privately owned by



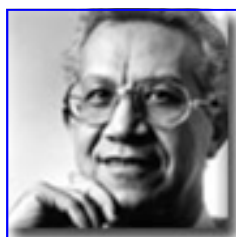
an Egyptian Coptic Christian. A second storey had apparently been added illegally.

prompting the involvement of the State Security forces to demolish the extension. There are differing reports on the level of force used and we are still trying to verify the facts. We do understand, however, that the owner gifted the building to the Coptic Church only after the demolition of the extension.

We actively raise human rights including the freedom of religion with the Egyptian authorities and remind them of their international obligations whenever appropriate.

Advocates of a Theocratic State

By : Adel Guindy



Dr Ahmed Fathi Sorour, the Speaker of Egypt's People's Assembly (since 1990) published an article titled "Between Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Belief," which occupied 24 pages of the March 2009 issue of the Assembly's quarterly review. He later published an abridged version in Al-Hayat newspaper (May 14) and Al-Ahram (May 20, 21).

For those who do not know him well, Dr Sorour, a prominent law professor, is among other occupations, the honorary president of the Institute for Higher Studies in Criminal Science, Sicily-Italy; the president of the International Institute for Law in the Francophone Countries-Paris; and the vice president of the International Society for Criminal Law-Paris

The article deserves a lot of comments, but we will focus here on its last section, which covers the important issue of 'the effect of a religious affiliation of a State on the balance between the freedoms of expression and religious belief.' It starts by stating that:

"Constitutions in some democratic countries establish a religion of the State. An example is Greece's constitution, which states in Article 3-1 that 'the prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Norwegian constitution states in Article 2 that Evangelical-Lutheran is the official religion of the State. Egypt's constitution states that Islam is the religion of the State. Constitutions of some Arab countries (U.A.E., Bahrain, Somalia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Iraq) have also made the same statement."

It is appreciated that Dr Sorour makes a point in clarifying the statement in the Greek constitution, as:

"the jurisprudence has established that the religious affiliation stated in the constitution is a mere declaration about the predominant religion with no legal consequences that would justify stifling the freedom of expression or giving supremacy to the prevailing religion. That is because the constitution has explicitly guaranteed each individual's religious freedom in the large sense, that is the freedom of religious belief and the freedom of a religious

community to practice of rituals, without hindrance (Art. 13-1)."

The constitution indeed states (Art. 13-1) that "Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable. The enjoyment of civil rights and liberties does not depend on the individual's religious beliefs."

But Dr Sorour seems to have found what he may consider to be a golden opportunity in the case of Norway. However, one must not ignore the fact that this is a rare case in the modern western world and that the text has old roots (against a backdrop of a religious war (1534-36), the result of which Norway became 'Evangelical-Lutheran,' not Catholic). That stipulation on the State religion is largely a formality, which does not affect - legally or practically - the laws in the country nor violates freedoms in any way. Indeed the same Article 2 starts by stating that "all inhabitants of (Norway) shall have the right to free exercise of their religion."

References (among 'democratic countries'!) to some Arab countries which established Islam as a State religion (including the failed State of Somalia!), appears as a flimsy justification for Egypt's case (more on that later). Dr Sorour then returns to Egypt's constitution:

"The statement about the official State religion in Article 2 is complimented by Article 46 which concerns the freedom of belief and the freedom of practice of religious rituals. The Constitutional Court has emphasized that (...) Egyptian constitutions have upheld these freedoms, being among the established constitutional principles in every civilized country; for every human-being may believe in whatever he wills of religions or beliefs as his conscience accepts and his soul favors, without external authority beyond convictions

in the depths of the heart."

Once more, it is wise to reiterate what the Constitutional Court has emphasized as something well established in 'every civilized country.' The pressing question is: Why such established principles do not find their way to be applied in Egypt, but are usually subjugated in practice to Article 2 (on Sharia)? A case at point is yet another ruling by the Administrative Court (June 13) to deny Mr. Maher Al-Gohary the right to convert to Christianity, because this "contradicts Sharia."

After going out of his way to minimize the negative effects of the constitutional text regarding the religion of State in Egypt, Dr Sorour then comes to the "real meaning of stating in Article 2 that the principles of Islamic Sharia are the main source of legislation." He reminds the reader of other cases:

"in the constitutions of U.A.E., Bahrain and Qatar that Sharia is 'a main source;' in Sudan's constitution that Sharia and Ijmaa are 'a source' of national laws, applicable in the northern states of the country; in Syria's constitution that Islamic jurisprudence is 'a main source' of legislation; in Oman's constitution that Sharia is 'the source' of legislation; and in Iraq's constitution which states that no laws contrary to the fundamentals of Islam's provisions may be issued."

Unfortunately, Dr Sorour ignores that adopting a 'religious law' as a source of legislation is a particularity of only a limited number of 'Islamic' countries. He also reverts to the cases of some 'brotherly Arab countries' as a justification, ignoring that most of them are quite novice when it comes to having a constitution, and that these were mostly drafted by the same crafty Egyptian experts who had written their country's constitution, with all its aberrations and contradictions. He ignores that the Iraqi constitution he partially quotes actually stipulates that "No law that contradicts the universally agreed tenets of Islam, the principles of democracy, or the rights cited in this Constitution (Second Chapter) may be

Continuation on Page 9

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enacted. This (constitution) (...) guarantees the full religious rights of all individuals to freedom of belief and religious practice, such as Christians, Yazidis and Sabeans.” He further ignores that many Arab countries (e.g. Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia) do not mention Sharia as a source of legislation in their constitutions. He ignores that many Islamic, non-Arab, countries (e.g. Cote d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Mali, Senegal, Turkey or Uzbekistan) not only do not mention Sharia in their constitutions, but also uphold secularism, and/or mention no religion of state. He also ignores that among the examples he quoted, there are countries that consider Sharia to be ‘a’ source, or ‘a main’ source even though Muslims may represent up to 99% of the citizens; yet Egypt, a multi-faith country, with a history of progressive evolution over two centuries, has made Sharia ‘the’ main source of legislation which makes it, according to the interpretation of the Constitutional Court, the de-facto sole reference.

In sum, Dr Sorour knows that Egypt has become an ‘extreme case’ (or a case of extremism!), yet he endeavors to defend her reckless course of action!

Dr Sorour then gets to the issue of contradiction between adopting a ‘religious law’ as a source of legislation, and the freedoms: “Even if Islamic Sharia has undoubtedly a religious nature, being the essence of Islam, yet it is independent from the religious belief in being a legal system. Thus it is conceivable to apply Islamic Sharia in a non-Islamic society, on non-Muslims living in an Islamic society, or on foreigners living in (Islam’s) land, without affecting the principle of freedom of belief. This is because of (Sharia’s) civilizational nature, logical basis and social values.” This must represent a logical dilemma to most mortals, but not to Dr Sorour who tries a new kind of logic! For even when he qualifies Sharia as a system with ‘an undoubted religious nature,’ he ignores these propositions and jumps to contradictory conclusions. He never bothers to explain how could Sharia be an independent legal system, that could even be happily implemented in a non-Islamic society (!),

whereas it is founded on submission to certain religious injunctions? In fact (as the experts say) Sharia is not even a positive system of law, but a ‘normative corpus that regulates in detail inter-personal relations,’ without a possibility to elaborate laws based on general principles and the society’s needs.

But realizing the logical impasse, Dr Sorour deploys another idea: ‘Sharia’s civilizational nature, logical basis and social values.’ However, these are by no means given facts, but a mere opinion; an opinion, moreover, that can only be expressed by a partisan biased to his own narrow religious vision. Furthermore, it is an opinion that can be easily refuted: It is enough to subject Sharia to a ‘Litmus test,’ by comparing its provisions and applications to the international conventions of Human Rights. The results are well-

When constitutions refer to certain principles, they usually do so explicitly. Egypt’s constitution is an exception when it refers vaguely to ‘principles of Saharia.’ The Constitutional Court had to come to some rescue as..

“it took interest in clarifying what is meant by the ‘principles of Islamic Sharia’ to be those provisions (ahkam) which are firm, both in veracity and meaning. They are not subject to ijtihad, as their incidence does not change with time or place (Case 119 of 12/2004). Ijtihad is limited to conjectural provisions whose veracity and/or meaning are not fully confirmed (Case 18 of 5/1995).”

We notice that the court may have narrowed the scope of discussions regarding the ‘principles of Sharia,’ but it has not ventured to clearly delineate them (nor clarify those ‘firm provisions’ on which they are based).

Here, one has every right to ask: In the absence of clear statements in the body of the constitution itself; who, besides men of religion, would determine what represents ‘firm provisions’? Isn’t this exactly the essence of the theocratic State? (defined as a system where “the primary effort of government is to implement and enforce divine laws.” -- Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion, ed. Robert Wuthnow).

One can further wonder what would happen when certain Sharia provisions contradict in letter or spirit the interna-

tional conventions on Human Rights or, indeed, other stipulations in the very same constitution? Courses on Sharia, taught in Al-Azhar as well as in law schools in secular universities, are awash with texts which reflect the non-equality between woman and man, and between non-believer and believer (i.e. Muslim). They cover a wide range of aspects, from treating dthimis, to hudud (bodily punishments); from personal status to slavery. Supposedly they are based on ‘firm provisions,’ and hence still applicable -- even if some scholars (a minority) indicate that these may not be fully enforceable in today’s societies. Are we to rely upon occasional disagreements between exegetes, hoping to find some reassurances as to our fate and to that of our country?

It is important at this point to highlight that some may warn that ‘criticizing Sharia means attacking Islam as a religion.’ Rejecting such claims which aim at muzzling mouths we emphasize that the debate is not at all religious, but strictly about fundamental legal issues, with broad political and societal ramifications.

Reaching a climax, Dr Sorour finally proclaims that:

“It needs no demonstration that considering Islamic Sharia a main source of legislation does not infringe on the State’s duty to protect freedom of belief for the (followers of) other religions.” Yet again, he sees no need to demonstrate how could such contradictory statements hold together-- simply because he cannot.

How depressing to see some pillars of the regime (who occasionally declare their ‘belief’ in the ‘civil’ State, where freedom, justice, equality and democracy prevail!) act. They had better understand the disastrous implications of a theocratic State, and that many of Sharia injunctions do contradict the established principles of human rights, yet instead of devoting their talents and assuming their responsibilities to advance a badly-needed progressive agenda for Egypt, they support (knowingly or not) the cause of the Islamists whose ultimate goal is nothing but to turn the world into an Islamic abode, by ‘imposing Allah’s Law on the Earth and its inhabitants.’

Woe to you, Egypt!

President Sarkozy speaks out against burka

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has spoken out strongly against the wearing of the burka by Muslim women in France. In a major policy speech, he said the burka - a garment covering women from head to toe - reduced them to servitude and undermined their dignity.

Mr Sarkozy also gave his backing to the establishment of a parliamentary commission to look at whether to ban the wearing of burkas in public. In 2004, France banned the Islamic headscarves in its state schools.

'Not welcome'

"We cannot accept to have in our country women who are prisoners behind netting, cut off from all social life, deprived of identity," Mr Sarkozy told a special session of parliament in Versailles.

"That is not the idea that the French republic has of women's dignity.

"The burka is not a sign of religion, it is a sign of subservience. It will not be welcome on the territory of the French republic," the French president said. But he stressed that France "must not



fight the wrong battle", saying that "the Muslim religion must be respected as much as other religions" in the country. A group of a cross-party lawmakers is already calling for a special inquiry into whether Muslim women who wear the burka is undermining French secularism, the BBC's Emma Jane Kirby in Paris says.

The lawmakers also want to examine whether women who wear the veil are doing so voluntarily or are being forced to cover themselves, our correspondent says.

Mr Sarkozy's speech was the first a French president has made to parliament since the 19th century - made

possible by a constitutional amendment he introduced last year.

Later on Monday, Mr Sarkozy was expected to meet the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifah al-Thani.

In 2004, France banned the Islamic headscarf and other conspicuous religious symbols from public schools, triggering heated debate in the country and abroad.

Members of the French government have been divided over the issue. The immigration minister, Eric Besson, has said a full ban will only "create tensions" while the junior minister for human rights, Rama Yade, said she would accept a ban if it was aimed at protecting women forced to wear the burka. France's official Muslim council has criticised the debate.

"To raise the subject like this, via a parliamentary committee, is a way of stigmatising Islam and the Muslims of France," said Mohammed Moussaoui, head of the French Council for the Muslim Religion. France is home to about five million Muslims.

Source : BBC

A British Muslim woman wants the burkha to be banned

By Saira Khan - London Daily Mail (24 June 2009):

My message to those Muslims who want to live in a Talibanised society, and turn their face against Britain, is this: 'If you don't like living here and don't want to integrate, then what the hell are you doing here? Why don't you just go and live in an Islamic country?'

Shopping in Harrods last week, I came across a group of women wearing black burkhas, browsing the latest designs in the fashion department. The irony of the situation was almost laughable. Here was a group of affluent women window shopping for designs that they would never once be able to wear in public.

Yet it's a sight that's becoming more commonplace. In hard-line Muslim communities right across Britain, the burkha and hijab - the Muslim headscarf - are becoming the norm. Shockingly, the Dickensian bone disease rickets has re-emerged in the British Muslim community because women are not getting enough vital vitamin D from sunlight because they are being consigned to life under a shroud.

We are led to believe that we must live with this in the name of 'tolerance'. And yet, as a British Muslim woman, I abhor the practice and am calling on the Government to follow the lead of French President Nicolas Sarkozy and ban the burkha in our country.

I have read the Koran. Nowhere in the Koran does it state that a woman's face and body must be covered in a layer of heavy black cloth. Instead, Muslim women should dress

modestly, covering their arms and legs. The burkha is an entirely different matter. It is an imported Saudi Arabian tradition, and the growing number of women veiling their faces in Britain is a sign of creeping radicalisation, which is not just regressive, it is oppressive and downright dangerous. The veil restricts women. It stops them achieving their full potential in all areas of their life, and it stops them communicating. It sends out a clear message: 'I do not want to be part of your society.' Every time the burkha is debated, Muslim fundamentalists bring out all these women who say: 'It's my choice to wear this.'

The burkha is the weapon of radical Muslim men who want to see Sharia law on Britain's streets, and would love women to be hidden, unseen and unheard. It is totally out of place in a civilised country.

President Sarkozy is absolutely right to say: 'If you want to live here, live like us.'

He went on to say that the burkha is not a religious sign, 'it's a sign of subservience, a sign of debasement... In our country, we cannot accept that women be prisoners behind a screen, cut off from all social life, deprived of all identity.' So what should we do in Britain?

My message to those Muslims who want to live in a Talibanised society, and turn their face against Britain, is this: 'If you don't like living here and don't want to integrate, then what the hell are you doing here? Why don't you just go and live in an Islamic country?'

NEWS

Further attacks on Christians in Egypt

United Copts GB sources

Further attacks on Christians in Nazlet Girgis village took place on Friday 3 July 2009. Nazlet Girgis is not far from Nazlet Boshra where an attack on Christian's homes and properties took place on Sunday 21 June 2009 by a large group of the Muslim inhabitants of the village following a visit by a small group of Christians who work in Cairo and visit their families in the village on monthly basis attempted to visit the local priest at home. The police had applied an embargo on visitors to the priest of more than two at a time for fear off conducting Christian prayers in the priest home which would result in upsetting the Muslim families in the village. The attack which took place today in Nazlet Girgis resulted in burning of crops in the fields belong to four Christian families, two houses and the local priest car were also set a light. The attack was premeditated and unprovoked. It took place against innocent Coptic Christian families and seems to be a fall out from the 21 June incident. So far 17 Coptic youth and the local priest have been arrested for

no obvious reason as it is obvious they are the victims of the attack. The arrest of innocent Christians is normal Egyptian police exercise to counterbalance the arrest of some of the Muslim perpetrators.

The Egyptian police for the past a few years tends to press the Christians to hold a reconciliation session after each attack on their lives or property thus the perpetrators can avoid persecution (the Egyptian police does not usually investigate/persecute attacks on Christians lives or property)

Christian Homes Burned in Egypt After Death of Muslim Man

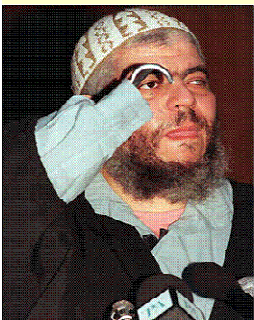
Another incident of a Muslim mob attacking, torching and looting Coptic Christian homes and shops took place today in the village of Meet El-Korashy, Meet Ghamr, after a Muslim young man died following a fight with a Coptic shopkeeper. State Security cordoned off the whole village and placed it under curfew. The Shopkeeper and his family were arrested and charged with murder. 19-year old Mohamad Ramadan Ezzat, student at the Al-Azhar Islamic Institute, returned an empty bottle of soft drink and asked for a refund. When the shopkeeper refused to return the refund

money, witnesses say that Ezzat broke the bottle and attacked Emil, who stabbed him in self-defence with the sharp edge of the bottle glass. Ezzat was taken to hospital where he died the following day.

Prosecution arrested the shopkeeper Emile, his two sons and and his wife, who were all charged with murder. Muslim witnesses told newspapers' correspondents that Ezzat broke the bottle to prove that it was his, and did not intend to stab the shopkeeper. According to the Egyptian newspaper, people in the village gathered in the village awaiting the arrival of the coffin. The funeral was attended by hundreds of people, all wailing and chanting slogans of 'Allah Akbar' and calls for revenge. When they returned from the burial, they stoned Coptic homes, destroyed walls and set fire to the homes belonging to the Coptic family. The fire brigade arrived hours later, by that time the fire had consumed the Coptic homes.

Dr. Naguib Gobraeel, President of the Egyptian Union Human Rights Organization, sent an urgent appeal to the Minister of Interior and Director of State Security in Dakahlia asking for protection for the Coptic inhabitants whose homes are being torched, their shops looted and who are being forced to stay indoors.

Abu Hamza still preaching hate in prison



Hook-handed cleric Abu Hamza is preaching hate-fuelled sermons from his prison cell. Dozens of inmates - many jailed for terror offences - have been gathering to listen in the cell next to where the

Muslim extremist is being held at high-security Belmarsh Prison in SouthEast London. Hamza shouts his message through piping which connects to the neighbouring cell. The cleric, 50, was jailed five years ago for inciting racial hatred and murder during sermons and has been fighting extradition to the US. A prison source said: "Unfortunately people have been lining up to hear what he has to say."

Egypt: Worker arrested for 'offensive cartoons'

An Egyptian government official has been arrested for producing cartoons considered offensive to minority Coptic Christians, Arab media said on Monday. The incident took place in the southern Egyptian city of Qena.

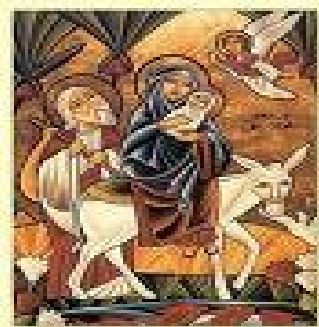
The arrested man, a local government worker, printed the cartoons on the sandals used by the faithful in the bathroom of the mosque. The sole of the shoe is the most unclean part of an unclean object and shoes are considered ritually unclean in the Muslim faith.

In a separate move in Egypt at the weekend, a curfew was imposed on two towns as religious violence between Christians and Muslims escalated in the Egyptian governorates of Bani Swaif and Dakahlia. The clashes began when an 18 year-old Muslim was apparently stabbed to death by a Christian grocer in a dispute over the price of a soft drink.

After the burial of the young Muslim, hundreds of people took to the streets to protest.

Coptic Christians make up between 10 and 15 percent of Egypt's 73 million people and comprise the largest Christian community in the Middle East.

Source: AKI - Jul 07, 2009

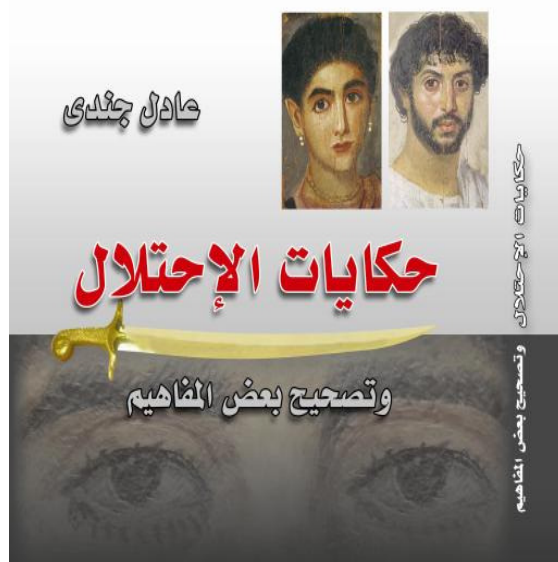


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And after two years, the Caliph Abd El Malik died and was replaced by his son Alwaleed (705-715 AD). He appointed Qurah Ibn Shareek (in 708 AD) ruler on Egypt who inflicted a great deal of misery on both the Christians and Muslims.

And when the Patriarch came to Egypt (or is it Cairo?), as was the custom, to greet and to congratulate him on his appointment, Quran arrested him and said to him: whatever money Abd Allah Ibn Abd El Malik has taken from you, I want the same. The Patriarch told him that that was at the instigation of some wicked people and that he did not have money. The ruler told him: this talk is not going to help you and I must have 3000 Dinars even if you have to sell your flesh otherwise you will never get away from my hand. Then Qurah left him to walk to Upper Egypt visiting various cities and villages on his way at a great cost to his health, being also a stranger in those areas.

After being falsely accused of hiding money, the ruler brought the Patriarch back and was about to kill him. He put iron shackles on him and threw him in prison and after seven days he de-



manded the 3000 Dinars. After a great deal of effort, the Patriarch managed to collect 1000 Dinars in two years. Moreover, Qurah used also to confiscate the money belonging to every notable who died. People used to escape together with their wives and children from one place to another because of his great injustice. Fatal epidemics spread and Qurah himself, together with his house hold, died in one of those epidemics.

وبعد سنتين مات (ال خليفة) عبد الملك وتولي بعده ابنه الوليد (٧٠٥-٧١٥)، فولي علي مصر قره ابن شريك (في ٧٠٨) وأنزل قره بلایا عظيمة علي النصارى والمسلمين]].
[[ولما جاء البطريرك كالعادة إلى مصر ليهنيه بالولاية ويسلم عليه، قبض عليه وقال له: الذي قبضه منك عبد الله بن عبد الملك تحتاج أن تقوم لي بمثله. فقال له أن ذلك كان بسعاية ناس السوء وأن ليس معه نقود. فقال له: هذا كلام ما ينفذ ولو أنك تبیع لحكمك لا بد من ثلاثة آلاف دينار وإلا فما تخلص من يدي. ثم تركه قره يسير إلى الصعيد يطوف المدن والقرى ولقي مشقة وغربة.
(وبعد اتهام بإخفاء مال) أحضر البطريرك وهم بقتله، وكتبه بالحديد وطرحه في السجن وبعد سبعة أيام ألزمه أن يقوم بالثلاثة آلاف دينار. ولحقه تعب عظيم وضيق إلى أن جمع ألف دينار بعد سنتين. وكان قره يأخذ أموال كل أرخن يموت. وكان الناس يهربون ونسأوهم وأولادهم من مكان إلى مكان من أجل البلايا وعظم ظلمه. وانتشرت الأوبئة القاتلة ومات قره وأهل بيته في أحدها.

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Or log on <http://www.unitedcopts.org/content/view/391/118/>

And fill the form Or speak to Tel: 07976710729

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You can fill in the Standing Order attached or log on

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