

**UNDER THREAT: THE WORSENING PLIGHT OF EGYPT'S COPTIC  
CHRISTIANS**

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HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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DECEMBER 7, 2011

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## UNDER THREAT: THE WORSENING PLIGHT OF EGYPT'S COPTIC CHRISTIANS

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DECEMBER 19, 2011

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,  
*Washington, D.C.*

The commission met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 334 Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Frank R. Wolf and Hon. James P. McGovern [co-chairmen of the commission] presiding.

[The statement of Cochairman WOLF follows:]

Mr. Wolf. The hearing will come to order and, as I wait for the witness to come up, I will make my opening statement.

It has almost been one year ago that, on New Year's Eve, a suicide bomber killed 21 worshipers as they were leaving services at a Coptic christian church in Alexandria, Egypt. The attack was the worst incidence of violence against Egypt's Coptic minority in a decade until early this October when at least 22 were killed in Cairo during clashes between military police and Coptic Christians who were gathered to protest the burning of a church.

These are just two of the most high profile cases of persecution of Coptic Christians. There are countless other examples of violence, discrimination, and incitement, all of which only intensified since the fall of the Mubarak regime.

The targeting of Christians in the Middle East, notably in Iraq, has driven many to flee the lands they have inhabited for centuries. In fact, it is centuries. Keep in mind, St. Mark evangelized Egypt for centuries, and attempt to emigrate now to the west. There is a historical parallel here which bears mentioning.

I submit for the record a September 17 piece from the Wall Street Journal, a very powerful piece written by a reporter with the Journal who is Jewish and an Egyptian American. She writes movingly of her own family's experience in Egypt after Nassar came to power and made it clear that there was room for "outsiders."

She describes how the once flourishing Jewish community, numbering roughly 80,000, left in droves. Her personal account is consistent with the State Department's recently released annual report on international religious freedom which estimates that "the country's Jewish community numbers approximately 125 persons."

Mr. WOLF. In short, in the last 50-plus years, Egypt has effectively emptied the country of the Jewish population, and I fear the same fate may await the Coptic Christians, if things are not changed. The dwindling Christian population throughout the region has serious implications for the prospects of pluralism and tolerance in that part of the world.

In light of these realities, I have been working, along with my colleague Anna Eshoo, on legislation that would create a special envoy position at the State

Department to focus specifically on the challenges facing religious minorities throughout the Middle East. It was actually a recommendation of one of the witnesses today.

That bill passed the House overwhelmingly, and one Senator, one Senator, has it blocked in the Senate. This envoy would advocate on their behalf of foreign governments and within our own government, and would develop policy recommendations to ensure their survival.

This bill, H.R. 440, overwhelmingly passed the House on July 29, 420 to 20, with 80 co-sponsors at the time of the passage. It is now languishing in the Senate as a result of anonymous one Senator. The same is true of a bipartisan legislation passed earlier this fall, H.R. 2067, to reauthorize the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. The Commission is a reliable voice for persecuted people of faith.

While the Senate drags its feet, religious freedom is under assault globally and in Egypt in particular, and one Senator, one Senator, has a hold on that bill in the Senate. We have a moral obligation to do everything in our power to prevent the extinction of Christians in Egypt.

I was in Egypt in late June of this year where I met with various government officials, NGO, and activists. Coptic Christians told me that they fear -- they fear sectarian violence and were concerned about continued discrimination in government hiring and building churches.

They also really fundamentally have almost no confidence -- almost no confidence -- in the American Embassy. They do not view the American Embassy as an island of freedom. They almost view it as a kind of neutral place or maybe one that they have to be careful to even be involved with.

I came away with a number of broad based policy recommendations, one very important; one being that the U.S. must seriously consider conditioning foreign assistance, specifically military assistance, to Egypt.

Each year the United States gives Egypt approximately \$1.4 billion in foreign military assistance, with no strings attached -- no strings attached. We must leverage this assistance, especially as Egypt transitions. We must make it clear that any future military assistance to Egypt will be conditioned upon the government respecting and upholding universally recognized human rights norms.

This message is of the utmost importance, as Egypt looks toward drafting a new constitution following the elections, and not only are the Coptic Christians having a difficult time. We met with the Baha'i community. They are having a very difficult time. The Ahmadis are having a very, very difficult time.

I believe that we have a moral obligation to be a voice for the voiceless, and this administration and this Congress must find its voice for the beleaguered Copts and other religious minorities, lest the Arab Spring evolve into an Arab Winter with lasting implications the world over, and lasting implications that I think many people know could come but are not talking about.

Again, I want to thank everyone for being here, and I recognize the chairman, Mr. McGovern.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Thank you very much, and good morning to everybody. I want to thank everyone for attending this important hearing on Coptic Christians in

Egypt and the growing threats to their religious freedom. I would especially like to thank my fellow Co-Chair, Frank Wolf, as well as the staff of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission for organizing this briefing. I think it is time.

During the Mubarak regime, Coptic Christians faced discrimination not only from extreme Islamic groups, but also by the government itself.

In its most recent international freedom report, the U.S. State Department found that the former Egyptian government continually failed to redress the violence perpetrated against Coptic Christians, and indeed appeared to condone such violence. Coptic Christians also faced discrimination in employment, religious practice, and in construction of churches.

Following the fall of the Mubarak regime, the plight of Coptic Christians has worsened, despite their role in helping to oust Mubarak from power. Scores of Christians have been killed in deadly confrontations. According to some reports, the Egyptian security forces have themselves attacked Coptic Christians.

In addition, Coptic Christians continue to face employment discrimination and legal obstacles when it comes to building churches or obtaining legal recognition for their conversion.

With the Islamic victories in recent elections and expectations that Islamists will continue to win seats in subsequent rounds of Egypt's parliamentary elections, the future for human rights of Coptic Christians is uncertain. These electoral gains raise serious concerns as to whether the Egyptian government will uphold its commitment under its own laws and international human rights obligations to respect the freedom of religion and conscience.

Today, we look forward to hearing from six distinguished panelists who will discuss the plight of Egyptian Coptic Christians and what impact Egypt's elections might have on them. On behalf of the Commission, I want to thank all the witnesses for being here. Again, I especially want to thank my colleague, Frank Wolf, for arranging this hearing.

Our goal here is to raise awareness and to, hopefully, compel the Egyptian government, as it develops, to respect the rights and freedoms of all people, including Coptic Christians. With that, I yield back my time. Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Pitts.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this critical hearing.

Congress has conducted multiple hearings on the topic of the plight of Egypt's Coptic community and, unfortunately, it appears as though, despite our prolonged attention to this issue and our efforts to highlight human rights violations, conditions continue to worsen.

Over the last 10 months since the revolution began, members of Congress have stressed the need for the Copts' greater security and equal protection under the law with our State Department and the staff directly. Clearly, as attacks against the Coptic community continue with impunity, our government must reevaluate our policies, given the severity of the situation.

The situation that the Copts face is dire. After suffering continued attacks, they now face a future parliament dominated by Muslim extremists and hardliners. Furthermore, the current military leadership has indicated that they may stack the panel members tasked with drafting a new constitution.

Given the history of the SCAF's concern for minority rights and religious freedom, the window for establishing security and protection for the Copts and their rightful place in Egyptian society may be slipping away. The administration must act now before it is too late.

Every attack that occurs without prosecution brings Egypt further away from any true sense of democracy. Any government that is established as blood runs through the streets and vast segments of the population are marginalized cannot bring a full sense of legitimacy when tasked with fulfilling its duties to its people.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and to the testimony that they will share, particularly with the actions of our State Department. I believe the need to reassess our policies is apparent, given our support of the ruling government.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Pitts. I appreciate it.

Now I will introduce Kathy Fitzpatrick, and I apologize for the microphones, and I appreciate you coming up here, and I want to thank you for being a witness, too. I know that it was a difficult time of scheduling.

Kathy Fitzpatrick, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State.

We are going to ask all the witnesses -- your full statements will appear in the record -- if you can summarize and keep it to roughly in a five or six-minute range.

It is almost one year ago that on New Year's Eve, a suicide bomber killed twenty-one worshippers as they were leaving services at a Coptic Church in Alexandria, Egypt.

The attack was the worst incidence of violence against Egypt's Coptic minority in a decade until early this October when at least twenty-two were killed in Cairo during clashes between military police and Coptic Christians who had gathered to protest the burning of a church.

These are just two of the most high-profile cases of persecution of Coptic Christians...there are countless other examples of violence, discrimination and incitement—all of which has only intensified since the fall of the Mubarak regime.

The targeting of Christians in the Middle East, notably in Iraq, has driven many to flee the lands they have inhabited for centuries and attempt to emigrate to the West. There is a historical parallel here which bears mentioning.

I submit for the record a September 17<sup>th</sup> piece from the *Wall Street Journal*, written by a reporter with the *Journal* who is Jewish and Egyptian-American. She writes movingly of her own family's experience in Egypt after Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power and made it clear that there was no room for "outsiders." She describes how the once flourishing Jewish community, numbering roughly 80,000, "left in droves."

Her personal account is consistent with the State Department's recently released annual report on international religious freedom which estimates that "the country's Jewish community numbers approximately 125 persons..."

In short, in the last 50 plus years, Egypt has effectively been emptied of Jews. And, I fear the same fate may await the Coptic community. The dwindling Christian population throughout the region has serious implications for the prospects of pluralism and tolerance in that part of the world.

In light of these realities I have been working, along with my colleague Anna Eshoo, on legislation that would create a Special Envoy position at the State Department to focus specifically on the challenges facing religious minorities throughout the Middle East. This Envoy would advocate on their behalf...with foreign governments and within our own government and would develop policy recommendations to ensure their survival.

This bill, HR 440, overwhelmingly passed the house on July 29<sup>th</sup> (402-20) with 80 cosponsors at the time of passage. It is now languishing in the Senate as a result of an anonymous hold by one Senator. The same is true of bipartisan legislation passed earlier this fall, HR 2867, to reauthorize the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. The Commission is a reliable voice for persecuted people of faith. While the Senate drags its feet, religious freedom is under assault globally, and in Egypt in particular, as we will undoubtedly hear today. We have a moral obligation to do everything in our power to prevent the extinction of Christians in Egypt.

I was in Egypt in June of this year where I met with various government officials, NGO's and activists. Coptic Christians told me they feared sectarian

violence and were concerned about continued discrimination in government hiring and building churches.

I came away with a number of broad-based policy recommendations—one very important one being that the U.S. must seriously consider conditioning U.S. foreign assistance, specifically military assistance, to Egypt.

Each year the United States gives Egypt approximately \$1.4 billion in foreign military assistance—with no strings attached. No strings attached. We must leverage this assistance especially as Egypt looks to transition from military to civilian rule.

We must make it clear that any future military assistance to Egypt will be conditioned upon the government respecting and upholding universally recognized human rights norms. This message is of utmost importance as Egypt looks toward drafting a new constitution following the elections.

I believe that we have a moral obligation to be a voice for the voiceless. This administration and this Congress must find its voice for the beleaguered Copts and other religious minorities lest the Arab Spring devolve into an Arab Winter with lasting implications the world over.

Again, I would like to thank everyone that is here for this important and timely hearing, and I look forward to the testimonies.

**Statement of Rep. James P. McGovern**  
**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing**  
**“Under Threat: The Worsening Plight of Egypt’s Coptic Christians”**  
**334 Cannon HOB – Wednesday, December 7, 2011 – 10:00–12:00 pm**

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Good morning. Thank you for attending this important hearing on Coptic Christians in Egypt and the growing threats to their religious freedom. I would like to thank my fellow co-chair, Congressman Frank Wolf, as well as the staff of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, for organizing this briefing.

During the Mubarak regime, Coptic Christians faced discrimination not only from extreme Islamic groups, but also by the government itself. In its most recent International Religious Freedom report, the U.S. State Department found that the former Egyptian government continually failed to redress violence perpetrated against Coptic Christians, and indeed appeared to condone such violence. Coptic Christians also faced discrimination in employment, religious practice, and the construction of churches.

Following the fall of the Mubarak regime, the plight of Coptic Christians has worsened despite their role in helping to oust Mubarak from power. Scores of Christians have been killed in deadly confrontations. According to some reports, Egyptian security forces have themselves attacked Coptic Christians. In addition, Coptic Christians continue to face employment discrimination and legal obstacles when it comes to building churches or obtaining legal recognition of their conversion.

With the Islamist victories in recent elections and expectations that Islamists will continue to win seats in subsequent rounds of Egypt’s parliamentary elections, the future for the human rights of Coptic Christians is uncertain. These electoral gains raise serious concerns as to whether the Egyptian government will uphold its commitment under its own laws and international human rights obligations to respect the freedom of religion and conscience.

Today, we look forward to hearing from six distinguished panelists, who will discuss the plight of Egyptian Coptic Christians, and what impact Egypt’s elections might have on them. On behalf of the Commission, I thank all of today’s witnesses for being here, and I look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF KATHY FITZPATRICK**, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Co-Chairman and Congressmen.

First, if I may, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Tom Lantos Commission today. It is a particular honor to speak today about universal human rights, including religious freedom, on Pearl Harbor Day, as we honor those who fought for our freedom, those who fought and died, and those who returned to secure the blessings of liberty for our people, and also in remembering the tireless commitment that Tom Lantos had to promoting human rights after his experiences during that war.

It is also an honor to speak today on the eve of the 63rd anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which enshrines the universal principles we hold dear and which we support for ourselves and others. These principles include freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and freedom of expression.

Mr. Chairman, it is in this spirit that I would like to place my testimony today as we shine a light on the situation for Coptic Christians in Egypt.

Mr. WOLF. Without objection.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on the Coptic Christian community in Egypt and for inviting me to testify. My statement will address the continued discriminations and threats to personal security faced by the Coptic community, and outline U.S. Government efforts to support religious freedom.

As you know, this hearing is taking place one week after Egypt held the first rounds of its elections for the people's Assembly. Although some irregularities occurred, by all accounts this process so far has allowed the Egyptian people who participated on an unprecedented scale to make their voices heard at the ballot box for the first time in decades.

Let me reiterate Secretary Clinton's congratulations to the Egyptian people for a peaceful, successful start to their election process. This process will eventually lead to the drafting of a new constitution and, finally, Presidential elections.

Times of transition are full of unknowns, and this one is no exception. Egyptians, Muslims and Christians, educated and illiterate, rich and poor, are exercising new freedoms and opportunities to profoundly shape Egypt's future, choosing their future leaders, government, and constitution. Secretary Clinton called this period Egypt's historic transition to democracy, and she stressed the importance of the process continuing in a just, transparent, and inclusive manner.

Transitions can be inherently threatening to minority communities and, as such, engender fears of negative consequences. Mr. Chairman, some Coptic Christian fears are well founded. Sustained failure to prosecute perpetrators of sectarian violence has nurtured a climate of impunity in Egypt over many years. Copts have borne the brunt of heightened sectarian violence and tensions.

While I list in some detail below facts concerning recent major sectarian crimes, I would like to highlight two cases where authorities have yet to arrest any suspect to face trial.

The first, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, the Coptic Orthodox Church of the Two Saints in Alexandria suffered a bomb attack on January 1st of this year, killing 23 people and injuring approximately 100 people; and on October 9th at the television building in Cairo near Tahrir Square, violence captured in video recordings and reported by eyewitnesses resulted in at least 25 deaths and more than 300 injuries, most of them Copts.

Mr. Chairman, Egypt's Copts continue to face discrimination, especially in government employment and the ability to build, renovate, and repair places of worship. Copts represent about 10 percent of the population of Egypt, and play an important role in Egypt's economy. Yet they remain underrepresented in prominent positions in Egyptian politics and society. These factors serve to sanction societal discrimination and engender negative attitudes against them.

As you know, Assistant Secretary Michael Posner, who is my Secretary, provided testimony to the Helsinki Commission on November 15th, highlighting discrimination that Coptic Christians face and urging accountability for all who perpetrated these sectarian crimes. We continue to call for an end to violence and discrimination based on religion or belief, as well as an end to impunity for such crimes.

While the focus of my testimony is on the situation of the Copts, I would also like to point out that other religious minorities suffer official discrimination.

Members of the Baha'i faith, which the government does not recognize, face personal and collective discrimination. The government also sometimes arrests, detains, and harasses Muslims such as Shia, Ahmaydiya, and Quaranists, converts from Islam to Christianity and members of other religious groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.

The Government of Egypt continues to refuse to recognize conversions of Muslims to Christianity or other religions, and anti-Semitism remains a problem, and Egyptian media, both state owned and private, continue to propagate stereotypes and intolerance toward Jews.

Mr. Chairman, it is also important to set this testimony on the Copts in a broader context. We support the aspirations of citizens to live in societies that guaranty freedom, including freedom of expression, assembly, and religion. These are the demands that we heard in Tahrir Square where Copts and Muslims joined hands to protest and pray. We have heard similar demands echoing throughout the Middle East and even far beyond that region following Tahrir Square.

Secretary Clinton has spoken out about the importance of religious freedom and religious tolerance in these transitions, both fundamental to human dignity and peaceful transitions to democracy. Religious freedom is a human right guaranteed by international human rights law.

At the release of the State Department's Report on International Religious Freedom in September, Secretary Clinton emphasized the role that religious freedom and tolerance play in building stable and harmonious societies, and she said, when

societies fail to take steps to denounce religious bigotry and curb discrimination based on religious identity, they embolden the extremists and fuel sectarian strife.

The reverse is also true, she said. When governments respect religious freedom and they work with civil society to promote mutual respect or when they prosecute acts of violence against members of religious minorities, they can help turn down the temperature.

Mr. Chairman, in this context, I would like to note that the frequency and severity of sectarian incidents in Egypt are profoundly disturbing. In January 2010, gunmen attacked the Nag Hammadi Church in Upper Egypt, killing seven people. My assistant secretary that I mentioned was soon after that and called for accountability for the attack on behalf of the United States.

One suspect, Hamam al-Kamouny, was tried under the emergency law in a state security court, and convicted on January 16th, and executed on October 10th. Although that court acquitted the other two defendants, Egypt's news agency announced on November 14th that both men will be retried on December 19th in the higher emergency state security court for premeditated murder and terrorism.

We applaud the pursuit of accountability in this case, although we would prefer that these crimes be dealt with in civilian courts, which has been consistent with our policy.

Since the fall of President Mubarak on February 11th, we have received reports of an increase in sectarian violence intentions, including at least 70 people killed in religious classes, most of them Coptic Christians. This brings the total number of reported deaths this year to approximately 95 people. My written testimony outlines several of these cases. Here, I would like to mention a few recent major incidents.

On February 23rd, the Army used live ammunition, including rocket propelled grenades, against unarmed Copts during a land dispute at the Saint Bishoy Monastery. One of the six monks shot there later died. To our knowledge, no one has been held accountable.

On March 4th in the village of Sol, a large group of Muslim villagers destroyed the Church of St. Mina and St. George after the army failed to stop them. To our knowledge, there have been no investigations, and no one has been charged, despite videos of the perpetrators. The army did rebuild the church afterwards from its own budget.

On May 8th in Imbaba, a poor neighborhood of Cairo, two churches were attacked and one burned during sectarian riot. The clashes resulted in 23 deaths, 232 injuries.

Official media has reported that the government has referred 48 suspects for those attacks to trial. Approximately half of these suspects have been arrested, including a prominent Salafist leader, while half remain at large. The trial resumed on December 4th when the judge postponed proceedings to allow for forensic doctors to prepare their testimony.

On September 30th in Marinab village in Edfu, Aswan Governate, an estimated crowd of 3,000 Muslims looted and burned the St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, in addition to some Copt owned homes and businesses. To our knowledge, no one has been charged.

Finally, of course, on October 9th in Cairo, violence erupted in front of the Egyptian television building known as Maspero at a demonstration by Copts protesting the government's failure to investigate the burning of the church in Marinab that I just mentioned. At least 25 people were killed, and more than 300 injured.

Prosecutors are investigating about 30 demonstrators accused of inciting violence, stealing firearms and attacking security forces. However, to our knowledge, no arrests have been made of persons suspected of having perpetrated the lethal attacks on the demonstrators.

President Obama and Secretary Clinton have made clear their deep concern about violence against Coptic Christians. On October 11th, Secretary Clinton raised the Maspero incident with the Egyptian Foreign Minister and called for an immediate, credible and transparent investigation and accountability for all, including forces who were responsible for the violence, with due process of law.

On November 2nd, a fact finding committee led by respected human rights advocates and established by the National Council of Human Rights issued a report on the Maspero violence. According to that report, as the marchers approached Maspero, civilians throwing rocks and chanting Islamic extremist slogans attacked them. Military police used shields and batons and fired blanks, attempting to keep them from reaching the building.

The report acknowledge that 12 or more civilians were killed, and 15 injured when armored military vehicles ran over them. The committee said that it could not determine who fired the bullets that killed at least seven demonstrators, but asserted that authorities recovered bullets that could assist in investigations to identify the source of the gunfire that killed the protesters. This report called the incident a turning point that threatens Egyptian society.

Many cases of sectarian violence over the years have stemmed from disputes over church construction. The government of the previous Prime Minister Sharaf pledged to adopt a unified places of worship law, which would amend the process for constructing and renovating places of worship by placing equal requirements on all religious groups

Senior leadership of both Muslims and Copts recently indicated agreement on laws for each community, and the draft law pertaining to Copts is now in the hands of the government. We strongly urge the Government of Egypt to pass this legislation at the earliest possible opportunity. The prompt adoption of this provision would send a very strong signal of the government's commitment to respect religious freedom.

On October 15th, the staff issued a decree amending Egypt's penal code to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, language, faith, or race. We look forward the just and transparent implementation of these provisions. This will provide accountability for those who commit such crimes, and it will contribute to a stronger democracy.

Besides urging legal and policy support for improved religious freedom and tolerance in Egypt, we are pressing the government to identify and redress other routes of sectarian violence and negative attitudes.

While real change requires action that only the Government of Egypt can take, we are seeking additional ways to support progress and promote religious freedom.

The rights, wellbeing, and participation in government and society of Egypt's estimated 10 million Coptic Christian citizens are vital to the success of Egypt democracy. With this process of historic transition off to its start, we urge the cabinet, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and Egypt's future leadership to safeguard the universal rights of all Egypt's citizens, including Coptic Christians.

Like Egyptian Muslims, Egyptian Copts are concerned about their country's future and their own place in it. In addition to security from sectarian violence and equal treatment under the law, Copts seek equal representation in parliament and a proportional voice on the committee that will draft Egypt's new constitution.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your patience, as Secretary Clinton said in her remarks following Egypt's historic elections last week, the American people will continue to stand by the people of Egypt as they move toward a democratically elected civilian government that respects universal rights and will meet their aspirations for dignity, freedom and a better life. Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. FITZPATRICK follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHY FITZPATRICK, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing  
Statement by Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State  
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor  
U.S. Department of State  
December 7, 2011**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on the Coptic Christian community in Egypt, and for inviting me to testify. My statement will address the continued discrimination and threats to personal security faced by the Coptic community and outline U.S. government efforts to support religious freedom.

As you know, this hearing is taking place one week after Egypt held the first round of its elections for the People's Assembly. Although some irregularities occurred, by all accounts the process has so far allowed the Egyptian people, who participated on an unprecedented scale, to make their voices heard at the ballot box for the first time in decades. I would like to reiterate Secretary Clinton's congratulations to "the Egyptian people for a peaceful, successful start to their election process." This process will eventually lead to the drafting of a new constitution and finally presidential elections.

Times of transition are full of unknowns, and this one is no exception. Egyptians – Muslims and Christians, educated and illiterate, rich and poor – are exercising new freedoms and opportunities to profoundly shape Egypt's future, choosing their future leaders, government, and constitution. The Secretary called this period Egypt's "historic transition to democracy" and stressed "the importance of the process continuing in a just, transparent, and inclusive manner."

Transitions can be inherently threatening to minority communities and as such engender fears of negative consequences. Mr. Chairman, some Coptic Christian fears are well founded. Sustained failure to prosecute perpetrators of sectarian violence has nurtured a climate of impunity in Egypt over many years. Copts have borne the brunt of heightened sectarian violence and tensions. While I list in some detail below facts concerning recent major sectarian crimes, I would like to highlight two cases where authorities have yet to arrest a criminal suspect to face trial. A church in Alexandria suffered a bomb attack on January 1 of this year -- killing 23 and injuring approximately 100. On October 9, at the television building in Cairo near Tahrir Square, violence captured in video recordings and reported by eye witnesses resulted in at least 25 deaths and more than 300 injuries, most of them Copts.

Egypt's Copts continue to face discrimination, especially in government employment and the ability to build, renovate, and repair places of worship. A unified places of worship law has yet to be passed. Copts represent about 10% of the population and

play an important role in Egypt's economy, yet they remain underrepresented in prominent positions in Egyptian politics and society. These factors serve to sanction societal discrimination and engender negative attitudes against them.

President Obama and Secretary Clinton have made clear their deep concern about violence against Coptic Christians, most recently concerning the October 9 tragedy. We have urged the Egyptian government to investigate this violence, including allegations that the military and police used excessive force that was the cause of most of the demonstrator deaths. We also have urged that those responsible for these deaths and injuries be held accountable. Authorities must identify and arrest any suspects in connection with these horrific crimes as soon as possible.

As you know, Assistant Secretary Michael Posner provided testimony to the Helsinki Commission on November 15, highlighting the discrimination Coptic Christians face and urging accountability for all who perpetrate sectarian crimes.

While the focus of my testimony is on the situation of the Copts, I would like to point out that other religious minorities also suffer official discrimination. While non-Muslim religious minorities officially recognized by the government – namely Christians and the tiny Jewish community – generally worship without harassment, members of the Bahai Faith, which the government does not recognize, face personal and collective discrimination. The government also sometimes arrests, detains, and harasses Muslims such as Shia, Ahmadiya, and Quranist, converts from Islam to Christianity, and members of other religious groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. The Government continues to refuse to recognize conversions of Muslims to Christianity or other religions, constituting a prohibition in practice.

Mr. Chairman, it is also important to set this testimony on the Copts in a broader context. In early November, Secretary Clinton gave an important policy address that outlined our overall policy on democratization in the Middle East and beyond. She described the U.S. government's principled engagement in the Middle East. We support the aspirations of citizens to live in societies that guarantee freedom, including freedom of expression, assembly and religion. We also believe strongly in systems that allow citizens a say in how they are governed and that provide economic opportunities for all. These are the demands that we heard in Tahrir Square, where Copts and Muslims joined hands to protest and to pray in the weeks leading up to the downfall of the Mubarak regime. We have heard similar demands echoing throughout the Middle East and even far beyond that region following Tahrir Square.

Secretary Clinton also has spoken out about the importance of religious freedom and religious tolerance, both fundamental to human dignity and peaceful transitions to democracy. Religious freedom is a human right, guaranteed by international human rights law. At the release of the State Department's report on International Religious Freedom in September, Secretary Clinton emphasized the role that religious freedom and tolerance play in building stable and harmonious societies. She said:

“Hatred and intolerance are destabilizing. When governments crack down on religious expression, when politicians or public figures try to use religion as a wedge issue, or when societies fail to take steps to denounce religious bigotry and curb discrimination based on religious identity, they embolden extremists and fuel sectarian strife. And the reverse is also true: When governments respect religious freedom, when they work with civil society to promote mutual respect, or when they prosecute acts of violence against members of religious minorities, they can help turn down the temperature. They can foster a public aversion to hateful speech without compromising the right to free expression. And in doing so, they create a climate of tolerance that helps make a country more stable, more secure, and more prosperous.”

This is the basis for our belief that in order to succeed and prosper, Egypt, and its neighbors, must protect the rights of all citizens and all minorities, including its Coptic population. The corollary is also true: successful democratic transitions are the best way to safeguard those rights.

Meanwhile, the frequency and severity of sectarian incidents in Egypt are profoundly disturbing.

In January 2010 gunmen attacked the Nag Hammadi Church in Upper Egypt, shooting and killing seven people as worshippers were leaving a midnight Christmas mass. On a trip to Egypt shortly afterward, Assistant Secretary Michael Posner called for an end to impunity for such crimes and full accountability for those who attacked this holy place. One suspect, Hamam al-Kamouny was tried under the emergency law in a state security court, convicted on January 16 and executed on October 10. The other two defendants, Qoraishi Abul Haggag and Hendawi El-Sayyed, were acquitted by the court, angering many Coptic activists. On November 14, Egypt’s official news agency announced that Abol-Haggag and El-Sayyed are to be retried on December 19 under the Higher Emergency State Security Court, for crimes including premeditated murder and terrorism with the use of force and violence. We applaud the pursuit of accountability in this case, although we would prefer that these types of crimes be dealt with in civilian courts with full due process of law.

Almost exactly a year after the Nag Hammadi attack, a bomb exploded at the Coptic Orthodox Church of the Two Saints in Alexandria, on January 1, 2011, killing 23 people and wounding around 100. There are no suspects in custody for that horrendous crime, although the Government of Egypt reports that its investigation is ongoing.

These two incidents, and others like them, took place before the fall of President Mubarak on February 11. We have since received reports of an increase in sectarian violence and tensions, including at least 70 people killed in religious clashes – most of them Coptic Christians. This brings the total number of reported deaths this year to approximately 95. There have been at least six recent major incidents of violence against Copts:

- On February 23, the Army used live ammunition, including rocket propelled grenades, against unarmed Copts during a land dispute at the Saint Bishoy Monastery in Wadi Natrun. A monk, one of the six shot, later died. To our knowledge, no one has been held accountable for these attacks.
- On March 4, in the village of Sol, a large group of Muslim villagers destroyed the Church of Saint Mina and St. George after the army failed to stop them. To our knowledge, there has been no investigation and no one has been charged despite videos of the perpetrators.
- On March 8, 13 people were killed when Muslims and Copts clashed in the Mukkatam area of Cairo. Some of the Copts had been protesting the slow government response to the destruction of the church in Sol. One Coptic bishop claimed that although news reports listed seven Christians and six Muslims, all 13 were Copts. To our knowledge, there has been no investigation and no one has been charged in the deaths.
- On May 8 in Imbaba, a poor neighborhood of Cairo, two churches were attacked and one burned during sectarian riots. The clashes resulted in 23 deaths and 232 injuries. That month, the official media reported that the government referred 48 suspects to trial. Approximately half of these suspects have been arrested, including a prominent Salafist leader, while half remain at large. The trial resumed on December 4, when the judge postponed proceedings to allow forensic doctors to prepare their testimony.
- On September 30, in Merinab village in Edfu, Aswan governorate, an estimated crowd of 3,000 Muslims looted and burned the St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, in addition to some Copt-owned homes and businesses, following reported incitement by village imams. Local media reported that a Ministry of Justice fact-finding committee traveled to Aswan on October 12, in the aftermath of the October 9 violence, to investigate the church burning. The status of this investigation is unclear.
- And finally, on October 9 in Cairo, violence erupted in front of the Egyptian television building known as Maspiro, at a demonstration by Copts protesting the government's failure to investigate the burning of the church in Merinab in Aswan governorate. At least 25 people were killed and more than 300 injured. Prosecutors are investigating about 30 demonstrators, including one prominent blogger, who were detained during the violence. They are accused of inciting violence, stealing firearms, and attacking security forces. They will be tried in state security courts. However, to our knowledge no arrests have been made of persons suspected of having perpetrated the lethal attacks on the demonstrators.

On October 11, Secretary Clinton raised the Maspiro incident with Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr and called for an immediate, credible, and transparent investigation of all who were responsible for the violence, with full due process of law. The White House issued a statement urging Egyptians to move forward together to forge a strong and united Egypt and reaffirming our belief that the rights of minorities - including Copts - must be respected, and that all people have the universal rights of peaceful protest and religious freedom.

The Government of Egypt has stated publicly that they are conducting two investigations. The Egyptian Armed Forces is reviewing the conduct of Military Police, who eyewitnesses and video evidence suggest ran over and shot at demonstrators. The Ministry of Justice has been tasked by the Egyptian Cabinet with a full investigation of the incident.

On November 2, a fact-finding committee established by the National Council for Human Rights issued an initial report on the Maspiro violence. (NCHR is a quasi-governmental watchdog body, but the committee was led by respected human rights advocates). The report found that the march by Copts and their Muslim allies began peacefully at Shubra and moved toward Maspiro in downtown Cairo. According to the report and several corroborating accounts, as the marchers approached Maspiro, they were attacked by civilians throwing rocks and chanting Islamic extremist slogans. According to the same sources, military police then confronted the marchers and attempted to keep them from reaching the building. The MPs used shields and batons, and fired blanks. Marchers began fighting back against the violent civilians and military police. The NCHR report acknowledged that 12 or more civilians were killed and 15 injured when they were run over by armored military vehicles. The committee said it could not determine who fired the bullets that killed at least seven demonstrators, but asserted that the authorities possess bullets that can be used to assist an investigation to identify the source of gunfire that killed protestors. The report called the incident a turning point that threatens Egyptian society.

During the height of the clashes, state TV anchor Rasha Magdy called on "honorable Egyptians" to defend the Army against "attacks by violent demonstrators." Twenty-one prominent Egyptian human right organizations criticized the "inflammatory role played by the official state media," charging that a "direct link can be traced between the outright incitement against demonstrators by state media and the events at Maspiro."

The Coptic community is concerned, as we are, about the severity and frequency of sectarian attacks against their community, and the need to hold perpetrators accountable. Muslims have also stood with members of the Coptic community to protest extremist violence carried out against them.

The United States Government condemns this sectarian violence and continues to urge the Government of Egypt to take all necessary and available measures to address the root causes of sectarian violence and tensions.

In raising our concerns about the Coptic community, we are also aware and very supportive of the positive steps the Egyptian government has taken on behalf of the Copts. On March 8, by order of the Prime Minister, Coptic priest Mitau Wahba was released from prison where he was serving a five-year sentence for officiating at a wedding of a Christian convert from Islam. On April 14, the SCAF fulfilled its commitment to rebuild a church in Sol that had been destroyed on March 4 by mob violence. And as I noted earlier, the government also took steps in response to the May 8 Imbaba violence; in addition to re-opening dozens of churches, the government is prosecuting 48 individuals charged with murder, attempted murder, and a variety of other crimes.

The government of previous Prime Minister Sharaf pledged to adopt a Unified Places of Worship Law, which would eliminate discrimination from the process for constructing and renovating places of worship by placing equal requirements on all religious groups. Many cases of sectarian violence over the years have stemmed from disputes over church construction. Senior leadership of both Muslims and Copts recently indicated agreement on a Places of Worship Law for each community and the draft law pertaining to Copts is now in the hands of the government. We strongly urge the Government of Egypt to pass that legislation at the earliest possible opportunity. The prompt adoption of this provision now would send a very strong signal of the government's commitment to protect religious freedom.

I would like to recognize the government's addition of an anti-discrimination law to its penal code, fulfilling an order of former Prime Minister Essam Sharaf. On October 15, in the aftermath of the Maspairo violence, the SCAF issued a decree amending Egypt's penal code to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, language, faith, or race. The decree also delineated prison sentences and specific fines for acts of discrimination and failure to prevent them. These included more severe penalties for government officials found to be complicit in discrimination. We look forward to its just and transparent implementation. This will provide accountability for those who commit such crimes and help put a stop to impunity, provide justice to victims, and contribute to a stronger democracy.

Beside urging legal and policy support for improved religious freedom and tolerance in Egypt, we are pressing the government to identify and redress other roots of sectarian violence and negative attitudes. While real change requires action that only the government of Egypt can take, we are seeking additional ways to foster progress. We support some existing programs that promote religious freedom and tolerance and we are seeking additional ways to do so.

The rights, well being, and participation in governance and society of Egypt's estimated ten million Coptic Christian citizens are vital to the success of Egypt's

democracy. With this process of historic transition to democracy off to a good start, we urge the cabinet, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and Egypt's future leadership, to safeguard the universal rights of all Egypt's citizens.

Like Egyptian Muslims, Egyptian Copts are concerned about their country's future and their own place in it. In addition to security from sectarian violence and equal treatment under the law, they seek equal representation in parliament and a proportional voice on the committee that will draft Egypt's new constitution. Along with Egyptian Muslims, Egypt's Copts and other religious minorities consider themselves full partners in the new Egypt that has entered a "historic transition to democracy."

As Secretary Clinton said in her remarks following Egypt's historic elections last week:

The American people will continue to stand by the people of Egypt as they move toward a democratically elected civilian government that respects universal human rights and will meet their aspirations for dignity, freedom, and a better life.

Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you very much. I just have a couple of questions. One, I have been told yesterday that the number of asylum cases requests by Coptic Christians is at an all time high with regard to the United States. Do you know that to be a fact?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Chairman, I don't know, but I can check with our Department of Homeland Security who, I believe, would receive those asylum cases.

Mr. WOLF. Secondly, the Coptic Christian community that I met with in June really didn't seem to have very much of a confidence in the American Embassy. Anne Patterson had not even gotten there. She got there the following week, I believe. What can the Embassy do reach out and lead?

One Coptic Christian leader told me he would never even go into the Embassy, because there are ramifications. What can the Embassy do or what does the State Department plan on doing to show that the Embassy is an island of freedom, and it is not a hostile place?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you sharing that, Mr. Chairman. What I can say is that, from the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, Ambassador Patterson, the senior leadership of the State Department and our embassy in Cairo, have all placed a very high priority on the issues related to religious freedom and protection of Coptic Christians.

As I noted, the Secretary was very clear with the Egyptian foreign minister that there needed to a credible, transparent, and accountable investigation, including for those who are responsible for the lethal -- for the deaths of civilians. Our Ambassador in Egypt, Ambassador Patterson, is talking to the government all the time about these issues, and our embassy meet regularly with Coptic colleagues, with Coptic leaders in Cairo.

In addition, here in Washington we also are engaged in discussions with our Coptic community here in the United States. Just a few weeks ago, Assistant Secretary Posner and Ambassador At Large for International Religious Freedom Susan Johnson Cook met with a group of Coptic Christians here in the United States.

Others of us have also met with them and hear their concerns, and to listen to them and to make sure that, as we are dealing with this government in Egypt and as we move forward on the basis of our core principles by which we are supporting reform in the Middle East and Egypt, that we are paying due account, as we are, to the situation of Copts.

So, Mr. Chairman, I think we are fully engaged on this issue, and we will continue to be.

Mr. WOLF. Why does the administration oppose conditioning aid? We conditioned aid in so many cases. Why does the administration oppose that?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Chairman, thank you for that. I think right now we recognize that we are in a new situation in Egypt, and we recognize at the top of our agenda is the agenda of human rights, democracy, and reform. We have many areas of influence on the Egyptian Government. The idea of legislative conditionality, we believe, in this complex situation won't necessarily help promote the human rights environment.

So, therefore, we are engaging at the highest levels in ensuring that the Egyptian government understands that the core principles that the President and the

Secretary have laid out for the transitions in the Middle East -- that is, full acceptance of universal principles, rights of all minorities, the institutionalization of democracy -- to ensure that these are very much the language and the agenda that we have with the Egyptian Government.

Mr. WOLF. I am going to end with this. I think we have not conditioned aid all during the time we gave Mubarak money, and the Coptic Christian community and the others and many modern Muslims see never any conditionality. Things are worse, and they also don't understand -- A while back the Egyptian military was up on the Hill lobbying against conditional aid, and our military was with them in the delegation, American military up on the Hill with the Egyptian military lobbying to congress against it.

I think there is really -- What I would urge, and I would hope you would come back to me and let me know if they are going to do it. I am asking to do two things. One, the President has -- the President has to make a public statement. He went to Cairo, spoke, never mentioned the Coptic Christians. He needs to make a public statement, not a press release with Carney, a public statement from the White House on this issue before we get to the end of this year.

Secondly, I had expressed to somebody at the Department, without getting into who, that I have asked that they send a very prominent -- probably a General Zinni or someone. Our military has a better relationship with the Egyptian Government than the State Department, quite frankly -- and find some general who had been friends with, and I think General Zinni was head of CENTCOM, to go over to be, not a special envoy. We don't have to call him anything in particular, but to really represent the President and the Secretary of State on what we expect and how we are going to hold them.

It can be done privately, but the public statement by the President needs to be public. It can't be private. It is like when I was running for office. People would say, I am really for you, but now how much can I give you without having my name connected to your campaign? They didn't want to be identified. We want people to identify publicly, the President, but General Zinni or someone like that should be sent over to advocate for the administration privately to tell them this is what we expect.

Thank you for your testimony. Mr. McGovern.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Thank you. I will be brief. I just want to echo what Mr. Wolf just said. I appreciate the fact that things are unfolding in Egypt and that some things are complex, but there are some things that are not complex, and that is when people's human rights are being violated.

I believe that it is appropriate to condition military aid, in particular, to countries that are not respecting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and violating the rights of certain groups within their country. So I think a message to the emerging Egyptian Government is that you have a very impatient United States Congress, and if you want no conditionality, the simple thing to do is to respect the religious freedom and the freedoms of all people in the country.

My guess is that at some point, when there is a foreign aid bill that works its way to the floor, that there will be a group of members that will -- you know, if things don't improve, that will seek to condition aid.

The question I have is: Obviously, the administration has raised the issue of the Coptic Christians and other issues, human rights issue, to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. My question is, when these issues have been raised as to whether they will investigate violence or discrimination perpetrated against Coptic Christians and others, what is the response? What are we being told by the emerging Egyptian Government and the armed forces? What are they telling us in response to these things?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you. Sir, in the case of the Maspero incident, the Egyptian Government has said that it is conducting an investigation. Now we need to see the results of that investigation, and we need it to be credible, and we need it to be transparent, and we need to hold people -- they need to hold people accountable for the deaths of civilians in that terrible, terrible violence.

There have been other cases where there has been accountability. There are cases where there has not been, but I did mention a couple of ones with the Nag Hammadi Church last year, last January 10th.

There was a trial, and one person was convicted and actually executed, and then the others were acquitted in that first trial, but they are being retried, albeit in the state emergency courts, in the military courts, and we have said consistently to the SCAF that all trials of civilians must be in civilian courts. I mean, this is the essence of due process, but the fact that they are holding them accountable is something that we think is useful.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Does the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces -- do they get it? Do they understand that this is a problem, that these things shouldn't be happening? I am just curious, because there is a pattern here that has gone on for quite sometime, and now we have a new day in Egypt, and Coptic Christians were part of the movement to oust Mubarak. This is their opportunity, a window of opportunity, to get things right, but do they acknowledge that this is really bad?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. I can certainly say that we, the United States, have made it very, very clear that they need to address all of these issues, that they need to address the accountability issue. They need to address the discrimination issue. They need to address the issue of equality under the law for Coptic Christians, including in building and reconstructing their churches.

I mentioned that there have been cases, major cases, where we haven't seen accountability, a few cases where we have. We have seen a few steps taken like the decree to criminalize discrimination on the basis of gender, religion and race that includes enhanced penalties for government employees engaged in discrimination.

We have also seen the effort to develop a places of worship law that would treat the ability of Copts to build their churches on equality of requirements and equality under the law with mosques.

Mr. MCGOVERN. We do have confidence that these laws will be enforced?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Chairman, that again is part of our agenda, is that we want to see these implemented in a just, transparent and inclusive manner. We need to see them implemented

Mr. MCGOVERN. Well, again, we appreciate the efforts of the State Department in trying to raise these issues. I just conclude by referencing again something my co-chair said at the beginning. For years, we have not conditioned aid

to Egypt, and we basically kind of cast our lot with Mr. Mubarak who, I think, by any objective account, was not a person who upheld a high standard of human rights in Egypt.

I think that, if the United States stands for anything, we ought to stand out loud in force we are for human rights. I just want to make sure we don't get into a pattern here where we are -- for the sake of continuity or keeping everything calm, that we are going to do something similar, and that is to basically enable a group of people who are emerging as leaders to continue to get U.S. assistance and not be held accountable for their human rights record.

I think that is just kind of our -- I think that is our wish here, is that there is this new opportunity. Let's get it right. Let's help them understand how important this is, and if not, then there is going to be a price to pay, and that is they are not going to get our aid.

So I thank you for very much for your time and effort, and I yield back.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you. Mr. Pitts.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, at the hearing, the Helsinki hearing last month, I asked Secretary Posner to elaborate on actions, if he could give us a list of actions such as meetings with advocacy groups, public statements, conversations with Egyptian officials, activities at the U.N. that this administration, including the State Department, has taken since January to support the rights of minorities in Egypt.

Do you know -- We haven't received any such list. Is the State Department working on a list to provide us?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Congressman Pitts, for reminding us of that list, and we are working on it, and even as we are working on it, we are engaging the Government of Egypt at the highest levels on these issues, and we are aware that we owe that to you.

Mr. PITTS. What type of policies do you think we need to have to be more effective? We seem to be impotent in affecting this military government as far as human rights are concerned. What kind of policy should we have to be more effective in advocating for human rights and religious freedom of minorities?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Congressman. I think that President Obama has laid out clearly that we support reform in the Middle East, and we support reform in Egypt, and we support this reform on the basis of core principles, things like the renunciation of violence, core principles like the need to accept universal human rights, particularly freedom of religion, and particularly freedom of assembly and expression, due process.

Secondly, several points evolve from that. One is that all political actors involved must do the same: Renounce violence, accept the universal principles, accept the institutionalization of democracy and the institutions of democracy that protect these rights.

Third, I think that we also need to see that, when we are talking about this democratic process, which has just begun -- the transition has only just begun in Egypt -- we are talking about a process over time that doesn't just involve elections. What we are saying is democracy is not just about elections. It is about building the

core elements of democracy and protection of freedoms into the institutions that evolve during this process.

Mr. Chairman, I think that is our core principle. It is consistent with our values. It is consistent with the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We need to continue to insist on that as our core principles and raise those with this government and with succeeding governments going forward, and continue to urge and insist on accountability, insist on the end of a culture of impunity for these attacks against Coptic Christians and others, and insist on the implementation of the anti-discrimination decree that was recently issued, and again insist on moving forward with the places of worship law that would put on equal footing the ability of Coptic Christians to build or repair a church on the same footing as building or repairing a mosque. Those are the key elements, Congressman.

Mr. PITTS. Well, with all due respect, we have been advocating these positions for year and years. I raised these issues personally with the members of the government and President Mubarak numerous times. We seem to be ineffective in getting much change to these policies.

How does general support of general policies, which has not resulted in diminished violence against minorities, going to be more effective than conditioning support? Is the administration willing to look at certain sanctions or qualifications for conditional support of the aid that we keep pouring into this military government?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Congressman. The issue of conditionality is something that, in this environment, we have not felt would enhance our ability or enhance the human rights environment in Egypt, while at the same time, all of these issues, the human rights agenda, religious freedom, democracy, on a day to day basis and on a practical basis are the fabric of our discussions and our relationship with this military government, and going forward I think that the voice of the United States is extremely important.

We have seen situations where accountability has not happened. We have seen some situations where there has been some accountability. So we need to press those forward. We need to really insist on the implementation and continued commitment to implementing, for example, the anti-discrimination decree and getting a places of worship law that equalizes the building of Coptic Churches, getting that done. Those are the types of things that, I think, begin the process of ensuing protection and ameliorating the discrimination against Coptic Christians.

Mr. PITTS. How is present economic assistance that the U.S. provides directed toward promoting human rights in Egypt?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you. We do have -- We have directed about \$65 million of U.S. assistance during the transition to support democratic building this transition process, to support the development of and support of civil society, to support the mechanics and the nuts and bolts of democracy like how to do an election, how to advocate, how to count votes.

These are the types of things, very core and fundamental, that we are engaged in. All of these also touch on our universal principles, including religious freedom. So I think we are very -- We are trying to use such support to build -- to help Egyptians themselves, because this process, sir, must be Egyptian led, but to help

Egyptians themselves understand and learn about and inculcate themselves into the nuts and bolts and the institutionalization of democracy.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you. I would appreciate your reminding Secretary Posner and the State Department to please provide the Commission, us, with the actions taken, especially since the October 9th incident when the military directly attacked and killed Egyptian citizens, to press the Egyptian Government for more transparent investigation and to prosecute those who are actually responsible for the murders of citizens. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Pitts. We are going to have some questions for the record that we will send you.

Secondly, with all due respect -- and you know, I know you are a good person; I know that -- you sound just like all the other people did, all Republic or Democratic administrations. Dave Obey tried to condition aid two or three years ago, and everyone -- They said exactly, under the Bush administration, what you are saying under this administration, and it has gotten worse. We have given over \$50 billion, and it has gotten worse.

If you can get back to the committee on the questions we are going to give you; two, how many have applied for asylum, and the sooner you can tell us, the better; three, whether or not the President plans on making a public statement; and four, whether or not that he plans on sending General Zinni or some other general.

With that, I thank you.

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Mr. Wolf. The next panel will be Nina Shea, Director, Center for Religious Freedom at Hudson Institute, and Dina Guirguis, Egyptian American democracy activist, attorney, and member of the Egyptian American Rule of Law.

If you could keep your testimony to five minutes each, I would appreciate it, and then we will proceed. Your full statements will appear in the record. If you could just proceed five minutes each, I would appreciate it. With that, Ms. Shea. I will go to Nina first.

STATEMENTS OF NINA SHEA, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, HUDSON INSTITUTE; AND DINA GUIRGUIS, EGYPTIAN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST, ATTORNEY, AND MEMBER OF THE EGYPTIAN AMERICAN RULE OF LAW ASSOCIATION.

STATEMENT OF NINA SHEA

Ms. SHEA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Co-Chairman. It is a real honor to be appearing before this commission to talk about a very serious and developing human rights crisis, the deepening repression against Egypt's Coptic Christians, who are the Muslim Middle East's largest religious minority at this point.

We are hearing reports from human rights groups in Egypt that tens of thousands, up to maybe 100,000, of this population have already left Egypt during this Arab Winter, and we believe that the numbers will soar in the months ahead; and as with other sudden mass exoduses in world history, this one is a sure sign that a minority community faces persecution.

During the elections of this recent days, we have determined -- our analyst, Sam Tadros who is a Coptic Christian in our office -- that Islamists of various stripes have won 65 percent of the seats in the lower house up to now. The Taliban-like Salafi movement captured about 25 percent of the seats. This is another vote, but of the seats, and the Muslim Brotherhood captured about 40 percent of the seats.

By comparison, the secular learning Egyptian Bloc, backed with heavy Coptic and other liberal support, came in a very distant third, and it seems that our aid, U.S. aid, for the nuts and bolts of the process has been completely wasted, because these other groups are not democratic in their programs.

We also project that overall, after all the parliamentary voting is done for the lower house, that Islamists will gain 76 percent of the lower house seats in parliament in the three rounds.

The implication of an Islamist mandate is much more far reaching than is suggested by the international news articles, which typically stress possible alcohol and entertainment bans. In fact, the fundamental individual freedoms of religion and speech and democracy itself are all at risk. Moreover, the new constitution will be drafted by persons selected by this new Islamist dominated parliament.

A larger danger will be presented by blasphemy and apostasy codes, which will suppress the Copts and possibly the building of their churches and how they build their churches. Whether they can have domes maybe or bells or singing could be interpreted as an insult to Islam, but other minority groups, Baha'is, Quranists, Shiites, minority Muslims, dissident Muslims and so forth.

The Copts have long been caught in a vice between two competing forces, a brutal military government and religiously intolerant Islamists. These two forces, working usually independently but on occasion together, especially at the lower ranks of the security services, direct periodic violent and indiscriminate attacks against Copts and their churches.

On occasion, and now with increasing frequency, these attacks are taking the form of pogroms on vulnerable Coptic villagers. This situation is exacerbated by state laws that suppress Christians' ability to repair or build churches. The government has time and

again failed to protect Coptic minorities from such violence, and denies them justice in the wake of attacks, sometimes arresting the victims themselves along with the attackers or instead of attackers, and at other times resolving the matter not with a judgment of law but simply with a forced handshake between assailant and victim.

One of the most graphic recent demonstrations of this pattern of attack and impunity was the Maspero episode in October. Appended to my testimony are digests of about 100 -- over 100 incidents of attacks against Copts and problems of religious freedom experienced by the Copts in the last 18 months, and I would like to include that for the record.

Mr. WOLF. Sure. Without objection.  
[The information follows.]

Ms. SHEA. Thank you. In the Maspero event, which is the only one I will really mention, Coptic Christians marching through a section of Cairo to protest religious repression were ruthlessly dispersed by the military, resulting in dozens killed and hundreds wounded. Islamists then attacked the hospitals and funeral processions for the victims. The government denied responsibility for the army's attack on the demonstrators, exonerated the military, and arrested about 28 people, almost all of them Copts.

This is the investigation. They are still in prison, and this is the investigation that Ms. Fitzpatrick has just mentioned. They and at least one other person who criticized the military actions at Maspero in a blog -- that is Abdel Fattah, a secular Muslim who is now charged with or facing charges of inciting to terrorism, because he criticized the military - are reportedly still in prison.

The forensic evidence of the murders at Maspero indicate that two-thirds -- one-third were killed under the treads of the tanks, crushed to death, and two-thirds were killed with live ammunition. I spoke with a Maspero youth group leader just in last few days, and he raised the question that this ammunition was actually -- may have been provided by U.S. military aid.

It is apparent that Copts will be forced to continue to contend with this military, and will now also face a much empowered Islamist sector. The previously underground and unorganized Salafis are forthright about what they hope to bring about with their newfound strength. They described their plans for a sharia system, similar to one we see in Saudi Arabia or maybe under the Taliban. Quite simply, freedom of speech and religion as we know it will not be permitted, if they have their way.

The biggest winner, of course, was the Muslim Brotherhood, and they have not been as clear in articulating its vision for governance, but its Freedom and Justice Party has issued a 93-page program which shed some light on it.

Samuel Tadros, a fellow at the Hudson Center for Religious Freedom, noted in reviewing this program that the Brotherhood is pragmatic, but it is not moderate.

Tadros writes in the new issue of Hudson's Current Trends Journal, quote, "The first clear aspect of the Freedom and Justice Party program is the totality of its vision. There is no aspect of human life that the program does not aim to discuss or put under state regulation. In what should seem bewildering to outside observers, the program leaves no detail unmentioned, from participation in cultural festivals abroad to fast and free Internet services and even to publishing scholarly journals. The view it takes of all human actions, as regulated and supervised by the state, leaves no room for doubt on the kind of state they aim to build."

He goes on to say, the program then explains, the goal of the party is, quote, "cleansing the soul and hearts, upgrading the feelings, refining the character by calling for a commitment to worship, good manners, sociability and behavior and to remind people of God, the Day of Judgment, so as to wake up conscience." It states that the Mubarak regime had turned Egypt away from God and, quote, "into a colony of western and Zionist policies." According to the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party program, "forgetting the Day of Judgment and God is one of the most important reasons that led to the Egyptian people's revolt."

It promises to tie politics to Islamist principles and values. The principles of Islamist sharia are the main source of legislation, while the non-Muslim minority is given the right to resort to their own religious rulings in family and religious affairs.

In short, the Copts now confront a political future defined by a, for the time being, secular but brutal military, an all encompassing regulatory Islamist state that mixes sharia strictures with pragmatic measures. By the way, this raises the possibility of maybe a possible threat of a nationalized Coptic church and a nationalized Coptic endowment, something to be on alert about.

There is little room for optimism, not only for the Copts but for Egyptian liberals in general. For American foreign policy, there will be no good choices, only less bad ones. We will need to discern what they are. Certainly, admonishing the Copts, along with their persecutors, to use restraint, as the White House did in its only public response to the Maspero massacre, is not right nor just nor helpful in advancing American interests. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Ms. Shea follows:]

**Nina Shea, Director**  
**Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom**  
**Testimony before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**  
***"Under Threat: The Worsening Plight of Egypt's Coptic Christians"***

**December 7, 2011**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding these critically important and timely hearings today about a serious and developing human rights crisis: the deepening repression against Egypt's Coptic Christians, the Muslim Middle East's largest religious minority.

Already Egyptian human rights reports suggest that up to 100,000 of this population of 8-10 million have left Egypt during this Arab Winter and that number will soar in the months ahead. As with other sudden, mass exoduses in world history, this one is a sure sign that a minority community fears persecution.

This hearing also occurs while the results of the first round of balloting for Egypt's new parliament are being tabulated. So far, they indicate that assorted Islamists have won about two-thirds of the seats that were voted on last week. The Freedom and Justice Party of the Muslim Brotherhood, which the *New York Times* labels the "moderate" Islamist group, appears to have won a plurality, garnering 40 percent of the seats, while the "ultraconservative," Taliban-like Salafis captured about 25 percent of the seats. By comparison, the secular-leaning Egyptian Bloc – backed with heavy Coptic and other liberal support -- came in a distant third.

The final results will not be known until January. However, subsequent voting is expected to show even more dire results for non-Islamists. That is because this first phase encompassed the large cities of Cairo and Alexandria, which include more non-traditional populations than do the rural areas, which are to vote later. The Center's analyst projects an overall Islamist gain of 76 percent of the lower house of parliament in the three rounds.

The implication of an Islamist mandate is much more far-reaching than is suggested in many international news articles, which typically stress possible alcohol and entertainment bans (maybe because their foreign correspondents are disproportionately affected by them). In fact, fundamental individual freedoms of religion and speech and democracy itself are all at risk. Moreover, the new constitution will be drafted by persons selected by this new Islamist-dominated parliament.

The Copts have long been caught in a vise between two competing forces – a brutal military government and religiously intolerant Islamists. These two forces, working usually independently, but on occasion together especially at the lower ranks of the security services, direct periodic, violent and indiscriminate attacks against Copts and their churches. On occasion and now with increasing frequency, these attacks are taking the form of pogroms on vulnerable Coptic villagers. This situation is exacerbated by

state laws that suppress Christians' ability to repair or build churches. The government has time and again failed to protect Coptic minorities from such violence and denies them justice in the wake of attacks, sometimes arresting the victims along with the attackers and at other times resolving the matter not with a judgment but simply with a forced handshake between assailant and victim.

One of the most graphic, recent demonstrations of this pattern of attack and impunity was the Maspero episode in October. In that event, Coptic Christians, marching through a section of Cairo to protest religious repression were ruthlessly dispersed by the military, resulting in dozens killed and hundreds wounded. Islamists then attacked the hospitals and funeral processions for the victims. The government denied responsibility for the army's attack on the demonstrators, exonerated the military and arrested about 28 people, almost all of them Copts; they, and at least one other person who criticized the military actions at Maspero in a blog -- Abdel Fattah, a secular Muslim, who is charged with "incitement to terrorism" -- are reportedly still in prison.

The chain of events began on September 30, 2011, when a mob some 1000 people-strong from the village of al-Marinab, Aswan province, burned and demolished a Coptic building that was under renovation. Coptic homes and businesses were also attacked. A mob prevented the fire brigade from entering the village, and security forces did not intervene. Aswan's governor sided with the mob, stating that the church did not have permission for the renovation.

On October 8 and 9, Coptic youth along with some Muslims held a large demonstration against the burning of the al-Marinab church and the general failure of the government to protect Copts. When they passed through the areas of El Qolaly and Abdeen in Cairo, they were attacked by some of the Muslim residents. On October 9, the armed forces ruthlessly crushed the largely Coptic protest in Cairo's Maspero area, near the state broadcasting building. Some twenty seven were killed, mostly all Copts, along with one soldier, and over 300 were wounded. There is no evidence that the Coptic protestors were armed.

At that time a news anchor on Egyptian state television broadcast that Copts were attacking the army and called on Egyptians to defend it. This report, which was retracted by the station the following day, immediately agitated many Muslims, who went to Maspero and clashed with the protesters. Salafi television stations broadcast that Christians had burned a Qu'ran at Maspero, stoking further violence against Copts and a march on the Coptic hospital where many of the wounded had been taken. On October 11, funeral processions for several of the murdered Copts were attacked by armed thugs who blocked their way and hurled stones and Molotov cocktails at them. Those in the funeral procession sought shelter and called the army emergency phone line for help, but none was forthcoming for several hours.

Prime Minister Essam Sharaf blamed the Maspero violence on "invisible hands," implying foreign interference (often interpreted to mean American or Israeli). At an October 12 press conference, the military blamed Christian protesters and "enemies of the

revolution" for triggering the clashes on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Generals from the Supreme Council of Armed Forces showed footage of priests and a Coptic Christian activist they accused of "instigating" the Maspero violence. Major General Adel Emara, a member of the ruling council and deputy defense minister, tried to clear the military of any blame in the killings. He denied that troops opened fire at protesters, claiming their weapons did not have live ammunition. He said it was not in "the dictionary of the armed forces to run over bodies ... even when battling our enemy." According to forensic reports for the slain protesters, a third of the victims were crushed by armored vehicles, while two-thirds were shot with live ammunition. On October 15, 28 persons, almost all Copts, were reported arrested for the violence and remain in jail.

It is apparent that the Copts will be forced to continue to contend with this military and will now also face a much empowered Islamist sector. The previously underground and unorganized Salafis are forthright about what they hope to bring about with their new found strength: they describe their plans for a sharia system similar to those in Saudi Arabia, or under the Taliban. Quite simply, freedom of speech and religion, as we know it, will not be permitted if they have their way.

The biggest winner of the elections is the Muslim Brotherhood and it has not been clear in articulating its vision. But its Freedom and Justice Party's 93-page program sheds some light on it. As Egyptian Copt and policy analyst Samuel Tadros, currently a Fellow of the Hudson Center for Religious Freedom, noted in reviewing this program, the Brotherhood is pragmatic but it is not moderate.

Tadros writes in the new issue of Hudson's Current Trends journal:

"[T]he first clear aspect of the FJP program is the totality of its vision. There is no aspect of human life that the program does not aim to discuss and to put under state regulation. In what should seem bewildering to outside observers, the program leaves no detail unmentioned, from participation in cultural festivals abroad (pg. 85), to fast and free internet services (91), and even to publishing scholarly journals (33). ... [T]he view it takes of all human actions as regulated and supervised by the state leaves no room for doubt on the kind of state they aim to build. ...

"The program then explains that the goal of the party is 'cleansing the soul and hearts, upgrading the feelings, refining the character, by calling for a commitment to worship, good manners, sociability and behavior, and to remind people of God, the Day of Judgment so as to wake up conscience' (4). The Mubarak regime had furthermore turned Egypt away from God and 'into a colony of Western and Zionist policies.' According to the program, 'forgetting the Day of Judgment and God is one of the most important reasons that led to the Egyptian people's revolt'(5) promises to tie politics to Islamic principles and values (6). The principles of Islamic Sharia are the main source of legislation (7), while the non-Muslim minority is given the right to resort to their own religious rulings in family and religious affairs (7)."

In short, the Copts now confront a political future defined by a (for the time being) secular but brutal military and an all-encompassing regulatory Islamist state that mixes sharia strictures with pragmatic measures. There is little room for optimism, not only for the Copts but for Egyptian liberals in general. For American foreign policy, there will be no good choices, only less bad ones. We will need to discern what they are. Certainly, admonishing the Copts along with their persecutors to use “restraint,” as the White House did in its only public response to the Maspero massacre, is not right, nor just, nor helpful in advancing American interests.

**\*DRAFT APPENDIX\***

**HUDSON INSTITUTE’S  
CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

**EXAMPLES OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM PROBLEMS FACED BY  
EGYPT’S COPTIC CHRISTIANS**

**July 2010 - December 2011**

0. In early July 2010, Sheikh Youssef Al-Badri, a member of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, an affiliate of the Egyptian Ministry of Al-Awqaf (Islamic Endowments) stated on state television that converts from Islam should be killed.
1. On July 19, 2010, Camilia Shehata, wife of Coptic priest Tedros Samaan, who officiated in Deir Mawas, disappeared. Copts believe that she had been abducted by Muslim extremists, and they asked the security services to investigate, which, Copts in the area maintain, they refused to do. There were major demonstrations by Copts throughout Egypt. Father Tedaos stated that in the previous two months five Coptic girls had been abducted in the area. On July 23, security services returned Camilia to her husband. *(See also #s 8, 12, 17, 18, 60, 70, 72-75, 88)*
2. Beginning on July 25, dozens of Coptic clergy and thousands of Copts staged a sit-in in Maghagha, protesting the Governor of El Minya’s suspension of a license (agreed to after three years of negotiations) to rebuild the church’s diocesan buildings, including the church itself, after the previous buildings had already been torn down. The people in the area have had to meet in a makeshift tent. *(See also # 31)*
3. In early August 2010, the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies (based in Cairo, and often closed by the Egyptian government) released a report on democratization in the Arab world. It described many instances of religious violence in Egypt (mostly against Copts) and said that the state consistently sought to minimize its importance.
4. On August 13, 2010, after an altercation between Christians and Muslims, Sheikh Tobah, imam of the village of Shimi, about a hundred miles south of Cairo, called for jihad against Christians in the village. As a result, there were attacks on Copts over the next two days and 11 Copts were hospitalized. No arrests were made, and security forces pressured Copts to accept ‘reconciliation.’
5. In mid-August 2010, Pope Shenouda cautioned Copts not to make any confession of sins over the phone as security forces were wiretapping priests’ phones.

6. OSAMA GOMAA MAATOUQ, WHO WAS FIRST DETAINED BY EGYPTIAN STATE SECURITY INTELLIGENCE (SSI) POLICE ON APRIL 11, 2008 FOR HIS CONVERSION FROM ISLAM TO CHRISTIANITY, HAD AS OF SEPTEMBER 2010 BEEN HELD BY STATE SECURITY WITHOUT CHARGE OR OFFICIAL REGISTRATION DESPITE SEVERAL COURT ORDERS THAT HE BE RELEASED. IN 2010, EGYPTIAN EMBASSIES CONTACTED BY EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HAVE CLAIMED THAT MAATOUQ HAD BEEN RELEASED BUT IT APPEARS THAT HE WAS MOVED TO A NEW PRISON, "MINYA AL-AMOMA", UNDER THE NAME ABDEL-LATIF GOMAA MAATOUQ. HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES BELIEVE THAT STATE SECURITY MAY HAVE ALTERED HIS NAME SO HE WOULD NOT SHOW UP IN INQUIRIES INTO THEIR RECORDS. (*SEE ALSO # 64*)

7. On September 7, 2010, a 300 man security force , including armored vehicles, and using tear gas and batons, attacked the monastery of St, Macarius of Alexandria in Wadi Rayan, Fayoum Province, after claims that the monastery was rebuilding in a conservation area. The monks responded that the monastery was there long before it became a conservation area. (*See also # 47*)

8. In early September 2010, rumors spread, particularly under the influence of Sheikh Abu Yehya, that priest's wife Camilia Shehata (mentioned above) had converted to Islam and that, to hide this fact, the Coptic church was giving her mind altering drugs and hiding her in a monastery in Ain Shams (There are no monasteries in that area). The subject has escalated, with Camilia appearing on TV to say that she had not converted, and radical sheikhs saying the person on TV was not her but a double. Al Azhar, the leading Islamic institution in Egypt, denied that the priest's wife ever converted to Islam. (*See also #s 1, 12, 17, 18, 60, 70, 72-75, 88*)

9. On September 17, 2010, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom called on the Egyptian government to ensure the resumption of the trial of the three men charged with the Christmas eve murders of seven people . Since February 2010, the court proceedings have been postponed numerous times, a very common pattern in cases of attacks by Muslims on Copts. (*See also #s 41 and 107*)

10. On September 15, 2010, the "Front of Al-Azhar Scholars," which has no formal connection with Al-Azhar, and is in principle banned, though it still operates, issued a fatwa stating that Egyptian Muslims should boycott Coptic businesses, professionals and schools.

11. On September 15, 2010, Al-Jazeera TV broadcast a program called 'Without Limits, 'presented by moderator Ahmad Mansour, who hosted the Islamist Dr. Muhammad Salim al-'Awa, former Secretary-General of the World Council of Muslim Scholars and expected presidential candidate, who made inflammatory accusations against the Copts. al-Awa alleged the Church has its own militia and has hidden weapons and ammunition in monasteries and churches, preparing for a war "against the Muslims," and to divide Egypt into two states. He also said that "Israel is in the heart of the Coptic Cause," and the Church gets weapons from Israel. Such allegations are likely to increase antipathy and violence toward Copts.

12. In the weeks following the television program 'Without Limits' there were repeated demonstrations by Islamists against Copts, and particularly Coptic Pope Shenouda III, accusing him of being a US agent, an abductor and torturer of female Muslim converts from Christianity, of stockpiling weapons in monasteries and churches to carry out war against Muslims, and of plans to divide Egypt to create a Coptic State. (*See also #s 1, 8, 17, 18, 60, 70, 72-75, 88*)

13. On September 23, 2010, Bishop Bishoy, secretary of the Coptic Church's Synod and the second highest authority in the church, was due to give a private lecture to clergy in a "Coptic Faith" Seminar in Fayoum, south of Cairo. The lecture was cancelled after media published part of a draft, in which the Bishop questioned whether Quranic verse 5:17, which he suggested contradicted the Christian faith, and inferred that 'Christians were infidels,' had been added after the death of Prophet Muhammad by one of his successors, Caliph Uthman (644-656), for religious/political purposes. The following day, on September 24, 2010, thousands of Islamists demonstrated in front of the Ibrahim Mosque in Alexandria demanding that Bishop Bishoy be detained by the authorities. (It should be noted that Christian and Jewish scriptures are regularly contradicted in Egypt, including in publications funded by the government). (*See also #s 14, 15, 17*)

14. On September 26, 2010, Al-Azhar's Islamic Research Council, a formal state body, held an emergency meeting led by the institution's head, Grand Imam Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, repudiating Bishop Bishoy's comments, accusing him of provoking sectarian tension, and stating formally that citizenship rights for non-Muslims in Egypt "are conditional to respect for the Islamic identity" of Egypt. (*See also #s 13, 15, 17*)

15. In an interview with state-owned TV Channel "Al Hayat el Yom" on September 27, 2010, Pope Shenouda expressed his concern about the ongoing situation. "Matters have become very, very, very sensitive," he said. "I try to pacify my people, but I fear they may lose this peace, because of too many incitements." He defended his silence by saying: "Our silence does not mean that we do not have an answer to what is said about us, we have a strong response. But we do not want to add fuel to the fire, and we prefer silence. However our silence should not be used to cause more incitement and insults." (*See also #s 13, 14, 17*)

16. On October 3, 2010, a statement issued by an unknown organization naming itself the "Front of Islamic Egypt" warned Copts to stay at home with their wives and children as their would be a bloody confrontation on Wednesday, October 6, 2010. This organization's statement was the second in a series, the first of which promised the Copts a bloodbath.

17. On October 8, 2010, after Friday prayers, demonstrators staged a protest in front of the Ibrahim Mosque in Alexandria, and other sites in Egypt. They called again for the release of Muslim women allegedly held against their will by churches and also for the trial of Father Bishoy, secretary of the Holy Synod of the Coptic church, for comments purportedly questioning the authenticity of the Quran. Demonstrators demanded the searching of monasteries and churches to look for weapons, and threatened Pope Shenouda, shouting "Shenouda, just wait, we will dig your grave with our own hands," and "Islamic, Islamic, Egypt will remain Islamic." They called on Christians to dispose of Shenouda and for a boycott of Coptic businesses. Photos of the Coptic Pope were burnt in effigy. (*See also #s 1, 8, 12-15, 18, 60, 70, 72-75, 88*)

18. On October 31, 2010 gunmen from the Al Qaeda-affiliated Islamic State of Iraq invaded the Sayedat al-Najah Church in al-Karrada, central Baghdad, killing the priest and others, and holding the rest of the congregation hostage. Later that day, security forces attempted a rescue and some 42 congregants were killed, along with Al Qaeda gunmen, when the latter blew up their suicide vests. Among that attackers demands for the release of the hostages was the release of the two women allegedly being held prisoner by the Coptic Church in Egypt. The gunmen reportedly said to the congregants: "We are here to avenge the burning of the Qur'ans and the jailing of Muslim women in Egypt." (*See also #s 1, 8, 12, 17, 60, 70, 72-75, 88*)

19. On November 16, 2010, Muslims set fire to at least ten homes of Copts in the village of al-Nawahid in Qena province after rumors of an affair between a Coptic boy and a Muslim girl.

20. "The State Department July-December 2010 Religious Freedom Report states that "For approximately two years the MOI failed to comply with repeated court orders to release Emad Adib Atiya Suleiman, a Christian married to a convert to Christianity, from "administrative detention." The courts, including a 2008 ruling by the Supreme State Security Emergency Court, issued 15 orders to revoke a 2007 detention order for Suleiman that was based on reports of an alleged "romantic relationship between the aforementioned and a Muslim woman living in the same area." Suleiman was released on July 26, 2010."

21. On November 11 and 22, 2010, security forces attempted to stop construction work on an extension to the church community centre at Saint Mary and Saint Michael's Coptic Church in Giza. Then, in the early hours of the morning on 24th November, police and other security forces surrounded the site while men were working on the roof and 200 people were keeping vigil inside the church. The security forces used tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition, and two Copts were killed and 60 people wounded, including police, some seriously. Over 150 were arrested at the scene or nearby, and at the end of 2010, 23 were still in custody.. Church leaders insisted that they had a permit for the building extension, but the authorities dispute this. There is a distinction in Egyptian law between church property and a church building. Church leaders have a permit to expand property owned by the church, but not to erect a church building per se. (*See also #s 35 and 39*)

22. In December 2010, it was reported that Ashraf Thabet, a convert from Islam to Christianity had been charged with insulting a heavenly religion under Article 98f of the Egyptian Penal Code. Thabet, from the Port Said area, had told local Muslim religious authorities about his change of beliefs and they reported him to the State Security and Investigation, who charged him.

23. On December 2, 2010, the Pew Research Center, one of the most respected research centers on religion and society, released the reports of a survey in the Middle East that it carried out in May 2010. Among its findings were that 84% of Egyptians favor executing any Muslim who changes his religion.

24. On December 17, the radical Islamist e-journal *Sawt Al-Jihad* focused on the Copts and the lead article, by Abu 'Abdallah Anis, described them as agents of "the global Crusade": "The ultimate goal of the Copts — shared by Christians everywhere — is, says Anis, to steer the Muslims away from their religion; they also collaborate with Israel, and aim to establish an autonomous entity separate from Egypt."

25. On or about December 21, 2010, the al-Qaida affiliated website *Shumukh-al-Islam*, published a "death list" naming 200 Coptic Christians, most of them living overseas, over half in Canada. The list included pictures, addresses and cell phone numbers. The website said it intended to "identify and name all of the Coptics throughout the world who hope to defame Islam" and called Coptic Christians living abroad "dogs in diaspora," a very derogatory reference in Arabic.

26. Shortly after midnight on January 01, 2011, in what appeared to be a suicide bomb attack, there was an explosion at the al-Qidiseen church ("Church of the Two Saints") in Alexandria as worshippers were leaving a midnight service to celebrate the New Year. 21 Copts were killed and almost one hundred injured. (*See also # 49*)

27. Subsequently, Copts demonstrated throughout Egypt and criticized the government for not protecting them. On January 4, 2011, as a small group of protesters marched through the center of Cairo, a high-ranking state security officer walked over to a row of demonstrators standing vigil and slowly, methodically blew out the white candles they were holding to remember those who died.

28. Because of specific threats on terrorist websites against Coptic churches in the Netherlands, Sweden, Britain, Germany, European authorities increased security around Coptic churches in Europe, especially for January 6 and 7, which is Coptic Christmas.

29. On January 11, 2011, a Christian man was shot dead, and his wife, and four other Christian women, wounded on a train in Minya province. The attacker, Amer Ashour Abdel-Zaher, an off duty policeman, reportedly identified the victims as Christians because the women in their group did not have their heads covered and some were wearing crosses. The attacker shouted 'Allahu Akbar' as he fired and was arrested shortly afterwards. At the request of the Minister of Health, the wounded were first flown to a specialist hospital in Cairo, but the families insisted they be transferred to the church-run Good Shepherd Hospital in Samalout.

30. On January 12, 2011, thousands of Copts protested inside the newly-built church in Ezbet Gaffer, Al-Fashn, in Beni Suef province, after the city's administration office said that the church's dome must be demolished because the Presidential decree authorizing the new church did not mention a dome. The Governor intervened to pacify the Copts and sent the architects drawings to Cairo to see if there could be amendments.

31. On January 17, 2011, several thousand Copts demonstrated in Maghagha because the tent in which they had been holding worship services since March 2010 collapsed in the heavy rains that Egypt had been experiencing. The reason that they were meeting in a tent was that, after they had received permission to build a new church, they first demolished the old one, and then the Governor of Minya withdrew the permission for the new one. The Governor said that the Bishop's home must also be demolished. The demonstrators called for the building permit to be re-issued. (See also # 2)

32. On January 19, 2011, the roof of el-Amodein evangelical church in Samalut, in Minya province, collapsed because of heavy rain. 1500 Coptic youth staged a sit-in in the church, protesting that the church had applied for a renewal permit five years ago without any progress. The church also serves as a village school.

33. On January 30, 2011, in the village of Sharonna near Maghagha, Minya Province, two Coptic families were attacked in their homes and eleven people, including children 4 and 3 years old, were killed. Four others survived, despite being shot. The attacks stemmed from a reported affair between a married Coptic woman and a single Muslim man. The Muslim man was killed and police suspected that the killing was done by the woman's family, but released them due to lack of evidence. The killings of the two families appears to be a revenge killing, but their scope went further than such revenge usually does, even targeting young children. In addition, bibles, icons, and other Christian materials were desecrated and destroyed.

34. On February 5, 2011, a fire was set in a small church in Rafah, near the Egyptian border of the Gaza strip. The church was empty at the time. The arsonists also tried to take a cross which had been on the outside of the church.

35. While there were demonstrations in Tahrir Square, and many of Egypt's security forces had gone off duty, church members guarded St. Mary and St. Michael church, which was the church that was attacked by security forces on November 24, 2010, when four Copts were killed and many injured or imprisoned. When some security forces came back on duty, they stormed the church on February 6, and evicted the priest and the congregation who were keeping vigil there. *(See also #s 21 and 39)*

36. On February 8, 2011, in the village of Elias Hanna, in Samalut, Minya province, about 80 Muslims attacked a number of Copts because they attempted to pray in a house belonging to the Diocese since 2007. Five Copts were injured. There is no church in the area.

### **ATTACKS ON AND INFRINGEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OF COPTS POST FEBRUARY 11, 2011 (MUBARAK'S RESIGNATION)**

37. On the morning of Feb. 12, gunmen broke into and then looted The Virgin Mary Church in El-Arish, located in the northern Sinai Peninsula.

38. On February 17, 2011, in El-Hathatah, near Samalut, Minya, Muslims attacked Christians inside Saint George's church. This was prompted by the church building a roof over the courtyard between the church and its community services building within the fenced church compound, in order to make more space for its congregation.

39. On February 19, 2011, a Coptic home in Giza was broken into and 18 year-old Nesma Sarwat was abducted. The home belonged to the contractor who was working on St. Mary and St. Michael church in Giza, which was attacked by security forces using live ammunition on 24th November, 2010. The abductors wrote on the home's wall that "Islam is the solution" and "The Church has to be demolished," as well as the names of the other family members. *(See also #s 21 and 35)*

40. On February 20, 2011, members of the Egyptian armed forces stormed the 4<sup>th</sup> Century St. Paul monastery near the Red Sea, injuring three monks and demolishing a fence that the monastery had recently erected. The monastery had been attacked on February 13, 2011, by armed prisoners who had escaped in the turmoil in Egypt, and so had erected the fence for protection in their isolated area.

41. On February 21, 2011, the Emergency State Security Court in Qena acquitted Qurshi Abul Haggag and Hendawi Sayyed., two of the three suspects in the Christmas Eve killing of 6 Copts and one Muslim bystander in Nag Hammadi on January 6, 2010 in a drive-by shooting as the Christians were coming out of church. The third member of the group, Mohamed Ahmed Hussein, 39, more commonly known as Hamam el-Kamouny, was sentenced to death by the court on January 16, 2011. The court judged that the two were accomplices of Mohamed Ahmed Hussein but acquitted them. Bishop Cyril, the Coptic Orthodox bishop of Nag Hammadi, said "The court imposed one death sentence because one Muslim was killed, and the Egyptian judiciary wasted the blood of the six murdered Copts, who are of no value to the society. *(See also #s 9 and 107)*

42. Responding to the Qena Emergency State Security Court verdict, Leonard Leo, chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, stated that the prosecution "took over a year, and the Egyptian state security court committed serious breaches of due process and fairness." He added that "Incomplete justice does very little to address the perpetual cycle of violence targeting religious minorities that has remained unchecked by the government in Egypt,"

and "The government also should ensure that Christian and other non-Muslim places of worship receive heightened security, particularly in the current climate where religious minorities are increasingly vulnerable to extremist attacks, including threats to eradicate Christians from the region."

43. On February 21, 2011, members of the armed forces demolished the fence surrounding the 5<sup>th</sup> century St. Bishoy monastery in Wadi Natroun, in the Western desert. The monks had erected the fence because of the turmoil in Egypt and there are reports that they had also been attacked by ex-prisoners. The Monastery of St. Bishoy is a prominent monastic community in the Coptic Orthodox Church, and it is the main spiritual retreat of Pope Shenouda III. *(See also #s 46 and 48)*

44. The monastery of Abu Magar, near El-Fayoum, has been ordered by the security forces as of February 21, 2011, to demolish the fence that it too erected after an attack the previous week that injured six monks.

45. On February 22, 2011, a Coptic priest, Dawoud Boutros, was discovered stabbed to death in his home in the village of Shotub, near Assiut, in southern Egypt. He had been dead for about two days before relatives found him. Several of his belongings had been taken and a fellow priest, Danoub Thabet said the body had several stab wounds, and neighbors report seeing several masked men leaving the apartment shouting "Allahu Akbar." Subsequently thousands of Copts demonstrated, and smashed the windows of a street car.

46. On February 23, 2011, members of the armed forces again stormed St. Bishoy monastery in Wadi Natroun, reportedly using tanks, armored vehicles and a bulldozer to demolish a fence and a gate. The military used live ammunition, wounding Father Feltaows in the leg and Father Barnabas in the abdomen. Six Coptic workers in the monastery were also injured, some seriously. According to Michael Posner U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "the Army used live ammunition, including rocket propelled grenades, against unarmed Copts during a land dispute at a monastery. A monk, one of the six shot, later died. To our knowledge, no one has been held accountable for these attacks." *(See also #s 43 and 48)*

47. On February 23, 2011, the army also attacked the Monastery of St. Makarios of Alexandria in Wady el-Rayan, El Fayoum, 100 km from Cairo, using live ammunition. One monk was shot and more than ten were injured after being beaten with batons. *(See also # 7)*

48. On February 24, 2011, several thousand Copts staged a rally in front of the Coptic Cathedral in Cairo, where Pope Shenouda III was giving his weekly lecture after which they marched towards Tahrir Square to protest the attacks on the monasteries.

49. In February 2011, Ayman Al Zawahiri, then reputedly Osama bin Laden's deputy, released several audiotapes on the situation in Egypt, and his February 25, 2011 tape paid particular attention to the Copts. According to a transcript by the SITE Intel group, a U.S. group that monitors militant messages, he denied that Al Qaeda was involved the New Year's eve bombing of a church in Alexandria that killed 23 people and said that Coptic Orthodox Church Pope Shenouda III is "first among those who are responsible for setting the situation ablaze." He claimed that Shenouda was spreading the "belief that the Muslims have occupied Egypt and they must be driven out as they were kicked out of Spain" in the 15th century, and accused the Copts of trying to establish an independent state in Egypt. *(See also # 26)*

50. On February 28, 2011, thousands of Copts demonstrated against the Governor of Minya Governorate, Ahmed Dia-el-Din. The governor has ordered that a Christian centre in the village of Deir Barsha, in Mallawi, be demolished. The five-storey building belongs to the Coptic diocese of Mallawi and is used for providing services to the elderly and children from 75 villages. No reason for the decision has been published. Many local people have demonstrated in support of the building, claiming that it, "was inaugurated by the governor himself four years ago and all licenses and papers are fully correct."

51. On March 4, 2011, a Muslim mob of several thousand strong attacked and burned the church of St. Mina and St. George in the village of Soul, about 30 kilometers from Cairo. The mob pulled down the church's cross and detonated a handful of gas cylinders inside the structure. The ensuing fire destroyed the church and all its contents, including centuries-old relics. The fire department and the armed forces initially failed to respond to Coptic pleas for help during the arson attack. The incident appears to stem from a romantic relationship between a Christian man and a Muslim woman and the refusal of the woman's father to kill her to restore the community's "honor." Subsequently, over a thousand Copts fled the area. (*See also #s 52, 53, 55*)

52. After Copts and sympathetic Muslims demonstrated in Cairo on March 5, 2010, Field Marshall Tantawi, head of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, issued a statement that the destroyed church would be rebuilt by Easter, which it was, though local Copts are concerned by the fact that no-one was prosecuted for the attack, and they fear that this will contribute to a climate of impunity for attacks against Copts. (*See also #s 51, 53, 55*)

53. On March 8, 2011 a mob of some thousands of Muslims, using Molotov cocktails, guns and clubs violently attacked Christians on the outskirts of Cairo who were demonstrating in front of a television station and blocking a main road and throwing stones to protest the burning of the church in Soul on March 4, 2011. During the night, until 2 am, mobs roamed the Christian area of Mokattam, generally known as "Garbage City"; attacking residents, looting and burning homes, and destroying vehicles and equipment. According to some reports, the Egyptian army, which was called to restore order, joined in the attack, shooting Copts with live ammunition. Initial reports indicate that 13 people have been killed, with over a hundred injured, scores seriously so. Several garbage recycling plants and garbage trucks owned by the Copts were reportedly torched as well. (*See also #s 51, 52, 55*)

54. On March 14, 2011, Saad al-Husseini, a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau, its highest executive body, stated that while the platform of the Brotherhood's newly formed "Freedom and Justice Party" must still be approved by the Guidance Office and its Shura Council, it will maintain the position that neither a woman nor a Christian can be president of Egypt. (*See also #s 66, 69, 76*)

55. On early March 14, 2011, over a dozen Copts were reportedly shot or beaten, many with broken bones, by the Egyptian Army, some of whose members reportedly shouted "Allahu Akbar" during the attacks, which were caught on videotape. This took place outside the state television station, where a nine-day protest by the Copts had just ended and some out of town demonstrators had remained overnight until the curfew expired. (*See also #s 51-53*)

56. On March 20, 2011, in Qena, a Copt, Ayman Anwar Mitri, had his ear cut, his other ear mutilated, and his neck slashed by a group of Muslim men, members of the ultraconservative 'Salafist' movements, including an off duty policeman, after an accusation that he had rented his flat to a prostitute. The attackers then contacted the police and informed them that they had carried out the punishment required by Islamic law. Police did not lay any charges but called for a

'reconciliation' meeting. The head of Al-Azhar University, Sheikh Ahmed El-Tayeb, subsequently met with Mitri and offered him medical treatment.

57. On March 24, 2011, Salafis surrounded St. George's church, Beni Ahmand, Minya, and demanded that an expansion (which had already received governmental permission) be stopped, and that work already done be undone, and that the priest and his family leave the village. After a meeting of the groups with the military, the expansion was stopped, though the priest has remained and services continued.

58. On March 27, 2011, Salafis blocked the entrance to St. Mary's church in the Bashtil district of Giza saying that the church did not have a permit. The military dispersed the group. After a 'reconciliation' meeting with Copts, services at the church were forbidden until it acquired a new permit to operate.

59. On March 28, 2011, Coptic Pope Shenouda III met with church leaders to discuss their concerns about the increasing activities of the ultraconservative 'Salafist' Muslim movements. Such groups are seeking to impose their version of Islamic law in Egypt's chaotic environment, and have attacked unveiled women, and also Sufi shrines. (*See also # 63*)

60. On March 29, 2011, dozens of Salafis staged a protest in Cairo, accusing the church of abducting Camilla Shehata, a Coptic priest's wife who some believe converted to Islam and is being held by the church against her will. Salafis also have accused the police of collaborating with the church by handing Shehata over to Church authorities to reconvert her. The woman's whereabouts are currently unknown. Because of rumors of impending Salafi attacks, a Coptic church in Assuit evacuated some 340 female students from their university dormitories to hostels affiliated to the church and to monasteries. openly. (*See also #s 1, 8, 12, 17, 18, 70, 72-75, 88*)

61. On March 30 a Salafist killed a Muslim colleague for not praying. On March 28, 2011, in the village of Kasr El-Bassil in Fayoum province, 'Salafists' attacked stores and burned down a liquor store owned by a Copt, and demanded that coffee shops be closed. One villager was killed and eight others were injured.

62. On March 30, 2011, ten human rights organization staged a rally in front of the building of the Attorney General to publicize the plight of several thousand Copts in the villages of Badraman and Nazlet Badraman, in Deir Mawas, Minya Province, who since late January have been terrorized by Ali Hussein, a former police informer, and his gang. They accused Hussein of terrorizing Copts, raping Coptic women, and kidnapping their children for ransom and extortion, and accused the authorities of turning a blind eye to the attacks. On April 3, police and army forces stormed the village to arrest Hussein and his gang, but he had already fled. The police stayed only three hours and on April 4, Hussein renewed his attacks.

63. Salafis have also been attacking the mosques and shrines of Sufis, a more mystical and tolerant version of Islam, since Salafis believe that veneration of saints is heretical. Sheikh Gaber Kasem al-Kholy, the highest-ranking Sufi sheik in Alexandria said in early April that "I don't underestimate people's fears concerning Salafis. Of course, Coptic Christians are a main target for those extremists, but we need to speak out about the suffering of the Sufi people who were attacked by the Salafis." (*See also #s 59*)

64. In March 2011, Maher Ahmad Al-Mo'otahsem Bellah El-Gohary, a long-time convert from Islam to Christianity, was able to flee from Egypt after several years of legal disputes over his and his daughter's religious status. (*See also # 6*)

65. On April 5, 2011, hundreds of Salafis for three days occupied the entrance of St. John the Beloved church in the village of Kamadeer, in Samalout, Minya Province, and told Copts that they were not allowed to pray there any more. The church had been damaged by heavy rain on January 11, 2001, and required repairs, and the Salafis said that no such construction should be done. On April 7, a 'reconciliation' was held between the parties. The Copts were required to rebuild their church 200 meters away. The new church would have to be only one story, whereas the old one was two stories, and it could not have a dome, an external cross or a bell, or other feature marking a church.

66. On April 14, 2011, Mahmoud Ezzat, the Muslim Brotherhood's deputy Supreme Guide, said in a forum held in the Cairo district of Imbaba that the group wants to establish an Islamic state after it achieves widespread popularity through its Freedom and Justice Party. Meanwhile, Brotherhood leader Saad al-Husseiny, said at the forum that the group aims to apply Islamic legislation and establish Islamic rule. Church sources said that the Coptic Orthodox Church had decided to suspend its dialogue with the Brotherhood after additional Brotherhood leaders said it was seeking to implement Islamic Sharia and declare Egypt an Islamic state. (*See also #s 54, 69, 76*)

67. On April 15, 2011, and following days, over ten thousand people, mostly Salafists, protested in the southern Egyptian province of Qena against the appointment of a new Christian governor (the previous governor, Magdy Ayoub, was also Christian) and threatened to bar Emad Mikhail, the new governor, from entering the province: some even threatened to kill him if he did. The protesters blocked main roads in the area, stopping buses to separate men and women passengers, and disrupted the main rail rout in Upper Egypt. Egypt's cabinet rejected calls for the governor's resignation. However, on April 25, 2011, Prime Minister Essam Sheraf said he would 'freeze' the appointment of Emad Mikhail for three months and that meanwhile the secretary-general of the province Majid Abdul Karim would govern it

68. After a clash in which two Muslims were killed, by whom is not clear, on April 20, 2011, mobs rampaged in the town of Abu Qurqas, Minya province, burning Coptic homes and shops. The government deployed extra police and troops to the province and a curfew was imposed in the town. In the ensuing violence one Copt was killed and ten were hospitalized.

69. On April 22, 2011, a senior Muslim Brotherhood spokesman, Sobhi Saleh, stated in a conference that the Brotherhood wished to apply "Islamic legislation." (*See also #s 54, 66, 76*)

70. On April 24, 2011, thousands of Salafis protested against the killing on April 22, 2011 of a Christian woman named Salwa Adel, allegedly by her three brothers for having converted to Islam eight years previously, and having married a man named Khaled Ibrahim. The protestors also called for the release of Camilla Shehata, allegedly being held prisoner by the church. Prominent Salafi Sheikh Ahmed Al-Mahalawhy called for unity amongst Christians and Muslims but added that he believed that the previous regime had a policy of appeasing Christians. (*See also #s 1, 8, 12, 17, 18, 60, 72-75, 88*)

71. On April 28, 2011, dozens of Copts protested outside Egypt's High Court, demanding the return of Christian girls they describe as recently disappeared. Coptic lawyers also submitted a report to the attorney general requesting that the minister of the interior, Mansour al-Essawy, locate eleven Christian girls who they say have disappeared since the 25 January revolution. A statement by a Coptic group called the Maspero Youth Union denounced what it described as the kidnapping of Christian girls, listing Heba Iskandar, who disappeared from Maadi along with her

children, Heba Adel, who has been lost since 6 April after driving her son to school, and Maryam George Boqtor, who was lost with her children while buying them clothes before Easter celebrations. (See also #s 83, 95, 97)

72. On April 30, 2011, Muslims demonstrated at the Coptic cathedral in Cairo protesting what they said was the abduction of Muslim women by the church. The head of security at the Cathedral closed the gates and it was reported that Christians have been asked not to come to the Cathedral to avoid altercations with the protesting Muslims. Egyptian prosecutors asked the church to make Camilla Shehata available for testimony. (See also #s 1, 8, 12, 17, 18, 60, 70, 73-75, 88)

73. On April 30, 2011, there were also three other demonstrations on the same theme. The first demonstration was in front of El-Fatah mosque in Ramsis Square, the second in front of Al-Nour mosque Abbasiya Square, and the third came out of the Sharia Association mosque in Ramsis. The protesters demanded the resolution of "ten demands", which they had called for the previous Sunday, during a protest in front of the el-Kayed Ibrahim mosque in Alexandria, including the "trial of Pope Shenouda," " the release of Camelia Shehata and Wafaa Constantine" and "inspection of monasteries and churches to look for Muslim women held by the church." Some also held banners calling for an Islamic state. (See also #s 1, 8, 12, 17, 18, 60, 70, 72, 74, 75, 88)

74. On May 7, 2011, Camelia Shehata appeared on the Coptic satellite channel Al-Hayat and said that she was a Christian and have never converted to Islam. (See also #s 1, 8, 12, 17, 18, 60, 70, 72, 73, 75, 88)

75. On May 6, 2011, several hundred Salafist paraded through Cairo praising Osama Bin Laden, and then Salafists demonstrated at three mosques in Cairo against what they said was the abduction of Muslim women, and on May 7 they claimed that a Christian woman, Abeer, married to a Muslim man had been abducted by Copts in the Cairo slum area of Inbaba. On Saturday, May 7, a Salafist mob attacked St. Mena church, one of the oldest churches in Egypt, in Inbaba, and then firebombed the church of the Virgin Mary church in the same area. There was also shooting, some from the rooftops, by whom is not clear. Homes and shops were also firebombed. The clashes led to 10 deaths, both Muslim and Christian, and over two hundred injured: the military then surrounded the churches and detained about 190 people in the area. There was further stone throwing after a Christian demonstration in front of a state TV station calling on the armed forces for protection. Prime Minister Essam Sharaf postponed a trip to Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to hold an emergency cabinet meeting to discuss the attacks. Anba Theodosius, Bishop of Giza, where Imbaba is located, said "We have no law or security, we are in a jungle. We are in a state of chaos. One rumor burns the whole area. Everyday we have a catastrophe." Subsequently, police arrested 23 Salafists and the military said it would assist in rebuilding the churches. The government has assisted in repairing the churches. (See also #s 1, 8, 12, 17, 18, 60, 70, 72-74, 88)

76. On May 7, 2011, There was a joint Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi rally in the Haram district of Giza, in greater Cairo, which drew about 50,000 people. The organizers chanted slogans stating that the Brotherhood and the Salafis are one, and that both seek to apply the Islamic Sharia. Prominent Salafi preacher Safwat Hegazy condemned the church burning in Imbaba and said in his speech at the rally "soon we will have one caliph to rule us all." (See also #s 54, 66, 69)

77. Egypt's National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) stated on May 9, 2011 that its report on the violence in Imbaba would hold security forces largely responsible, citing their sluggish

According to its report, assailants targeting the Coptic community walked 2 km between the Mar Mina Church and the Virgin Mary Church, carrying shotguns, knives and Molotov cocktails, without being stopped by the police. It also says the Virgin Mary Church was set on fire amid a total absence of security.

78. On May 10, 2011, fifteen of Egypt's human rights organizations released a joint statement that said, in part, "Those in charge of administering the country, both the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and the Cabinet, have followed in the former regime's footsteps in refraining from strictly enforcing the law and upholding norms of justice. This is particularly apparent in their disregard for increasing incitement to religious hatred and sectarian violence, their yielding to political expediencies that facilitate impunity for crimes and lack of accountability for the sectarian violence that has erupted in several governorates in the last three months, and their disregard for various forms of collective harassment of Coptic houses of worship- which included permitting thousands of Salafis to hold prayers in front of the Coptic Cathedral in Cairo."

79. Copts held a sit-in in Maspero, in front of the State TV building, from May 7 to May 21 demanding the release of seventeen Christians they maintained had been unjustly detained and sentenced by a military court for 3-years on March 16, as well as over 400 others detained. They are demanding that the perpetrators who had burned churches be brought to justice. On May 14, 2011, they were attacked on at least three occasions by men in Salafist dress who fired guns and threw Molotov cocktails. 78 people were injured and 12 cars burned. Police were late to respond but arrested 52 people.

80. The government announced it is considering re-opening a number of church buildings that had been closed under President Mubarak, provided that the authorities are satisfied that adequate security measures are in place. The Church of the Virgin in Ain Shams, Cairo, was reopened but, on May 18, 2011, as a group of Christians approached the church, a crowd, including Salafis, blocked their way. The two groups threw stones at each other. Police restored order and made some arrests, and the Christians then approached the church via a back route. However, the authorities closed the church and arranged a reconciliation meeting, after which the church remained closed. *(See also # 82)*

81. On May 22, 2011, Egyptian authorities revoked the citizenship of Morris Sadek, a Coptic Christian lawyer who had been living in the US for several years, and banned him from entering Egypt. Mr. Sadek had been a vocal advocate of Coptic causes and a critic of the Egyptian authorities. The Egyptian government accused Mr. Sadek of insulting Islam, showing allegiance to Judaism, and calling on the US and Israel to interfere in his country's internal affairs.

82. On May 29, 2011, in connection with the May 19, 2011 confrontation concerning the Church of the Virgin in Ain Shams, Cairo, a military court sentenced two Coptic Christians to five years in jail for possessing weapons, violence and trying to turn a factory into an unlicensed church. Authorities released three Muslims who had been arrested. *(See also # 80)*

83. On June 12, 2011, two Coptic girls, Christine Ezzat Fathy, 17, and her cousin Nancy Magdy Fathy, 14, disappeared after attending the Virgin Mary Church in their village Nazlet Ebaid. The family accused two young Muslim men from the nearby village of Ezbet Rashed of kidnapping them, and filed a complaint with the Minya police, who took little action. On June 14, hundreds of Copts began demonstrating in front of the main security building in the province of Minya and clashed with police. Copts ended the demonstration on June 15, after General Mamdouh Maqled, head of the Minya Security Forces, promised to launch a thorough search for the two girls. The

Coptic Maspero Youth Union said it was compiling cases of recently disappeared Coptic girls to present to Cabinet and the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. (*See also #s 71, 95, 97*)

84. Nearly two weeks after they disappeared, Nancy and Christine Fathy were found in Cairo wearing niqabs that covered their bodies and faces: they were stopped incidentally by a police officer when he noticed that one of them had a cross tattooed on her wrist, as many Copts have, and which would be unusual for someone wearing a niqab.. According to investigators, the Christian minors said they had converted to Islam of their own free will, and refused to return to their families. The authorities put them in a state care home until the completion of the investigation. Their families protested that as the girls were minors they could not under Egyptian law have legally converted without parental permission. Al Azhar and its *Fatwa* (religious edict) Committee, who would be the bodies to certify conversion, also denied that the two Coptic teenagers had converted to Islam, because they had not yet reached 18 years of age, as required by law. Subsequently, the two girls were taken by security officers from the care home and held in a undisclosed place.

85. In mid-June, the government released its draft law on construction and repair of places of worship (Christians had long asked for a unified law on places of worship, so that the same conditions would apply to both churches and mosques). The major churches, Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican, as well as the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, criticized the draft on the grounds that it was similar to the current law in that it still required the Governor's permission for even minor repairs, that State Security still needed to screen all such constructions and repairs, the surrounding community must agree. The bill also required all new churches to be large--- 1000 square meters--even if the number of Copts in the area was small. This would be more expensive, inappropriate to the needs of the congregation, and could arouse opposition from local Muslims. The draft also said that places of worship need to be at least 1km apart.

86. On June 24, 2011, hundreds of Muslims surrounded St. George's church in Beni Ahmand, Minya province (which had been blocked by militant Muslims on March 24, 2011) vowing to kill its priest Father George Thabet, who was serving morning mass and was locked in the church with a number of parishioners. Security forces arrived five hours later and escorted Father George in a police car to the Coptic Diocese in Minya.

87. On June 25, 2011, a mob, mostly Salafists, burned eight Christian homes in the Upper Egyptian village of Awlad Khalaf. The attack was initiated by a rumor that a house which is being built by Wahib Halim Attia would be turned into a church. Two Christians and one Muslim were injured.

88. On June 29, 2011, the Egyptian administrative court of the State Council dismissed a lawsuit filed by Muslim lawyers demanding the disclosure by the church of the whereabouts of Camilia Shehata, the wife of a Coptic priest, who was alleged to have converted to Islam and held against her will by the Church. In reaching its decision, the court said the lawyers failed to provide proof to support their claim of the detention of Camilia by the church. (*See also #s 1, 8, 12, 17, 18, 60, 70, 72-75, 88*)

89. On June 30, 2011, a Muslim mob looted and burned Christian homes, businesses and cars in the village of western Kolosna in Samalut, Minya province. Some 10 Christians were injured, but none went to hospital. The violence broke out when a Coptic couple was returning to Kolosna by bus and the wife was sexually harassed by some Muslims at the bus terminal. The husband had tried to defend his wife but was severely beaten.

90. On July 3, 2011, Egypt's Supreme Administrative Court ruled in favor of people born Christian who were seeking to have their religious registration officially changed back from Muslim to Christian. This ruling affects people who had previously been registered as "Christian", but whose registration changed to "Muslim" either because as an adult they converted to Islam, or as a consequence of a parent changing their registration, or because of a clerical error. The court stated that its ruling covered all such cases and that no individual case should be referred to the judiciary. It also said that presentation of a birth certificate stating religious registration as "Christian" with a current confirmation of faith from the church would be sufficient for the change to be made. Finally, the court criticised the Ministry of the Interior for not effectively implementing previous rulings and instructed the Ministry's officials to implement this ruling without delay. The authorities had failed to implement previous court decisions and it is not clear if it will implement this one. (*See also # 114*)

91. On July 25, 2011, an altercation between a Christian woman and a Muslim man who had parked his bike in front of her home escalated into assault by the man on the woman and other Christian villagers, and the arrest of one Copt. Afterwards a mob attacked Coptic farmers, who were beaten with iron rods and pipes. Six Christians, and no Muslims, were hospitalized, and one Copt, the woman's husband, Kirillos Daniel, was arrested. In an interview on CTV Coptic TV, Father Estephanos Shehata, of the Samalout Coptic diocese, said "The real reason behind this assault was the church bell, which has greatly angered the Muslims in the village." He said the dilapidated church in the village of Ezbet Jacob Bebawi, outside Samalout, north of Minya, was given permission to renovate and this was completed last week, and the church bell was reinstalled.

92. In late July 2011, evangelical and Catholic Churches considered canceling the 2011 iftar celebrations due to the recent upheavals in Egypt, a move paralleling Pope Shenouda III, head of the Coptic Orthodox Church, decision to cancel this year's national unity iftar.. The iftar celebration, a traditional Muslim occasion, has traditionally involved Christians and Muslims in a celebration of unity as Egyptians. One concern was that if the churches invited Islamists to iftar, it might be embarrassing, whereas if they didn't invite the Islamists, there might be trouble.

93. On July 28, 2011 in Nazlet Roman, four Christians were shot, two fatally, by four Muslim men. A report, including the names of the assailants, was given to police, but no arrests were made.

94. On August 7, 2011, in clashes in the village of Fargallah, in Minya Province, several Coptic Christian were wounded and one, Maher Nassif Tobias, was killed, and several Muslims were wounded. The violence broke out after a road accident involving a motorcycle and a pedestrian and friends and relatives intervened. Subsequently mobs looted and burned several Coptic homes, including that of the village priest Father Youanes, pastor of St. George Church.

95. On August 8, 2011, the respected newspaper Al-Masry Al-Youm reported that lawyers it had contacted about reports of kidnappings of Coptic girls said that since the toppling of Hosni Mubarak there has been a spike in the number of families seeking help over alleged kidnappings. Cairo-based lawyer Said Fayaz said that the number of alleged cases on his books has doubled since the 25 January uprising. Lawyer Peter Ramses said that before the upheaval began early this year his firm was dealing with about three or four cases every week. "Now we have nearly three or four families every day coming to us to say their girl has been taken." Ramses added that many cases were not bona fide kidnappings, but were instead instances of a young Christian girl falling in love with a man. (*See also #s 71, 83, 97*)

96. As noted above, on August 10, 2011, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, "Egypt's new military rulers are increasingly using the same tactic: portraying pro-democracy activists as spies and saboteurs, blaming the country's economic crisis and sectarian strife on foreign infiltrators, and blasting the U.S. for funding agents of change." "Dozens of Westerners, including tourists, reporters and Cairo residents, have been rounded up on the streets and delivered to police stations and military checkpoints by mobs of volunteer spy catchers in recent weeks. Almost all were quickly freed, with the exception of Ilan Grapel, an Israeli-American law student who has been incarcerated since June on suspicion of being a Mossad agent dispatched to Cairo to sow unrest." The "State-run October magazine on its July 31 cover depicted U.S. envoy Anne Patterson stoking unrest and called her 'Ambassador From Hell.'" "Any relation with the foreigners is dangerous now," says Hafez Abu Saada, chairman of the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights."

97. In mid August 2011, Copts began a publicity campaign complaining about what they said was a double standard in the way that the authorities treated the kidnapping of Muslim and Christian girls. A 15-year-old Muslim girl, Zeina, had been abducted on April 3, 2011, by gunmen. A ransom of 5,000,000 Egyptian pounds was demanded for her return and the kidnappers released her after receiving the ransom. The next day the authorities gave a press conference stating that the six culprits had been arrested thanks to the efforts of a team of 400 officers from the Interior Ministry who worked on the case. The kidnappers were charged with abducting a minor and on April 19 a military court sentenced five of them to life imprisonment and the sixth to 15 years. Two days after this kidnapping, on April 5, Nabila Sedky, a 15 year old Coptic girl from Zawya el Hamra in Cairo disappeared after accompanying her Muslim schoolmate Souad Abdelrassoul to school. Her family never saw her again. After several months, district public prosecutors charged a Muslim man with 'abduction of a female without deception or coercion.' Lawyer Karam Gabriel has filed a complaint with the Attorney General asking to have the charges changed to abduction of a minor by deception and coercion. (*See also #s 71, 83, 95*)

98. In early September 2011, Copts in the Upper Egyptian village of al-Marinab in Edfu, Aswan province, were blocked by mobs from leaving their homes or buying food until they removed the dome of a building, which was being rebuilt. Some local Muslims, backed by Salafists from neighboring villages, threatened to demolish the building, which they said was an illegal church. Copts maintained that it had been a church for decades. On September 2, a "reconciliation" meeting had been held under the auspices of the security forces between Muslims and Christians in which Christians gave in to demands that the rebuilt church be stripped of external crosses and bells. Subsequently, extremists demanded that the building also be stripped of its domes, which local Copts said would lead to the collapse of the structure. (*See also #s 101 and 103*)

99. At the beginning of September 2011, the school administration of Shaikh Fadl Secondary School, a public school in Bani Mazar, sent a warning to Christian students stating that they were required to wear a head covering similar to the Muslim Hijab, and not to reveal their hair, otherwise they would be refused entry to school. Several Copts complied but 14-year-old Ferial Sorial Habib did not, and for eight days she was prevented from entering the school. Her father went to school on September 17 to protest this decision, but the school filed a police complaint against him on charges of libel and defamation. Ferial's father filed a formal complaint with the state attorney and another with the Department of Education of Bani Mazar, stating the school has turned into a "hotbed of militants" and has acted beyond its legal authority.

100. On September 29, 2011, a number of masked men shot and killed a security guard when they attacked the site of a former church in Tamia Township, a village in Fayoum Governorate,

southwest of Cairo. Several guards had been guarding the site on which the Rawda Evangelical Church in Tamia Township stood before it was destroyed by the 1992 Cairo earthquake.

101. On September 30, 2011, a mob of approximately 1000 people from the village of al-Marina, in Edfu, Aswan province, burned and demolished a Coptic building that was being renovated (see para. 98 above). The mob demolished the dome, walls and columns, then went to a depot, where lumber to be used for construction was stored, and burned it also. Coptic homes and businesses were also attacked. A mob prevented the fire brigade from entering the village, and security forces did not intervene. The Governor of Aswan province, who has blocked church construction and repair before, said that the church did not have permission for the renovation but the church, as well as national human rights groups said they had copies of the documents certifying governmental permission for the work. *(See also #s 98 and 103)*

102. On October 3, 2011, in Modamr village in the governorate of Sohag, in southern Egypt, a number of Muslim youth surrounded a building that local Copts pray at, demanding it be shut down. They blocked the road to the church and hurled bricks at the building. On this occasion security officials dispersed the crowd. Local Copts said that security officials had verbally approved the building of a church on the site.

103a. On October 8, 2011, when Coptic youth along with some Muslims demonstrating against the burning of the church in al-Marina and the general failure of the government to protect Copts, passed through the areas of El Qolaly and Abdeen in Cairo, they were attacked by some Muslim residents. *(See also #s 98 and 101)*

103b. On October 9, 2011, the armed forces ruthlessly crushed a largely Coptic protest in the Maspero area of Cairo, near the state broadcasting building. Twenty seven Copts were killed, along with one soldier, and over 300 were wounded. The army appeared to have moved from its earlier practice of passivity in the face of attacks on Copts to a position of hostility against Copts that resulted in unrestrained violence. Many of those killed were crushed to death by armored military vehicles. There is no evidence that the Coptic protestors were armed. *(See also #s 104-106, 108-111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121)*

104. Following the army attacks on October 9, a presenter on Egyptian state television Channel 1, Nile News, said that Copts were attacking the army and called on Egyptians to defend their army from Christian attacks. This report agitated many Muslims, who went to Maspero and clashed with protesters, both Muslim and Christian. Salafi TV stations broadcast that Christians had burned a Quran at Maspero, After that there were further attacks on Copts, and a march on the Coptic hospital where many of the wounded had been taken (many Copts were afraid to go to the state hospitals). *(See also #s 103, 105, 106, 108-111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121)*

105. Prime Minister Essam Sharaf, following the practice of previous Egyptian governments, [blamed the events of Sunday night on “invisible hands” — which he did not further define — seeking to divide the country](#). This phrasing, usually meant to imply foreign interference (often US or Israeli), and may stigmatize Copts as tools of foreigners. *(See also #s 103, 104, 106, 108-111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121)*

106. On October 10, 2011, Egypt’s state television (Maspero) said that there had been no deaths among the military forces, contrary to its report the previous day: it added that the erroneous report was the fault of the news presenter. It had previously said that Coptic protesters attacked the military forces with weapons, which resulted in the death of at least three soldiers, and the presenter had called on the Egyptian people to take to the street to help protect the armed forces.

State TV had also reported that the protesters were armed and initiated the violence that killed the soldiers, which escalated the bloodshed late on Sunday. *(See also #s 103-105, 108-111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121)*

107. On October 10, 2011, Hamam al-Kamouny, the purported ringleader of the 2010 Christmas Day church attack in Naga Hamadi, was executed in Alexandria by the Egyptian government, following a conviction in January for his role in the crime. *(See also #s 9 and 41)*

108. On October 11, 2011, funeral processions for several of the dead Copts were attacked by armed thugs who blocked their way and hurled stones and Molotov cocktails at them. Those in the funeral procession sought shelter and called the army emergency phone line for help, but no help was provided for several hours. *(See also #s 103-106, 109-111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121)*

109. At a press conference on October 12, 2011, the military blamed Christian protesters and "enemies of the revolution" for triggering the clashes on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Generals from the Supreme Council of Armed Forces showed footage of priests and a Coptic Christian activist they accused of "instigating" the violence on Sunday night with calls for demonstrations and storming the state television building. Major General Adel Emara, a member of the ruling council and deputy defense minister, tried to clear the military of any blame in the killings. He denied troops opened fire at protesters, claiming their weapons did not even have live ammunition. He said it was not in "the dictionary of the armed forces to run over bodies ... even when battling our enemy." According to forensic reports for the slain protesters, a third of victims were killed by being run over by the armored vehicles, while two-thirds were shot with live ammunition. *(See also #s 103-106, 108, 110, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121)*

110. In the days after October 9, false rumors circulated throughout Egypt that US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton had said in a CNN interview that if the Egyptian military did not defend Copts then the US would send its own troops to do so. This rumor also cast Copts as tied to foreign powers. In a strongly worded statement issued, the US Embassy in Cairo said, "We were deeply disappointed by the widespread press coverage of a purely fictitious story concerning an alleged conversation by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in regards to the Maspero events. The Embassy stressed that the alleged conversation "never took place, and as we mentioned in a statement on Tuesday [October 11—PM], the United States did not offer to send troops to protect Coptic places of worship in Egypt." *(See also #s 103-106, 108, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121)*

111. On October 16, 2011, sixteen Egyptian human rights groups issued a statement saying that the government was fueling religious tensions, and continuing former President Hosni Mubarak's worst policies, including relying on reconciliation sessions to deal with sectarian violence, leaving perpetrators unpunished, and convincing extremists that they are not accountable for their actions. The groups also accused state-run TV of incitement against Coptic demonstrators, citing its reports that protesters were shooting at the armed forces, and its failure to mention casualties among demonstrators. It also criticized the state-TV presenter for urging citizens to take to the streets to defend the armed forces. *(See also #s 103-106, 108-110, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121)*

112. On October 16, 2011, Ayman Nabil Labib, a 17 year-old Coptic high school student in the Upper Egyptian town of Mallawi, in the governorate of al-Minya, was murdered because of the cross tattooed on his wrist. His Arabic-language teacher, Usama Mahmud Hasan, began insulting and harassing the teenager during class by telling him to wipe off the cross. When Ayman responded that the cross was a tattoo and therefore impossible to remove, and added that under his shirt he was also wearing a necklace with a cross, the teacher became incensed and asked the

class, "What are we going to do with him?" Two students in the class, Mustafa Walid Sayyid and Mustafa Hasanayn 'Issam, beat Ayman and led about fifteen students in chasing him as he struggled to escape. Two school supervisors, Tahir Husayn and Muhammad Sayyid, reportedly then forced Ayman into a teacher's room and there the group beat him to death. The two student ringleaders, Sayyid and 'Issam, have been charged with murder but no action has been taken against the school personnel.

113. There were demonstrations by Copts throughout the world on October 19. The demonstrations in Washington, outside the White House, included senior Coptic priests, an indication that their actions had the blessing of the Coptic Pope. It is unusual for the church to take part in anything that can be construed as political. Following the Oct. 9 violence, the Coptic Church in Egypt has expressed frustration with "problems that occur repeatedly and go unpunished" and Pope Shenouda III, called for three days of prayer, mourning and fasting for the dead. (*See also #s 103-106, 108-111, 115, 117, 119, 121*)

114. In October 2011, Camilia Lutfi (described above), the Christian mother of twins Mario and Andrew Medhat Ramsis, also mentioned above, who had sought to prevent the boys' religion being changed to Muslim, was successful in having them issued new identity cards that state their religious registration as "Christian." This was made possible because of the July 3, 2011 Supreme Administrative Court ruling about 'reconverts.' One implication of having these amended identity cards is that the twins should now be treated as Christians within the education system. (In 2008 they were held back for a school year after refusing to take an end-of-year examination for the Islamics class.) (*See also # 90*)

115. On October 20, 2011, Father Mittias, a Coptic priest who is a leading figure behind the Maspero Youth Union, who led the October 9 demonstrations, was called in for questioning by the military prosecutor. (*See also #s 103-106, 108-111, 113, 117, 119, 121*)

116. On or about October 22, 2011, an Egyptian Military Court ordered imprisoned Christian activist and blogger Michael Nabil Sanad, who had been on a hunger strike for nearly 60 days, to Abbasiya mental health hospital in Cairo, a place known for mistreatment of inmates. Sanad had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment on 10 April 2011 for "insulting the military and dissemination of false news about the armed forces." A spokesman for Catherine Ashton, the EU foreign policy chief, said "The EU has been following with great concern the case of Egyptian blogger (Nabil). His health condition is claimed to have seriously deteriorated and if he is not immediately moved to facilities where he can receive proper hospital care, his life could be in danger." The military has arrested Muslim bloggers, such as Loay Najati and Asma Mahfouz, on similar charges, but subsequently released them.

117. On October 25, 2011, Human Rights Watch released a report on the killings on October 9, 2011, at Maspero that stated "Consistent and credible witness testimony, as well as independent media and video footage, contradict the military's version of events. . . . The military has arrested at least 28 people, almost all Copts, in connection with the clashes and brought them before military prosecutors. The prosecutors ordered their detention for 15 days, pending investigation." (*See also #s 103-106, 108-111, 113, 115, 119, 121*)

118. On October 24, 2011, hundreds of Coptic Christians gathered at the Monastery of the Virgin and St. John the Beloved, located on the Desert Road from Cairo to Ismailia, and built in 2002. Although the Monastery states that it has the necessary permits, the army said that on October 25 it would demolish the monastery's fence, built for protection in the current lawless situation, on the grounds that the monastery had not received permission to build it. When Army vehicles with

demolition equipment arrived at the monastery, they were met by priests, monks, deacons and Copts dressed for mass and praying. The officer commanding the military detachment ordered his unit to withdraw. Army engineers later came to the monastery and filmed the fence and the crowds.

119. On November 3, 2011, the military announced that it would continue to hold 34 Coptic Christians pending investigations on charges of inciting violence, carrying arms and insulting the armed forces during the October 9 Maspero killings. According to defense lawyers, most of the detainees were arrested after October 9. Prominent activist Alaa Abdel-Fatah, who criticized the army for the Maspero massacre, was arrested on October 30, charged with inciting violence, seizing military equipment, and vandalizing military property. He refused to answer questions from the military prosecutors since he believed that the military itself should be investigated. *(See also #s 103-106, 108-111, 113, 115, 117, 121)*

120. On November 14, 2011, Egypt's official news agency announced that Abol-Haggag and El-Sayyed, two people previously acquitted of the January 6, 2010 shooting of six Copts, are to be retried on December 19, 2011, under the Higher Emergency State Security Court, for crimes including premeditated murder and terrorism with the use of force and violence.

121. On November 17, 2011, 40 days after the killing of Copts by the military at Maspero on October 9, and thus a traditional time to commemorate the dead, Copts sought to march to Maspero again. The procession was attacked by unknown assailants and 32 people were injured. *(See also #s 103-106, 108-111, 113, 115, 117, 119)*

122. On November 28, 2011, in the village of el Ghorayzat, in the Maragha district of Sohag Governorate, after a quarrel between a Christian and a Muslim in which the Muslim was killed, mobs attacked Christian areas, looting and burning homes and businesses. Two copts were killed and several wounded.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you very much. Before the next witness, I want to -- I am going to put all of the statements of all of the witnesses in the Congressional Record, too, because I think we are reaching kind of a defining moment on this issue, and I have noticed, too, that many of the media call the Muslim Brotherhood the moderates. It is interesting. That was one piece the other day.

The next witness, please.

## STATEMENT OF MS. GUIRGUIS

Ms. GUIRGUIS. Good morning, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for organizing this hearing. Thank you to you, Chairman Wolf, for tirelessly advocating on behalf of human rights around the world, and Egypt in particular, and for the cause of religious freedom.

Thank you, Congressman Pitts, as well.

It is very telling that in 2011 alone, I testified twice already before on the plight of Coptic Christians, who represent approximately 12 percent of Egypt's 85 million people. It has indeed been a year of trials and tribulations for the Coptic people, and I don't think I am going to go over everything that has happened this year. I think we have heard it already, and will hear from more witnesses.

I will just go ahead and jump to the area which I would like to cover today, which is the responsibility of the SCAF, the government's role in promoting this kind of sectarian violence just over the past 10 months. We know well what the Mubarak regime was up to for the three decades that he was in power, but we don't hear all that much about what the SCAF has been doing with regard to religious freedom, and potentially it is collusion with Islamist forces that have led us to the place that we at today.

So while Copts cautiously welcomed Egypt's revolution on January 25th, their hopes for a new Egypt that would reverse the persecution that they faced under the Mubarak regime are being systematically dashed. Indeed, fears of further institutionalized discrimination being leveled against them are being given life through the preliminary results of Egypt's first post-revolutionary parliamentary elections, which Ms. Shea discussed.

It is this matter that I would like to focus on, as the conduct of these elections epitomize the alarming situation facing not just Egypt's Copts but the United States as it attempts to forge coherent and effective policy toward a key ally in the Middle East in post-revolutionary transition.

So on November 28th, as we know, Egypt embarked on stage one of multi-phased elections -- there are three phases for these elections -- in a highly charged environment that calls into doubt the integrity of the entire process for a number of reasons.

On November 18th Egypt witnessed the resurgence of violence against peaceful protesters by Egyptian security forces under the direction of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, or SCAF, which had become the object of growing frustration by Egyptians who increasingly view the military regime as the main counter-revolutionary force.

In the span of one week, Egyptian security forces rained down on the square with huge quantities of tear gas and rubber coated steel bullets in what the State Department itself deemed a, quote, "excessive show of force" which left over 40 people dead and thousands injured.

As battles reminiscent of war zones raged on in Tahrir and across the country until the day before elections, SCAF nonetheless announced its intent to move forward with these elections, joined in its call by only one political force in the country, the Islamists comprised of the Muslim Brotherhood, on the one hand, whose political party is

the Freedom and Justice Party or the FJP, and the hardline Salafis and their party which is the Nour Party, although they have other political parties as well.

Egyptians were thus expected, somehow ludicrously, to take to the streets and to polling stations in this environment of extreme physical insecurity. Exacerbating these stark conditions were a number of other factors, including a confounding electoral law which even the most seasoned analyst could not explain to you, indicating, obviously, a decreased level of understanding by your average voter.

Additionally, Egypt's political spectrum at this point suffers from extreme polarization, fed by anti-revolutionary propaganda by the SCAF, as well as a religious propaganda war waged against Egypt's not just Christians but liberals overall. Even Muslim liberals are now deemed apostates by some of these more extremist movements.

So these kinds of propaganda wars have been condoned by SCAF and condoned by SCAF's Supreme Election Committee, which is the committee charged with regulating the conduct of these elections and laying down the rules and procedures governing the elections.

For example, only weeks before the election, in response to numerous complaints that had been submitted, legal complaints regarding violations on the ban on religious campaigning, including through sermons in mosques and other such means, the election committee simply responded by saying it would not be able to control these kinds of violations, given their frequency. End of story.

When voters headed to the polls, expectedly these violations continued and escalated, and election monitoring organizations decried and continue to decry numerous abuses which they say are being overwhelmingly committed by the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi parties.

Some of these violations documented in the media include group voting, vote buying, very much in the footsteps of Mubarak's National Democratic Party. Methods being used are distribution of basic food staples to Egypt's poorest in exchange for their votes and, more insidiously, religious propaganda, specifically anti-Christian propaganda which, by the way, is not just used against Christian candidates, who are very few in this election, but are being used against Muslim liberal candidates as well.

When I say that, I say that Muslim candidates that are part of the Egyptian Bloc, which is the liberal bloc, because they are in alliance with parties that have large Coptic constituencies. Those are labeled as also Christian, and anyone that votes for these Muslim candidates is implicitly somehow supporting Christians against Islam.

So complaints regarding representatives of both the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi Noir Party representatives in polling stations in close proximity to voting booths, directing the elderly and the uneducated on how to vote abound, as do complaints regarding niqabi women or women that cover their faces engaging in group voting and other kinds of fraud. Those complaints abound as well.

At one point during the elections, the Salafi Nour Party identified the liberal Egyptian Bloc, which I just mentioned, as the, quote, "Crusader's Bloc," and tried to intimidate Muslim veiled women who attempted to side with the Bloc, deeming them apostates.

More seriously, those tasked with even impartially overseeing the elections process in Egypt -- every electoral district has to be monitored by a judge. Well, in one

district a judge closed down his station early, because, quote, "too many unveiled women were showing up to vote."

Court decisions invalidating elections in numerous districts are already being handed down, most of which are being ignored by the election committee, resulting in confusion that casts doubt on the integrity of the new parliament, once its members are elected. So this is all quite worrying.

All these violations notwithstanding, Egypt's elections do represent a relatively improved process over what Egyptians experienced during the Mubarak era. Some observers point to the substantially higher voter turnout rate during the first two days of the election, estimated at 52 percent compared to the low teens during the Mubarak era, to support this conclusion. But I submit, Mr. Chairman, that to surrender to this conclusion and to the results of this election as a fair representation of Egypt's political landscape and, in particular, its revolutionary aspirations, would be fatally flawed.

Egypt's election is not to be evaluated by the conduct of the few days in which Egyptians cast their ballots, but by the events that have unfolded since the SCAF assumed power, since Mubarak's ouster in February, which paints a much more troubling picture.

First, ahead of the vote, Egypt's voters were threatened with a 500 pound fine, prohibitive for most of Egypt's poor -- forty percent of Egyptians live under two dollars a day, by the way -- if they don't vote. After the government announced it would not be imposing such fines, voter turnout dropped to 20 percent during the runoff election. This perhaps at least partly explains why voter turnout during the first few days was relatively high, and again casts doubt on, quote, "the democratic achievement that these elections represent."

Additionally, since February the SCAF has tried over 12,000 civilians, most of whom are liberal activists, including the young blogger that Ms. Shea mentioned, Allah Abdel Fattah, who is an advocate for pluralism. He, absurdly, is one of the people that is being tried for leveling violence against the Copts in the Maspero massacre.

The SCAF has made opaque decisions concerning Egypt's transitional roadmap, and dictated a plan unequivocally favoring Islamists over other political forces. In March SCAF appointed an all male, 10 member, constitutional committee to draft constitutional amendments. This committee was headed by a member of the Muslim Brother and comprised by at least two other members with the same affiliation.

Since then, SCAF has consistently refused to consider the drafting of a constitution first, which was the demand of Egypt's revolutionary and liberal forces, opting instead to move forward with parliamentary elections, and granting the new parliament the power to draft Egypt's new constitution.

This decision was, and is, highly unusual, since constitutions across the world are normally drafted through some sort of national consensus mechanism, and not by one of the interested branches of government which itself should be regulated by constitutional law. SCAF has consistently refused to entertain that notion.

Because Islamists were the strongest and only opposition allowed to exist during the Mubarak era, it was logical and expected that they would stand the most to gain from any election taking place shortly after Mubarak's ouster, especially with liberal parties lacking sufficient time to mount extensive grassroots campaigns, placing them at a serious disadvantage.

That Islamists would unfairly hold sway in Egypt parliamentary elections taking place according to SCAF's timetable was expected, and the U.S. must ask why SCAF has systematically worked to undermine liberal and revolutionary forces and their chances for electoral gains over the course of the last 10 months.

In addition to mandating a flawed transition plan, the SCAR has undermined the flourishing of civil society through, for example, going so far as to reverse court decisions permitting the establishment of independent labor unions. The SCAR has waged a vicious propaganda war against Egypt's liberals, at some point also going so far as to vilify groups such as April Six which played a key role in Egypt's 18-day uprising, calling them, quote, "agents of the United States."

The SCAF passed an electoral law which could charitably be described as enigmatic, as I mentioned before, and engaged in electoral redistricting, highly favorable again to Islamist forces. The SCAF has tolerated an escalation of the level of violence against Copts by Muslims, continued the usual impunity, and itself carried out an unprecedented level of attacks and massacres against Copts during this same time period.

The SCAF has woefully mismanaged Egypt's transition in just about every way imaginable, and created an environment of fear, resulting in suspicion and polarization as opposed to solidarity. All these factors beg the question of collusion between the SCAF and Egypt's Islamists, potentially to safeguard the extensive privileges of Egypt's top generals who stand to lose much by the transition to a genuine civilian democratic state, which would not hold any institution above the law.

This collusion, whether intended or otherwise, has resulted in a very dangerous formula, placing Egypt on the road to be the next Pakistan. While a survey conducted by state television just days ago placed support for a, quote, "civil state" meaning nonreligious, nonmilitary, at 51 percent with support for a, quote, "civil state with an Islamic background" trailing at 43 percent, and support for a religious state at only six percent. Thus far the elections have produced much more extreme results, highlighting the incongruence of the results with Egyptian societal trends.

According to official election results, the Muslim Brotherhood, as Ms. Shea mentioned, has won approximately 37 percent of the vote, followed by hardline Salafis with 25 percent of the vote, resulting in a potential Islamist bloc of over 60 percent, should the two parties join in a parliamentary coalition. Now they may not. The Muslim Brotherhood may choose to enter into a coalition with the liberal bloc.

If the trends continue as expected over the next two electoral phases, Islamists will maintain this majority, if not reach a super majority of 66 percent or higher. Prominent Salafi party leaders have gone on record recently to state that, quote, "Democracy is anti-Islamic," that minorities will have to pay a special tax known as jizya and be expelled from military service, among numerous other frightening declarations which Ms. Shea also alluded to.

The Salafis have also announced their intentions to curb individual and personal freedoms, such as women's dress and the consumption of alcohol. If this occurs, this will represent the replacement of Mubarak's authoritarian dictatorship with a religious one, an obtrusive version of Egypt's revolution. As a matter of fact, the parliament will have nearly no representation for Egypt's young revolutionaries who carried out the ouster of Mubarak, the revolution.

It will also place in jeopardy Egypt's international standing, relationship with the United States, and potentially adverse its international treaty obligations, all very serious matters. While the will of the Egyptian people, as expressed through the ballot box, should be respected, we should not lose sight that elections are not the only cornerstone of democracy, particularly when they are taking place under such deeply flawed conditions.

The U.S. ought now, more than ever, to clearly communicate to the SCAF that engineering skewed results that are reached through the blatant manipulation of voters and electoral process are not in keeping with democratic practices the U.S. wishes to see.

This is also a very good time, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman and others, to revive the conditionality debate before an aid bill is in conference, and we would very much like to see the conditions that are within it passed, as well as additional conditions which I will mention right now, namely, to ensure an end to the persecution of Egypt's liberal activists, the thriving of which will benefit not only all Egyptians -- will benefit all Egyptians, including the Copts, and that the new constitution reflects respect for pluralism, religious freedom, shared power, and fundamental human rights.

Thus far, the administration has unequivocally rejected conditionality, hoping in so doing to maintain open channels of dialogue and influence with the SCAF. That hasn't been terribly useful. When the Assistant Secretary was talking about the committee charged with investigating Maspero, she failed to mention that the committee is, in fact, a military committee.

An institution which committed the massacre cannot investigate itself, but in any case there have been no more dire circumstances to warrant the clear communication of America's values and interests to the SCAF than these that we are living right now.

Contrary to what the administration may believe, Egypt's religious and the further oppression of Egypt's Christian minorities are the guarantors of further instability. Meanwhile, Egypt's Copts will continue to fight for equal citizenship and for their rightful place in Egypt's future. I exhort all sectors of U.S. Government to stand with their courageous struggle.

I will leave you with the words of Beshoy Tamry who lost his friend, Mina Daniel, a very well known activist during the Maspero massacre. He said, quote, "Since the attacks on Copts began in the past few months, many Christians have been thinking of emigrating. Now after the victory of the Islamists, these plans will become reality, and many Christians are already packing their bags. However, there is another group which includes the Christian revolutionaries, who are adamant to stay in Egypt and continue the fight. This includes me and my friends. We will struggle. We will fight."

Thank you very much.

[The statement of Ms. Guirguis follows.]

**DINA GUIRGUIS**  
**Testimony before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**  
**“Under Threat: The Worsening Plight of Egypt’s Coptic Christians”**  
**December 7, 2011**

Good afternoon. Thank you Mr. Chairman for organizing this timely hearing. I’m especially pleased to have the opportunity to give testimony on Egypt’s sectarian crisis. I would like to state that my testimony here today represents my individual views and not necessarily the views of any organization with which I’m affiliated.

It is telling that in 2011 alone, I have testified twice before on the plight of Egypt's Coptic Christians, who represent approximately 12% of Egypt's 85 million people and are the Middle East's largest Christian community. Indeed, 2011 has been a year of trials for Egypt's suffering but resilient Christians, who welcomed the year with a massacre of an Alexandria church on New Year's Eve that left 21 people dead, subsequently withstood the burning and destruction of a number of their churches (already few in number) and private property, and the incitement of Egypt's self-proclaimed "revolutionary government" against them, culminating in an unprecedented massacre committed by the state which witnessed the crushing of peaceful protesters, most of whom were Christian, by armored personnel carriers and live shootings, leaving a devastating death and injury toll in its wake.

While Copts cautiously welcomed Egypt's revolution on January 25, their hopes for a new Egypt that would reverse the persecution they faced under decades of Mubarak's rule are being systematically dashed. Indeed, fears of further institutionalized discrimination being leveled against them are being given life through the preliminary results of Egypt's first post revolutionary parliamentary elections. It is this matter I would like to bring to your attention in my testimony today, as the conduct of these elections epitomize the alarming situation facing not just Egypt's Copts and the revolutionary forces who braved persecution to fight for a modern, civil state enshrining respect for human rights and equality in Tahrir Square, but also for the United States as it attempts to forge coherent and effective policy towards a key ally in post revolutionary transition.

On November 28, Egypt embarked on stage one of multiphase elections in a highly charged environment that calls into doubt the integrity of the entire process for a number of reasons. Since November 18, Egypt witnessed the resurgence of violence against peaceful protesters by Egyptian security forces under the direction of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), which had become the object of growing frustration by Egyptians who increasingly view the military regime as a counter-revolutionary force. In the span of one week, Egyptian security forces rained down on the square with huge quantities of tear gas and rubber coated steel bullets in what the State department deemed an "excessive show of force" which left over 40 people dead and thousands injured. As battles reminiscent of war zones raged in Tahrir and across the country until the day before the election, SCAF nonetheless announced its intent to move forward with the elections, joined in its call by only one political force in the country, Egypt's Islamists, comprised of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and the hard line Salafis. Egyptians were thus expected to take to polling stations in an environment of extreme physical insecurity.

Exacerbating these stark conditions were a number of other factors, including a confounding electoral law, which even the most seasoned analysts could not explain, indicating a decreased level of understanding by the ordinary voter.

Additionally, Egypt's political spectrum at this point suffers from extreme polarization, fed by anti-revolutionary propaganda by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), as well as a religious propaganda war waged against Egypt's liberals and Christians that was quietly condoned by the SCAF's Supreme Election Committee in direct conflict with its responsibility for laying out the rules and procedures governing the election.

For example, only weeks before the election, in response to numerous complaints regarding violations of the ban on religious campaigning, including through the use of mosques, the Election Committee announced it would be "unable to control" these violations given their frequency. When voters headed to the polls, these violations continued and escalated, and election monitoring organizations decried and continue to decry numerous abuses which they say are being overwhelmingly committed by the MB and the Salafist Nour party.

Some of these violations--documented in the media--include group voting, vote buying (including through methods clearly shadowing those of Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) such as distribution of food staples to Egypt's poorest in exchange for their votes), and more insidiously religious (anti-Christian) propaganda.

Complaints regarding representatives of both the MB's Freedom and Justice Party and the Salafist Nour party stationed within polling places in close proximity to voting booths directing the uneducated and elderly on how to vote abound, as do complaints regarding niqabi women, who cover their faces, engaging in group voting and voter ID card fraud. At one point during elections, the Salafi Nour party identified the liberal Egyptian bloc as the "Crusaders Bloc," and tried to intimidate Muslim veiled women who attempted to side with the bloc, deeming them "apostates." More seriously, those tasked with impartially overseeing the electoral process committed egregious violations, including a judge who closed down the station he was assigned to oversee because "too many unveiled women were voting." (The latter is indicative of the tragic inculcation of intolerance of religious minorities and religious extremism in contemporary Egypt.)

Court decisions invalidating elections in numerous districts are already being handed down, most of which are being ignored by the Election Committee, resulting in confusion that casts doubt on the integrity of the new parliament once its members are announced.

All these violations notwithstanding, Egypt's elections still represent a relatively improved process over what Egyptians experienced during the Mubarak era.

Some observers point to the substantially higher voter turnout rate during the first two days of the election, estimated at 52% by government statistics, compared to the low teens during the Mubarak era, to support this conclusion. But to surrender to this conclusion and to the results of this election as a fair representation of Egypt's political landscape--and in particular its revolutionary aspirations--would be fatally flawed. For Egypt's election is not to be evaluated by the conduct of the few days in which Egyptians cast their ballots, but by the events that have unfolded since the SCAF assumed executive power since Mubarak's ouster in February, which paints a much more troubling picture. First, ahead of the vote, Egypt's voters were threatened with an LE 500 fine (prohibitive for most of Egypt's poor) if they did not vote. After the government announced it would

not be imposing fines, voter turnout dropped to around 20% during the runoff elections. This perhaps at least partly explains why voter turnout during the first few days was relatively high and casts doubts on the "democratic achievement" these elections represent.

Additionally, since February, the SCAF has tried over 12,000 civilians, most of whom are liberal activists, in military tribunals. It has made opaque decisions concerning Egypt's transitional roadmap, and dictated a plan unequivocally favoring Islamists over other political forces. In March, SCAF appointed an all male 10 member constitutional committee to draft constitutional amendments, which was headed by a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and comprised of at least two others with the same affiliation. Since then, SCAF has consistently refused to consider the drafting of a Constitution first, which was the demand of Egypt's revolutionary and liberal forces, opting instead to move forward with parliamentary elections and granting the new parliament the power to draft Egypt's new Constitution. This decision was and is highly unusual, since constitutions across the world are normally drafted through some sort of national consensus mechanism and not by one of the interested branches of government which itself should be subject to the limitations stipulated by constitutional law.

Logically, the Constitution, which sets out the powers and limitations of the various branches of government should come first, but SCAF would not entertain the notion. Because Islamists were the strongest (and only) opposition allowed to exist during the Mubarak era, it was expected that they would stand the most to gain from any election taking place shortly after Mubarak's ouster, especially with liberal parties lacking sufficient time to mount extensive grassroots campaigns, placing them at a serious disadvantage.

That Islamists would unfairly hold sway in Egypt's parliamentary elections taking place according to SCAF's timetable was expected, and the US must ask why SCAF has systematically worked to undermine liberal and revolutionary forces, and their chances for electoral gains, over the course of the last ten months. In addition to mandating a flawed transition plan, the SCAF has undermined the flourishing of civil society through for example reversing court decisions permitting the establishment of independent labor unions.

The SCAF has waged a vicious propaganda war against Egypt's liberals, at some point going so far as to vilify liberal revolutionary groups such as April 6, which played a key role in Egypt's 18 days uprising, calling them "agents of the West." The SCAF passed an electoral law which could charitably be described as enigmatic, and engaged in electoral redistricting highly favorable to Islamist forces.

The SCAF has tolerated an escalation of the level of violence against Copts by Muslims and itself carried out an unprecedented level of attacks and massacres during this same time period. The SCAF has woefully mismanaged Egypt's transition and created an environment of fear, resulting in suspicion and polarization, as opposed to solidarity. All these factors beg the question of collusion between the SCAF and Egypt's Islamists, potentially to safeguard the extensive privileges of Egypt's top generals who stand to lose much from Egypt's transformation into a genuine civilian democratic state which would not tolerate any institution holding itself above the law.

This collusion, whether intended or otherwise, has resulted in a very dangerous formula, placing Egypt on the road to be the next Pakistan. While a survey conducted by state

television just days ago placed support for a "civil state" at 51%, with support for a "civil state with an Islamic background" trailing at 43% (and support for a religious state at 6%), thus far, the elections have produced much more extreme results, highlighting the incongruence of the results with Egyptian societal trends.

According to official election results, the MB has won approximately 37% of the vote, followed by the hard line Salafis with 25% of the vote, resulting in a potential Islamist bloc of over 60% should the two parties join in a parliamentary coalition. If trends continue as expected over the next two electoral phases, Islamists will maintain this majority if not reach a supermajority of 66% or higher.

Prominent Salafi party leaders have gone on record recently to state that democracy is anti Islamic, that minorities will have to pay a special tax known as "gizya," and be expelled from military service, among numerous other frightening declarations. The Salafis have also announced their intentions to curb individual and personal freedoms such as women's dress and the consumption of alcohol. If this occurs, this will represent the replacement of Mubarak's authoritarian dictatorship with a religious one, and the true subversion of Egypt's revolution. It will also place in jeopardy Egypt's international standing, relationship with the US, and potentially adversely affect its international treaty obligations.

While the will of the Egyptian people as expressed through the ballot box should be respected, we should not lose sight that elections are not the only cornerstone of democracy, particularly when they are taking place under such deeply flawed conditions. The US ought now more than ever to clearly communicate to the SCAF that engineering skewed results that are reached through the blatant manipulation of Egypt's voters and the election process are not in keeping with democratic practices the US wishes to see.

This is also a good time for the US to revive the conditionality debate--namely to ensure an end to the persecution of Egypt's liberal activists, the thriving of which will benefit all Egyptians including the Copts, and that the new Constitution reflects respect for pluralism, religious freedom, shared power, and fundamental human rights. Thus far the administration has unequivocally rejected conditionality, hoping in so doing to maintain open channels of dialogue and influence with the SCAF. But there have been no more dire circumstances to warrant the clear communication of America's values and interests to the SCAF. Contrary to what the administration may believe, Egypt's elections and the further oppression of Egypt's Christian minority are the guarantors of further instability. Meanwhile, Egypt's Copts will continue to fight for equal citizenship and their rightful place in Egypt's future. I exhort all sectors of the USG to stand with their courageous struggle. I leave you with the words of Beshoy Tamry, who lost his friend Mina Daniel during the Maspero massacre:

"Since the attacks on Copts began in the past few months, many Christians have been thinking of emigrating. Now, after the victory of the Islamists, these plans will become reality and many Christians are already packing their bags. However, there is another group, which includes the Christian revolutionaries, who are adamant to stay in Egypt and continue the fight. This includes me and my friends. We will struggle, we will fight. Our hope now is in Egypt's moderate Muslims. They are the ones who will be able to support us and our fight for a civil state."

Mr. WOLF. Well, thank you both for your testimony. As I said, we are going to put them in the Congressional Record, and I would urge Ms. Fitzpatrick, if you can make sure the Secretary of State sees their testimony also, and we will send a copy of both of your testimonies to Secretary Panetta and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, too. The next Pakistan is very, very depression. Mr. Pitts.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dina, what should the United States and the international community be doing in order to press the Egyptian military to protect the rights of the minorities?

Ms. GUIRGUIS. First of all, Mr. Pitts, thank you so much. I share your frustration that I think I heard with the Assistant Secretary regarding airing these grievances and recommendations time and time and time again, to little avail, it seems.

As I mentioned in my testimony, the administration is at a place where it is refusing to entertain the notion of conditionality, despite strong urging from other sectors in the U.S. Government, including yourselves here in the United States Congress, which we really do appreciate.

Back in January, I had recommended the appointment of a special envoy, and I am very grateful to see that in the works and taking place. I look forward to it being given life with the administration's cooperation. However, I really do mean it when I say that there is no better time to consider conditionality and place it very much, again, on the table, because I think once Egypt's new constitution is written, this will really close the door on any potential positive future coming out of all of this.

It is understandable that the transition will be rocky and will take time, and we have to be patient. However, what we must not do is allow certain things to be written in stone that will set a very negative trend, and I think one of those things is the drafting of the constitution.

The United States does wield leverage. One of the very unfortunate things, as Chairman Wolf mentioned and as I mentioned in my testimony before the Helsinki Commission, is to see representatives of CENTCOM making the rounds with representatives from SCAF to lobby only days after the Maspero massacre to not condition assistance to Egypt. This is extremely tragic and, I think, ultimately a very wrong route for the United States to take.

Mr. PITTS. What do you see happening with the youth movement that is disappointed in the outcome of recent elections, and what are the possibilities of increased violence again?

Ms. GUIRGUIS. I think, Mr. Pitts, that the street is there, despite all the challenges and the violence that is being meted out to the young revolutionaries through whether institutionalized forms of attacks such as this new electoral law which, for example, privileges Islamists above and beyond everybody else, or through actual physical violence; and it is my worry, Congressman Pitts, that after the new parliament is elected, the SCAF in collusion with this parliament will actually destroy what remains of this opposition and these young revolutionaries, not just destroy them morally in terms of discrediting them and all the other means that we are accustomed to after 30 years of the Mubarak dictatorship, but actually physically destroy them.

I think it should be a top priority for the United States to ensure the physical safety of these young revolutionaries before anything else. I think that, if this new parliament attempts to forge a constitution which is not representative of Egyptians'

aspirations, I think the street is very much there and will be out and active again, and this is when we really, really need to pay attention.

Mr. PITTS. What is your assessment of the military, the military's willingness to -- or some in the existing government to implement true justice for Maspero and other incidents versus simply arresting a few Muslims, a few Christians, blaming them for the violence like they have been doing for years?

Ms. GUIRGUIS. I have very little faith, Mr. Pitts, in the SCAF's ability or even will to bring justice or to see justice done for the Coptic people. As a matter of fact, while Copts were being run over by armored personnel carriers, the SCAF instructed its official media to go out and say that Copts were attacking our military and exhorting honorable citizens to come to the defense of the military, which resulted in vigilante acts of violence against Copts.

This is not a government that is acting fairly or remotely responsibly, and those are all questions that need to be posed and, unfortunately, questions that the administration and, in particular, the Pentagon seems very reluctant to pose.

Why are all of these things that are happening that are documented in terms of laws that are being passed and actions that are being taken, prosecutions of liberal activists, civilians and military tribunals -- Why are all of these things occurring to the severe disadvantage of Egypt's revolutionaries, and nobody seems interested in asking these questions.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Pitts. We have been joined by Congressman Chris Smith and Congressman Trend Franks, and I appreciate them both being here.

I think the administration is going to have to ask the question next year, how lost Egypt? Do you remember who lost China? Who lost Egypt, and it troubles me, too, to see our military coming up to Capitol Hill lobbying with, and also the Egyptian Government hiring outside lobbyists, former members of Congress, if you will, in cases to lobby for them. It is just crazy, and I think this administration -- There will be stories written: Who lost Egypt?

With regard, I thank you both, and Mr. Smith and Mr. Franks?

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Chairman Wolf. Thank you. I do have a full statement. Since I was unavoidably detained, I would like to ask it be made a part of the record, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WOLF. Sure, without objection.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN  
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. I appreciate that. I want to thank you for calling this very important hearing. I welcome our distinguished witnesses, who have been absolutely dogged in their determination to defend the rights of Coptic Christians and all minorities, all those who are beleaguered in Egypt as well as in other places. Mina Shea has been one of the champions of human rights worldwide, including in Sudan.

One of the regrettable aspects of having a foreign ops appropriations bill come to the floor in a very, very truncated fashion -- that is to say, we will not have the ability to offer specific germane amendments to it, because it will be one big mammoth omnibus appropriations bill, but I have weighted in. I know others have weighed in as well concerning the importance of having conditionality to aid to Egypt based on a number of criteria, including and especially religious freedom.

My understanding is that the Obama administration is pushing back on even the mere mention of religious minorities. I know this to be a fact. I find it absolutely deplorable. We have done this elsewhere. So it is part of a pattern.

We have done it -- I just had a hearing yesterday with eight panelists, including two people who have spent more than 20 years in the Chinese gulag, or Laogai -- Harry Wu among them; Pastor Bob Fu was the other -- and academics and others, that we have been so silent on human rights abuses in China, the deplorable situation that has gone from bad to worse under this administration.

Hu Jintao comes in and spends the better part of a week in Washington, and not a single word, not one public utterance by President Obama about the deplorable situation in China, including Nobel Peace Prize winner, Liu Xiaobo, who got it right after Obama got it a year ago. He meets with Hu Jintao at a press conference at the White House, and never even mentions the words human rights, and defends Hu to the press, including the Associated Press who asked a very, very important question about human rights in China.

So fast forward to Egypt. No big surprise that everything is being done so covertly, if it is being done at all, that it is unrecognizable. Meanwhile, the Coptic Christians are being singled out for barbaric behavior on the part of the Egyptians.

We are talking, and I am lobbying for it, to get specific language into this appropriations bill that singles out religious freedom, minorities in Egypt. There is pushback from the administration, and we may not be able to get it into the bill. The right for assembly -- certainly, let's put that in there. That is one of the things that will go in, but there comes a time where you draw lines in the sand, and we are talking about \$1.3 billion in U.S. taxpayer funds. We have to be far more clear about what our expectations are for a country receiving that money.

So I am very, very disturbed with the trajectory as well as the on-the-ground. Frank Wolf, our chairman, said a moment ago about who lost Egypt. When the Arab Spring occurred and people in a pollyannaish type of way, were saying, oh, look, the Muslim Brotherhood are not carrying signs attacking Israel or attacking the Coptic Christians or attacking America; they are much smarter than that. Are we so naive to think that somehow there was a -- what their real intentions were.

Very, very concerned and, of course, the SCAF, as you have pointed out, Dina. Again, I have raised it, but as you pointed out in our most previous hearing of the

Helsinki Commission, they routinely come into town aided and abetted by people at the Pentagon and the Obama administration who just want to go slow. Don't raise that; don't do this, just look askance and somehow it will go away.

It will get worse. It will demonstrably worse, as these elections are clearly suggesting, unless we take very clear and unambiguous actions, and I think linkage to our foreign aid is paramount right now as to where our leaders might be. If they walk, then they walk, because they are already walking, and they are running, I would suggest respectfully, and the naivete on the part of the Obama administration is appalling.

We are doing it with China. We are losing China. We are losing other countries where our human rights voice has been so incredibly muted, and we are doing it now with Egypt. So I have no questions at this point. Just a couple of weeks ago you answered all of the questions that I posed to you, and I thank you for that.

It is great that the Lantos Commission is doing this. The Helsinki Commission is doing it. The Human Rights Subcommittee which I chair as well has been raising these issues. So there is a great deal of discouragement.

I would also add, and I hope the State Department will take this back, Michael Posner when I asked him about Michele Clark's very strong statements the other day concerning -- this was months ago -- concerning the buying and abduction of young Coptic girls who are then sold into sexual slavery, and that is what forced marriages is, as well as forced Islamitization -- said that, while we don't have any specific information -- You were there, Chairman Pitts, and was very dismissive of the idea.

I told him, unless you have really deployed people to investigate this in an aggressive fashion, please don't put the veneer of somehow we looked into it and didn't find anything. We have not looked into it. Michele Clark has. She has a very good record as number two on human trafficking at the OSCE. She has worked that job. Now she is a professor, of course, right here in town. I am very disturbed at the statements that he made, and I did tell him so at that hearing.

Chairman Pitts, thank you very much. I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Smith follows:]

Mr. PITTS. [Presiding] The chair thanks the gentleman, and recognizes another distinguished human rights leader, the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Franks.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, there are always the usual suspects at meetings like this, and you are usually topping the list, you and Mr. Smith here, and I would start by asking that my written statement be entered into the record.

Mr. PITTS. Without objection, so ordered.

STATEMENT OF HON. TRENT FRANKS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS  
FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA

Mr. FRANKS. I also want to express that I identify with every syllable that Mr. Smith just expressed, because I think that, not only does he have a clear understanding of the circumstances, but represents my perspective on it completely.

It is always a dangerous thing when, in the name of trying to be reasonable and friendly to people that we overlook human rights abuses. It only leads to great challenges down the road. I heard it put in a little verse one time. It is perhaps a little archaic to use it in a meeting like this, but it says: No one gains when freedom fails. The best of men rot in filthy jails; and those to cry to appease, appease are shot by those they tried to please.

It generally always come home. When we don't have the courage to protect the innocent, sooner or later the aggressor expands their scope of aggression, and it affects all of us, and if we don't have the courage or the will or even the clarity to protect those who can't protect themselves and to stand up for the foundational rights of religious freedom and just human freedom in general, then we do ourselves no favor, and we certainly fail the test of leadership.

With that, let me first say that I also identify with the question that Mr. Pitts has already asked, suggesting that in the last couple of decades that, whenever there is attacks against Christians, a lot of times the military rounds up a number of Christians and a number of Muslim participants and it sort of faces away at that point.

I know that there are a lot of questions about the Egyptian military's willingness to act as they should. So let me put the question a little differently.

Ms. Guirguis and Ms. Shea, I would probably pose the question to both of you. If you could suggest to this panel and this congress just one policy or one directive or one effort that we might make in a collective way to catalyze the appropriate protection for the religious minorities, and certainly with the Coptic Christians here being the subject of the day, what would be the one thing that you would say would be critical to our policy? I will start with you, Nina, if that is all right.

[The statement of Mr. Franks follows:]

Ms. SHEA. Thank you, Congressman. It really struck me when I heard the administration's witness, and it is nothing against her. I know it is the policy. I have been doing human rights advocacy for many decades, and she said it was complex. We can't condition aid, because it was complex. It really reminded me of the excuses regarding South Africa and apartheid. It was just too complex to take on.

There is a right and a wrong here. It is against our interests to see the Copts wiped out or religiously cleansed, driven out. They are a moderating influence in Egypt. They are the bridge between east and west. They provide an experience of different people living together in different religions in the Middle East. They are the largest non-Muslim community in the Middle East.

They are committed to nonviolence. I talked to the Maspero Youth Union people and some of the Thebes Legion folks, and they are committed to nonviolence. So they do, as Dina said, want to stay and fight for their freedom, stand up for their freedom.

I think it is absolutely essential to condition our aid. It is not at all complex on the Copts' right to justice, that there should not be impunity, the handshaking when there is murder or pogrom, the imprisoning of Copts, and pretty much only Copts after the Maspero massacre. It is an abomination.

So I would say the end to the impunity is extremely important. Of course, the equal right to build churches and repair churches is very, very symbolic, because that is a real signal from the officials, from the government itself, that Copts are not equal citizens.

I don't have a lot of confidence in the new law regarding the building of houses of worship, because there is all sorts of language in there that talks about distance from mosques and so forth. Whatever the distance is, whatever it is, it is very difficult to find a space like that in Egypt. There are a lot of mosques, and it can be administered in a very unfair fashion. There shouldn't be any regulation other than zoning regulations.

So the impunity, the building of churches, I think, are extremely important, but the list is very long, because there is so much oppression against the Copts.

Mr. FRANKS. Right. Ms. Guirguis, would you like to?

Ms. GUIRGUIS. Sure. I would just like to add that, over the course of the past almost 40 years now, the U.S. has given aid to Egypt, \$1.3 billion to the military solely and a very minuscule amount in economic assistance.

That has not really won us leverage or influence in a positive sense as much as it has emboldened the Egyptian government to view this assistance as an entitlement. So U.S. taxpayer money is viewed as an entitlement. The armored personnel carriers which trample people are being funded by U.S. tax dollars, and that really is an abomination.

Now one thing: The SCAF always, as the Mubarak regime did before it, raised this issue this issue of sovereignty and don't intervene in international affairs. I am here to let you know that Egyptians strive for the United States finally to take a moral position vis a vis their country and what is happening there. They do not want to see the U.S. fall into the same trap with SCAF as it did with Mubarak in supporting the strongman, the strongman that oppresses everybody and builds up immense frustration.

They would very much rather see the United States be on the side of the people, and the people here are -- you know, Egyptians are intuitive, bright people that get it. They now see what the SCAF has been up to for the past 10 months, and they understand

that the SCAF has had a very destructive role in actually unraveling all the gains of the revolution.

The revolution, partly in response to what Congressman Smith said, was in large part nonsectarian in nature. This is true. Yet everything that the SCAF has done for the past 10 months has really undermined that culture of tolerance that prevailed during the early stages.

So I think Egyptians would be heartened, if anything, to see the United States take the moral and ethical position, not to mention that this is the position that is in the United States' interests.

Otherwise, we will find ourselves again siding with a government that is against its people, and the whole situation blowing up in our face very soon again, because one thing that has changed from the Egyptian revolution, if nothing at all has changed, is that the fear factor is gone. People feel emboldened. People feel like they can and should take to the streets, should things go horribly wrong again.

What we want to see is the building of Egypt now. We don't want to see a period of prolonged, indefinite instability, which is what we are looking at right now.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you, and well said. Mr. Chairman, I guess one of the concerns that I would express is that this administration in its approach has missed the power curve here. We have seen the recent elections and with the rise of the Salafis and a huge number of those representing the Muslim Brotherhood having very significant gains in the election and, of course, the outer areas perhaps are going to be even more dramatic in that fashion.

So it is something this administration needs to get on top of quickly. Let me just say for the record that I completely agree that our foreign aid in this case should be clearly conditioned on the actions of the acting government of Egypt, because if we don't have the courage to do that, then as you say, it certainly emboldens the enemies of freedom in the clearest way. So I think that that is something that all of us should be committed to, and I certainly am.

One last quick question, Mr. Chairman, and I will, if I could, direct this to you, Nina. The defamation of religion resolution was replaced last march by resolution 1618. Did you see -- Perhaps I will just put it this way. Do you see that replacement resolution as becoming a springboard for limiting free speech, in a sense, in the same way as the defamation of religion resolution?

Ms. SHEA. Thank you. I do, because I think that the administration is making a terrible mistake to keep this alive and actually breathing new life into this dead defamation, the resolution that was sidelined by the 1618, by inviting -- announcing at an organization, the Islamic Cooperation Conference, last July to Washington to discuss how we begin to implement religious tolerance.

While trying to moderate language about religion as a good thing, attacks on other people's religions, it is to work -- the OIC Secretary General has called this move a move of standing united with the United States between the OIC and the United States. From their perspective, they see the United States as endorsing their program.

Their program is to curb speech about Islam, to have the state -- to have every state around the world start regulating speech on behalf of Islam and only Islam, and they have for many years worked to get an international human rights crime against defamation of Islam. That is what their charter calls for. That is what their action plan is

about. This is the organization, Islamic Cooperation and 56 member states group based in Saudi Arabia, and now we are going to be working with them and pulling our members of our Homeland Security, of Justice Department, to come and testify before this conference that is taking place in Washington. It is going to take place now next week with the OIC, with others, but the United States seems to be the only one in the dock here.

Secretary Clinton said this is not going to result in limits on speech, that this is not about the U.S. being put on the carpet, but in fact, de facto, that is what it is. We are the only ones -- We are hosting it. It is here. We are being put under a special scrutiny that no other government is going to get.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, I thank all of you, and I thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, it is frightening to me, because the things I hear you say should be apparent to this administration, and it appears that it isn't. I guess the most temperate thing I can say about that is it exhibits an astonishing amount of naivete here when our own government has almost been -- or at least representatives of the government in the U.N. has been almost complicit with these calls for anti-defamation types of laws that are clearly suppressive of religious freedom.

Ms. SHEA. Extremely demoralizing for those in jail, the bloggers, the women's rights activists, the human rights activists in prison for raising speech that has been declared blasphemous.

Mr. FRANKS. Yes, ma'am. Well, it kind of goes to the question, Mr. Chairman, that with the freest nation in the world has given us great influence and strength and, if we don't use that for the furtherance of freedom, then we miss the test of our time. So thank you, sir.

Mr. PITTS. The chair thanks the gentleman. Thank you for your insight, and thanks to the second panel for your testimony. You have been very eloquent and informative. Thank you very much.

I will call panel three to the table, and I will introduce the three witnesses: Mr. Adel Guindy, President of the Coptic Solidarity International; Cynthia Farahat, Egyptian political activist, writer and researcher; and Raymond Ibrahim, Middle East specialist and Associate fellow, Middle East Forum.

We thank you for coming. Your written testimony will be entered into the record, and at this point the chair would like to recognize Mr. Bilirakis, if you have any opening statements. We are being joined also by Jeff Duncan. Do you have any opening statement?

STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF DUNCAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS  
FROM THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. Duncan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank you for taking this important issue up. On Monday we came back up and had a meeting with Cynthia, and educating myself on the issue of the Coptic Christians in Egypt. So I look forward to learning more about this, but also discussing, possibly through a question series of some of the things we have talked about relating to these applications of persecuted Christians wanting to come to the U.S.

There is a lot of depth here that we can really go into. So as this being the first hearing that I have ever sat in on, I look forward to seeing the flow of information and really delving into the topic. So I appreciate your leadership, and I yield back.

Mr. Pitts. The chair thanks the gentleman and now recognizes Mr. Guindy.

STATEMENTS OF ADEL GUINDY, PRESIDENT, COPTIC SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL; CYNTHIA FARAHAT, EGYPTIAN POLITICAL ACTIVIST, WRITER AND RESEARCHER; AND RAYMOND IBRAHIM, MIDDLE EAST SPECIALIST AND ASSOCIATE FELLOW, MIDDLE EAST FORUM

STATEMENT OF ABDEL GUINDY

Mr. GUINDY. Good morning. Thank you for holding this important hearing about the subject of the Copts. Thank you also for your leadership and that of Chairman Wolf and Franks and other distinguished Congressmen who have been giving us unwavering support over the years. It is honor to be here today, and I would like to request that my entire written statement be made part of the record. It is too long to be read, of course. It is nine pages. So I am going to speak on a few important things which, I think, are indicative of what is going on in Egypt.

Mr. PITTS. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. GUINDY. I would start by describing the situation in Egypt. In keeping with the depiction of summer or spring of this winter of that, I think Egypt is entering into a harsh summer with little to be seen in its Arab deserts beyond thirst, agony, and mirage.

The first mirage is what is what is being hailed as a static transition to democracy. It is a charade of a democracy, what is going on in Egypt today, right from the beginning, by design.

In this land here, you start with a Bill of Rights, a constitution to set the rules of the game, and then you build the institutions. In Egypt, by design, the military and the Islamist Brotherhood have reversed the sequence and were intent against the desires and the requests of the revolutionaries and many secularists, politicians, right from the beginning, right from February, to start with a decent constitution, and they reversed the sequence to start with elections. That way, the elections -- everybody, every kid in Egypt knew that is going to be run by the Islamists. That way they will make the constitution that is to their liking.

So what is going on today? It is a charade of opposers right from the beginning, apart from the irregularities in the process itself of the elections of the past -- of the first phase one. In fact, all along the process, you know, and even by law, you do not make a party which is based on religious or race foundation.

Fifteen out of the 31 newly authorized parties in Egypt over the past 10 months have been all religious based, religious based and openly asking for the application of sharia. So that is the first charade, the first mirage.

The second mirage is going into a civilian government. Egypt is entering a phase of alliance of rule by the military and civilians. The facade will be civilian, to the liking of the United States and the international community, but the force and the power behind the scenes will be held by the military.

There is a marriage of convenience or maybe by conviction, I don't know -- doesn't matter at that stage -- between the two groups, and this is going to be the phase of the ruling in Egypt for the next years. So these expectations that we see op eds here and there asking for passage from military to civilian is going to happen. There is no problem at all. The military are not interested in governing Egypt on a day to day basis. That is, in fact, a non-starter. They are not interested at all.

They are interested in the authority and the power which they have held for the past six decades. All the presidents so far came from between them, many prime ministers, ministers, heads of organizations.

The economy, the army controls an economy which amounts to about 30-40 percent of the economy of Egypt is a black economy, is a black box without any scrutiny or control of anybody. The budget: It is out of scrutiny of the people's assembly, and they have said clearly they are going to maintain that in the future.

So the couple of the alliance of military and Islamists are going to take over Egypt. Though it may be rocky over the time, maybe the balance of power is not clear, today they both have interest in working together in governing Egypt for the next few years, but you don't know. We don't know.

In fact, one prediction is that the Islamists will control the street and may feel strong enough at one point to subdue the army, which is the same situation that happened in Iran, in fact, that you subdue the army by doing some kind of cleansing, ideological or physical cleaning to have an army under the arms of the Islamists.

So we are entering a very rocky period. It is not a rocky transition toward democracy like some people would like to imagine or think. It is a rocky downhill process which is not at all encouraging. I think we need to be prepared for what is going on and do not applaud all the appearances of democracy in Egypt, which takes me -- I mean, there are so many things about why is alliance between the two and what the army -- the staff has been doing over the past few months, but for the sake of time, I will skip that. I may come back to it if you have any questions.

The second mirage is, in fact, the idea that the Islamists parties are just like any other religious parties. You know, why not the Christian parties, and I quote here Secretary of State Hilary Clinton which, when she spoke at the National Democratic Institute's 2011 Democracy Alliance dinner just November 7th.

It is a long quote. I am going to just say she said, "There are plenty of political parties with religious affiliations, Hindu, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, that respect the rules of democracy." The suggestion -- I would very respectfully but strongly disagree with that statement. If you take the Christian parties in the world -- you know, take Germany's Christian Democratic party, and try to think for a second it has anything to do with a party like the Brotherhood. It is outrageous, in fact.

The history, the movement of Christian parties started early, nineteenth century. If you look at the history, the evolution, what they stand for, their current agenda, and you compare that with any Islamist party, it is like pretending that sulfuric acid and water are equal, because both of them fluids. It is day and night. The Islamist parties are followers of totalitarian ideology. In fact, it is worse than the other totalitarian ideologies the world knew during the 20th century, because they pretend to speak in the name of God.

So the world needs to be aware that what is happening there. It is not democracy. The pretention that these parties will become democratic -- I mean, we hear some amazing things like, you know, mainstream Islamists are moderate Islamists. It is like talking about a mainstream Nazi Party or a moderate fascist party. The contradiction of terms there are amazing.

Then the Copts: Where do the Copts fit in? The whole situation is going into, if it is not a theocratic -- a military theocratic state, it is a semi-theocratic state, everybody.

You know, what is being called sometimes Tahrir II, which is the demonstrations that happened in the Tahrir over the week from the 19th to the 24th-25th of November was preceded by enormous demonstration by Islamists on Friday, the 18th. For what? For one word. You know, people have been working on a kind of a constitutional principles document for the past six or seven months.

It has many things, sometimes mostly contradictory facts, but anyway, at one point, one phrase or sentence to describe the future state it was saying that it is a civilian state. Civilian? It is to avoid talking about secular. Not only that, but it means non-theological -- non-theocratic rather, non-theocratic and non-military.

With these two meanings in mind, in fact, in the same document there is also the stipulation which has been in the past the old defunct constitution about Islam being the religion of the state, and principles of sharia being the main source of legislation. So that is already in there.

Yet the Islamists started talking about the word or the expression civilian might be construed, as the lords would like to say, into the possibility of becoming a secular state, and they were violently demonstrating in the streets by hundreds and thousands of them, of course.

By the evening of the date, the commission which is a governmental commission deleted that single word or description from the committee and caved in completely. Of course, the next few days, the docile government turned into a lion against the revolutionaries, which Dina has described before.

Where do the Copts fall into that? The Copts are -- apart from their systematic persecution, in fact, it is systemic also, and it is going to be more so when they are treated as dhimmis in an Islamic state, and a taste of that has been given to them again and again over the past six months, not only by the street, by the parties, by the Islamists, by the military council itself in the way it treated them and, in fact, what happened? A big massacre of Maspero on October 9th was made to give them a harsh lesson.

In fact, when the military took over from Mubarak on February 10th or 11th, they committed not to shoot at citizens never, ever. They largely kept that until the 9th of October, the first time the army shoots and crushes people, and these were the Christians, the Coptic Christians. That happened again in the November 25 story there.

I will jump straight to the recommendations, and I have six of them. One is the constitution. There must be an assistance by the international community about the inclusion of the adherence and -- full adherence and acceptance of human rights norms upheld in the foundational part of the new constitution.

The world needs -- At this stage, there must be a third alternative, because you know, you ask pragmatic governments. You have the army on the one hand, the Islamists. Which one? We should not be stuck with one or the other. The world must be able to choose to encourage, for the sake of Egypt, for the sake of the world, for the sake of the security of the area, to encourage the liberal secularist forces in Egypt which do include the Copts. Copts are part of that movement.

There hasn't been enough -- In fact, with so much open doors and channels and discussion, talks between western countries, especially the U.S. administration and the Islamists, has been very, very modest effort to engage with the liberal secularist movements there.

Third recommendation is implementation of justice. It has been very slow, the implementation of justice in Egypt. We encourage the authorities there to take it more seriously, the massacre of Maspero, for example.

The majority of those arrested are Copts. The perpetrators are the army, the other thugs in the street which are mobilized by the secret police, and so on. But yet the only people in jail are 28 Copts plus a few Muslim activists who have been bravely supporting the cause of the Copts.

We would like to request the U.S. government to create kind of a black list to ban certain officials who might be identified by victims from entering the United States. This is not difficult. There are usually enough evidence against these people. They can be given the right to defend themselves, if that is required to be fair, but at least that is the least of things to be done so that you don't kill somebody, and the next day you get a visa to the streets in Europe.

The fourth point is about foreign aid. Now I am delighted to hear again and again the idea of the linkage of aid to performance of human rights. In fact, it is not only the United States. This applies to the rest of the world.

I was amazed to discover a couple of weeks ago that the G8 in its meeting in France in May has started working on a package of aid for the Arab Spring countries, and they gave an ex-prime minister of France the duty of investigating the subject.

He presented his report at the G20 meeting in France, too, just two weeks ago during which he is talking about allocating about \$20 billion or \$50 billion to Egypt over the next three years. Not only that, he makes an astounding statement, not only that people don't want or hesitate to link aid to any constraints. He makes the commitment to the opposite. He says, obviously, there shouldn't be through that partnership any attempt of political tutelage over the aid receiving countries which would be doomed to fail. I found that flabbergasting.

Mr. PITTS. Could you conclude, sir?

Mr. GUINDY. The next point is the special envoy. The H.R. 440 has been adopted, and we strongly recommend that 1245 be adopted, too.

The last one is the U.S. and international community must stop appeasing Islamists and instead hold them accountable when they abuse human rights.

Once again, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and I repeat, it is in the interest in Egypt and the world that Egypt be guided properly in the right direction in the next year. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Guindy follows:]

**Adel F. Guindy**  
**President of the Board, Coptic Solidarity**  
**Testimony Before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**  
***“Under Threat: The Worsening Plight of Egypt's Coptic Christians”***  
**December 7, 2011**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for conducting this important hearing entitled *Under Threat: The Worsening Plight of Egypt's Coptic Christians*. I am honored to be here today, and I would like to request that my entire written statement be made part of the Record, however I will highlight some of the key points and would be happy to answer questions.

In keeping with the “seasonal” depictions of the situation in Egypt, such as “spring of this” or “winter of that,” I would venture to say that Egypt, indeed the region, is entering - at least for the short and medium term - a harsh summer with little to be seen in its arid deserts beyond thirst, agony and mirage. In my testimony, I will touch more on the general political situation in Egypt and its projected evolution, because it is only by understanding the overall picture, that we can fully understand the implications and consequences for the Copts.

### **TAHRIR-II**

In order to better understand the admittedly confusing situation, let me begin with what happened during Tahrir-II. On Friday November 18, 2011, hundreds of thousands of Islamists -mainly Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists - set out to protest the inclusion of the term “civilian” to describe the future state. This term was mentioned in a document on constitutional principles that has been in the works for months. The term “civilian” is generally understood to mean “non-religious and non-military,” but Islamists loathed the possibility that it might be understood to mean “secular.” This is despite the fact that the text of Article II of the old Constitution, in which Islam is the religion of State and the principles of Sharia the main source of legislation, was still upheld by the document. This same new document gave the Army a special, almost supra-state, status. Just hours after the November 18 march, the government caved to pressure and removed the contested term.

The next day, the docile government turned into a lion, when a sit-in by some 150 protesters from the families of the injured revolutionaries demanding treatment by the government, was brutally disbanded by the anti-riot forces. Furious at the attack and more so at the apparent complicity between the Military and Islamists, crowds poured into Tahrir Square. As the oppression increased, the crowds became even more determined and aggressive, trying to attack and burn the Ministry of

Interior building. The majority of the anti-government slogans were directed at the SCAF and its Chief, al-Moushir (Field Marshal) Tantawi, calling for his ouster and trial. At least 38 people were killed and thousands wounded.

## **THE ORIGINAL SIN – THE MILITARY’S OBSESSION WITH POWER**

To try and understand the full picture, we need to go back to what the Military did when they took over governing Egypt last February. It was a manifestation of what I like to call the even-older “Original Sin” that bred what we are in today and will continue to do unless redeemed – that “original sin” is the Military’s attachment to power since 1952. Ever since that date, they have enjoyed unparalleled power; apart from a unique position of behind-the-scenes authority, all the presidents, many prime-ministers, ministers, governors and heads of public organizations have come from their ranks. Coupled with that are the huge financial and economic interests (estimated by some to reach 30-40% of Egypt’s economy) with which the military is involved. The Army’s budget is beyond any scrutiny and the Army’s ranks can be only judged before military tribunals.

The stakes for the Military are high and however they may deny it, numerous acts show their intention to hold on to that unique position. For the Military, it is almost unavoidable that they enter into alliance with the Islamists while at the same time – in a twisted form of machination - use them to scare Egypt’s citizens, and the World, to justify the need for the Military’s very strong role in maintaining peace and stability. Whether or not SCAF or other military lean towards the Brotherhood is not important, but the issue of the alliance is what is important.

It is fair to claim that both the Military and the Islamists have a strategic interest in working together. Why is that? The generals know that there are strategic imperatives for the U.S., whatever the U.S. Administration’s political party:

- Maintain U.S. interests in Egypt; after all huge sums have been invested there. By one account, what Egypt has received since the Camp David agreements is about the same as the entire Marshall Plan (both in current dollars) devoted to rebuild several western European countries after WW-II (it appears to roughly be about 85 billion);
- Maintain the security of Israel and the peace treaty;
- Not allow a military regime to rule in Egypt – at least in appearance.

The Generals are also aware and are proponents of a fourth strategic element, specific to the current Administration, which is to operate with a policy of open arms towards Islamist parties, as long as those parties come to power through the “ballot box.” I will touch on this point a bit later in my testimony.

The Generals are certainly not interested in directly “governing” Egypt. A country with so many chronic problems, not to mention the chaos created after January and the new rebelliousness of the people, makes it more of a liability for them to be involved in the country’s day-to-day governing. They are, however, intent on maintaining the power and authority the Army has enjoyed over the past six decades.

On the other hand, while the Brotherhood is known to have reassured the U.S. in contacts over the past few years of its intentions regarding the above-mentioned American policy imperatives, it knows well that an alliance with the military is useful, at least in the short term.

In order to further improve their hand, the Military has reverted to the usual scare tactics, in which Mubarak had excelled for decades. They raised the possibility of some truly disturbing situations in which only the Military can be trusted to maintain peace and stability, such as:

- Islamists cannot be trusted – we must ask, when was the last time they upheld their promises for transparency, freedom, and democracy;
- An Islamist rule in Egypt will only represent strategic depth to Hamas. Any planned, or even unplanned, action by a Hamas zealot could drag Egypt into war with Israel, unless the Army is there to calm things;
- An uncontrolled Islamist regime could lead to hazardous and adventurous regional activities (remember Iran);
- Radicalization as a means to survive by diverting the people’s attention, especially if it fails internally to resolve daily-life problems. As a hint for future repetitions, please note the recent case from Friday November 25, 2011, when the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar mosque lead thousands from Hamas, the Brotherhood, Jamaa Islameya and Azhar scholars in a big rally “in support of Al-Aqsa Mosque” and denouncing Israeli “attempts at Judaization of Jerusalem.” (Note that there was nothing particular in the news that warranted such a rally).

And if these were not enough reasons to appreciate the need for the Army to reign in the unbridled Islamists, the Military threw in some extra factors to emphasize the above-mentioned “potential” risks with real, actual ones. The Military

- Released from prison thousands of Islamists, including the killers of Sadat, and turned them into instant heroes on state-owned TV stations;
- Allowed thousands of Jihadists, who had lived in exile for years, to enter Egypt;
- Encouraged the most radical factions of Salafists (literally “ancestral;” an offshoot of Wahabis) to surface and even dominate the scene;
- Even though the existing laws prohibit the creation of political parties based on religion or race, no less than 15 out of 31 newly created parties after January 25, 2011, are Islamist in ideology;

- Adopted a roadmap for political transition that was devised by, and in the interest of, the Muslim Brotherhood. For example, it was the request of the revolutionaries and many intellectuals to start with working on a Constitution, as a consensual charter taking into account the interests of all the nation's segments. Instead, the Military started with the parliamentary elections, whose partisan winners – widely expected to be the Islamists – would monopolize writing the Constitution to their own advantage;
- Implicitly encouraged terror campaigns against the Copts and even took part in them directly, such as in the October Maspero massacre;
- Raised anti-Americanism and the xenophobic tone, blaming foreigners of all kinds of wrongdoings.

Meanwhile, the Military also sought by all means to strangle the few active NGOs by accusing them of receiving “illegal” funds from abroad, particularly from the U.S. and the E.U., at a time where Islamists are reported to have received over a billion pounds from some Gulf countries over a few months.

In sum:

With the “Original Sin” of the Military’s attachment to power over six decades fully in action, it is unimaginable that the Army in Egypt will relinquish willingly the powers it wields and turn into simply another army which receives orders from civilians. It is worth noting that on February 8, 2011, just before toppling Mubarak, General Omar Soliman, for years in charge of the Intelligence Services, and his newly appointed Vice President, told the various political forces: “either dialogue, or face a coup d’état.” That intriguing expression may hold a key to better understanding the “Original Sin.” The Military would stop short of nothing in order to maintain their special status.

It is unimaginable that the Brotherhood, and other Islamists, will miss this golden opportunity to take over Egypt at such a time when they are finally nearing triumph in their global campaign, spearheaded from Qatar (the de facto regional headquarters of the Brotherhood, where its propaganda arm – al-Jazeera TV – is based) across the Sunni Near East and North Africa. The other forces, be it the original revolutionaries, the Copts, liberal and secular Muslims, or simply average people who are wary of an Islamist or a military rule, are quite fragmented.

## **POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS**

This Tahrir-II episode of the revolution shows that the Egyptian people are starting to realize the formidable challenge ahead with the Military-Islamist alliance. If a large portion of the population is willing to accept an Islamist regime (for reasons outside the scope of this testimony) the majority are increasingly loath to swallow the alliance. That’s the crux of the matter, and the outcome of this bras-de-fer will influence the future of Egypt, and the region, for years.

Egypt's dilemma now is that the options appear rather bleak.

- A Military-Islamist ruling alliance, is the most probable outcome with a “civilian” façade after “democratic” elections, thus presenting a more appealing face to the U.S. and the West;
- A power struggle, in the short term, in which the Islamists (who dominate the “street”) benefit from the latest gaffes by the Military, leading to a purely “civilian” Islamist regime with the West indifferent, as long as the ruler remains allegedly “civilian.” In this scenario, the army might eventually take a subdued role – but after ideological (and physical) “cleansing” (à la Iran);
- An extended power struggle, with the possible entry into a cycle of coup d'états.

## **ISLAMIST AND CHRISTIAN POLITICAL PARTIES**

Mr. Chairman, at this point, I would like to focus on the West's seeming obsession with the idea that democracy equals a “ballot box,” irrespective of whether the foundations and the environment of democracy are in place.

I would like simply to comment on one statement made by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in her Keynote Address at the National Democratic Institute's 2011 Democracy Awards Dinner on November 7 of this year. After explaining how the U.S. works with many different governments, she asked the question, “How will America respond if and when democracy brings to power people and parties we disagree with?” and then she answered,

“We hear these questions most often when it comes to Islamist religious parties. Now, of course, I hasten to add that not all Islamists are alike. Turkey and Iran are both governed by parties with religious roots, but their models and behavior are radically different. There are plenty of political parties with religious affiliations—Hindu, Christian, Jewish, Muslim—that respect the rules of democratic politics ...”

I respectfully disagree with the Secretary. Any objective study on the history and evolution of the Christian parties (such as Germany's Christian Democratic Party, headed by Angela Merkel) in Europe and some other parts of the world, shows clearly that their founding principles revolve around a commitment to particular values such as human dignity, justice, equality, social responsibility and effective citizenship, thus putting these parties on the conservative part of political spectrum. However, none of these Christian political parties advocate the establishment of a local or international “Christian State or Caliphate.” In looking at several mainstream “Christian” parties in Europe and South America, none of them demanded that “Christian Sharia” be the source of the country's Constitution. None

of them sanction violence to advance their goals, speak in the name of God, adorn their programs with biblical verses, or a chain of referrals or edicts. None of them set women lower than men, discriminate between citizens based on belief, or demand to impose a Jizyah on non-Christian citizens. None of them use logos of a bible embraced by two crossing swords. None would interfere in what people eat or drink or how they dress. None would enforce a penal code where the condemned may be whipped, lapidated or have their limbs amputated.

Here is but one, out of many, recent illustrations which give a more accurate reflection of who the Islamists really are. On the Friday after the fall of Mubarak, Youssef El Qaradawi, the Qatar-based prominent Egyptian Islamic preacher and spiritual leader of the Brotherhood, descended on Tahrir Square in a Khomeini-like show of force, to preach to the victorious believers. To his credit, he appeared conciliatory towards the Copts, trying to calm their anxieties. But that was in February. On his November 18, 2011, Friday address, he, according to CNN Arabic, urged Egyptian electors not to "vouch for a secularist, an agnostic, or those who don't accept Allah as their God, Islam as their religion and Mohamed as their prophet." So much for democracy, liberty, and basic freedoms.

Therefore, seeing similarity between Islamist and Christian political parties is like seeing that sulfuric acid and water are similar since both are "liquids." When will we accept that Islamist parties are not just "religious," but are propagators of the totalitarian ideology of Islamism? Islamist parties are just like other deadly totalitarianisms of the 20th Century, with one difference -- they pretend to be the representatives of God on earth.

This is not a call for mobilizing armies to fight Islamist parties whenever they take over. But it is a reminder that we need to be vigilant when these parties take over. At the very least, the international community must hold them fully accountable to fundamental principles of human rights which are universal, and to take them to task when they fail to respect those rights. This is not out of a utopian, altruistic view, but from down-to-earth sense of preservation of the basics of civilization.

## **THE COPTS: SIMPLY COLLATERAL DAMAGE?**

This brings me to the question: Where are the Copts in all this?

The following may be telling.

On October 24, 2011, the Coptic Pope Shenouda III "met with" (according to the local media) or was "summoned by" (according to sources close to him) Egypt's ruling military council for an urgent meeting at the Ministry of Defense. The ailing Patriarch, age 88, whose fortieth anniversary in office was celebrated November 14, 2011, was told to come alone. At the meeting, the Pope was berated by the top three generals. After the meeting, the Pope would not say much but the official declaration

emphasized “putting Egypt’s interest above all.” I, like many Copts, thought it was likely he had been bullied by the generals. If the Generals truly want to quiet the situation, why don’t they address and try to resolve Coptic grievances?

Copts, as we all know, have been subjected to systemic discrimination for years, often accompanied by sectarian attacks. The general reaction pattern was to swallow their pain and humiliation, groan in private, take refuge in prayer, and depend on the church’s clergy to beg the authorities on their behalf.

The October 9, 2011, Maspero massacre, which will be covered in more detail by another colleague, claimed 27 deaths and 300 injured. Despite overwhelming evidence, the Military continues to deny any responsibility for the violence and in a press conference on October 12, 2011 – just three days after the massacre - even praised the performance of its soldiers as well as the state media’s performance. Of course they never regretted, let alone apologized for, the heinous act. In fact, 28 Copts are still imprisoned and are “under investigation,” for these attacks, which amounts to nothing less than keeping them as hostages as a means of future blackmail.

Since its February takeover, the Army vowed never to shoot at citizens. It largely has kept to its promise, (up until the events of November 19-22, 2011, referred to above), despite numerous cases when huge demonstrations went out of control, or even when mobs cut roads, attacked public buildings, churches, or other Christian-owned properties. So, the Maspero massacre can only be interpreted as an escalation to intimidate further Coptic protest.

This brings us back to the Generals’ hurried meeting with the Coptic Pope. They were clearly trying to achieve three objectives.

- First, by dealing directly—and only—with him, the Military gives the Copts a taste of their status in an Islamic state where they will be treated as a minority religious community (“*dhimmi*”) rather than as a large portion of Egyptian citizens with a grievance.
- Second, that the Copts’ religious “chief” will be held responsible for the acts of his people and hence is expected to control them, or else. By the same token, this is intended to intimidate the Copts (inside Egypt and in the Diaspora) since they do not want to place their elderly spiritual leader in danger.
- Third, the Copts should put “Egypt’s interest above all” by shutting up and not doing anything – however legitimate - that can be used as a rationale by Islamists to attack them.

However, and despite such singling out, Copts are aware that they are not only defending their own rights but also are participating in a battle, alongside secularist and liberal Muslims, to stop Egypt from “democratically” turning into an Iran-like or Taliban-like state. In fact, given the above-mentioned background, one could warn

the Copts, “Behind you is the Military; before you, the Islamists.” Thousands of Christians have fled the country since the revolution. Others are determined to remain in their ancestors’ homeland and to resist the advance of Islamists.

As for the international community’s attention to the issue, it is important to realize that the Copts may not be seen to represent much strategic importance. They have no oil, and don’t represent a security threat that would warrant appeasing them! Hence, apart from occasional sympathetic statements, the world is likely to turn a blind eye and consider the oppressed Copts as mere collateral damage.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Instead of supporting the military and/or embracing the Islamists, there must be an Alternative Way.

### **1. Constitution:**

We urge the U.S. Government and the international community to press Egypt to ensure that its commitments to international human rights norms are upheld in the foundational sections of the new Constitution and are not undermined by any subsequent articles or passages. It would be extremely dangerous if “democracy” is used as a pretext to impose stipulations that defy those international norms, such as imposing Taliban-like laws on all Egyptians.

### **2. NGOs:**

The international community must support the liberal and secular forces in Egypt. The NGOs and emerging political parties should be assisted through adequate training programs as well as through appropriate funding. In this regard, the Egyptian authorities must stop their tactic of choking NGOs operating with transparency, while turning a blind eye to massive amounts of money channeled from certain Gulf countries to Islamist and Salafist groups in Egypt.

### **3. Implementation of Justice:**

We strongly urge the U.S. Government to press the Egyptian authorities to prosecute perpetrators of violence before, during and after the uprisings and the historic events in Egypt this year, including the Maspero massacre and the excessive violence at Tahrir square during November. Further, the extensive contacts between the U.S. and Egyptian militaries should emphasize the importance of prosecution of military personnel involved in Maspero.

We also urge the U.S. Government to ban visas and travel to the U.S. for any government official involved in torture. While this may be difficult to

implement immediately, the U.S. could assist in setting up a mechanism that would allow for victims of violence to report the names of their torturers. With the proper instruments and processes in place to allow for confirmation that a government official is indeed involved in torture, the U.S. could easily implement a visa ban against these officials similar to that in the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

We strongly urge the Egyptian authorities to stop arresting both Christians and Muslims when Christians and their property are attacked and instead bring the real perpetrators to justice.

#### **4. Foreign Aid:**

While we welcome efforts to help Egypt in its current economic situation, we believe that unconditional aid would be a strategic error. Financial and military aid should be linked to Egypt's human rights record in terms of constitutional stipulations, laws and practices over the short and medium terms. We urge the U.S Government, European governments and others in the international community providing financial aid to Egypt to tie that aid to Egypt's upholding and protecting fundamental human rights norms now and in any new Constitution.

Please note that we believe all international aid should support democracy, freedom and fundamental human rights. For instance, the G-8 summit held in May 2011 in Deauville in France was marked by the "Deauville Partnership" with the people of North Africa. As a start, \$20 billion was pledged in support for Tunisian and Egyptian reforms after the Arab Spring.

Furthermore, France's ex-Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, was charged by the G8 Presidency to follow-up on the issue. In an article dated November 14, 2011, he reported that \$30 billion would be earmarked for Egypt alone over the period 2011-2013. However, he added an astonishing remark, which sounds like a guideline by the G8 leaders, "Obviously, there shouldn't be through the (Deauville) Partnership any attempt of political tutelage over the aid-receiving countries, which would be doomed to fail."

The simple question is why should the U.S. and the international community pour in such colossal sums without even seeking the least guarantee to respect the principles of human rights - especially towards minorities?

#### **5. Special Envoy:**

We support and strongly urge the passage of S. 1245, after the adoption of H.R. 440, which provides for the appointment of a Special Envoy for minorities in the Middle East. We also strongly urge the Administration to appoint someone to that position who is highly qualified and has the stature needed to ensure the issues related to minorities are included in the highest

level of the U.S. Government's policy and diplomacy, particularly during this historic transition in Egypt and other countries in the region.

- 6. The U.S. and international community must stop appeasing Islamists and instead hold them accountable** when they abuse human rights. This means to publicly and strongly condemn abuses, and not hesitate to impose sanctions when issues are not addressed or corrected.

Mr. Chairman, Egypt is at crucial crossroads. The U.S. needs to lead the international community in helping Egypt go in the right direction. It is in Egypt's own, and everybody else's strategic interest.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide this testimony to this distinguished Commission. Again, I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Mr. PITTS. The chair thanks the gentleman, and would ask the witnesses to confine their remarks to five minutes, and recognizes Ms. Farahat for five minutes.

## STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA FARAHAT

Ms. FARAHAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is an honor to be able to testify today in front of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission about the status and plight of Copts in Egypt. I am a Coptic classic liberal political activist. I am also a writer and researcher in Egypt. I just came to the U.S. last month.

I have been involved in the political process for over a decade, and I have addressed the protesters in Tahrir Square and also have been involved in Maspero protests.

To be able to discuss the plight of Copts and why they are persecuted in Egypt, I will have to ask the question, who are the current rulers of Egypt. Who are the Supreme Council of Armed Forces? What is their ideology, and are they secular autocrats like they like to give the impression to western governments or is it something else?

What I claim here, and these are all historic facts, is that the current military oligarchy originates from the Muslim Brotherhood organization. In 1952 the Free Officers perpetrated a coup d'etat against the Egyptian monarch, but the Free Officers were the branch of the military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood organization.

They only split after the death and the assassination of Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1949. Before that, they were members of the Muslim Brotherhood, including the first president of Egypt, the actual first president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser. He was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, and in 1944 he joined and swore allegiance to Hassan al-Banna on a gun and Koran. This is the founding father. This is according to Khaled Mohieddin, a fellow Free Officer and also previously a member of parliament in Egypt. This is according to his own biography.

These are the founding fathers. Almost 90 people that perpetrated the 1952 coup d'etat were members of the Muslim Brotherhood. This is the reality of the basis of the current ideological foundation of the Egyptian army and the regime and the oligarchy that has had control for over six decades, 60 years of this.

This is what we are having, and it was inevitable that sharia law becomes part of the constitution. In 1971 President Sadat introduced sharia law to the constitution, and now I think it qualifies to say that Egypt is a constitutional theocracy, and it is not a modern state.

The consequences were that Copts are no longer, according to Sharia law, identified or defined as citizens. I have an Egyptian passport, but I am not a citizen. The concept of citizenship is a western concept that does not apply to us in Egypt. I am a woman, and I am Copt. I am a fourth class citizen in Egypt.

The first class citizen in Egypt is a Sunni male, Muslim male. The second class is the Sunni female. The third class is the Coptic male, and the fourth class is a Coptic female. That is why none of the people that committed crimes -- None of the criminals that committed crimes against Copts were prosecuted in any way, because it is against Sharia law -- and that is a fact; it is not an opinion -- to persecute someone for -- a Muslim for killing, raping, torturing or vandalizing the property of a non-Muslim or a dhimmi.

So this is our legal status, and this has been happening under the Mubarak so called moderate regime, an ally of the west, and it is now happening now. It was only

inevitable that they take the radicalism a step farther and start killing Copts in the street in front of TV cameras with live ammunition, and running them over with armored military vehicles they probably got from the United States of America.

One of my friends was in the protest. I was supposed to go there on the 9th with him and with other people. What happened was my friend was there, Michael Mosad with his fiancée, Vivian, and they were walking, and he felt when he started -- when the army started attacking Maspero and they saw them screaming Allahu Akhbar like they are going on an Islamic fitna and an invasion, they got scared, and they decided to leave, but he called his family, and he told them I am going to die tonight, and I want to say goodbye, because I am going to get killed tonight. That is what happened to my friend.

He got on the pavement, and then they turned around to leave, but what happened was the armored vehicle got on the pavement to intentionally run him over, and they did run him over and almost severed his legs from his body and crushed his skull. As Michael was lying there, breathless and dying, his fiancée kept screaming for help, asking someone to come and help him, what happened was the military started beating him up. They kept beating up his motionless body and beating her up and spitting on her and calling her an infidel and so much worse.

At the same time, while this was happening, I was watching Egyptian television where a military official would say -- would talk about the Copts, and he would say the Christian sons of dogs. We are, according to the state, the Christian sons of dogs. That is how the state defines us, and this is the current ally of the United States of America. So that is the situation, and that is what happened in Maspero.

Bothaina Kamel, a moderate Muslim and secular Muslim TV personality and journalist in Egypt, said that she was in Maspero, and I also know her. She was there, and as she got terrified of the attacks by the military, she went to hide inside the building of Al-Hurra TV channel. What happened was she said the military started attacking the building while screaming Allahu Akhbar, dragging Christians inside the building and beating them and torturing them.

Then when she said the screams stopped and we felt we were safe to get out of the building, she said we were walking in blood of Copts, and to get out of the building alive or safe you had to say I am a Muslim who believes in one Allah. That was a jihadist attack. This looks like a jihadist attack. It doesn't look like military trying to protect or stabilize a situation. That was religiously inspired.

After that, also Nawara Negm -- she is a Muslim political activist and also a TV personality. She stated that she saw the military checking the hands of Copts for crosses before attacking and torturing them in the street. They kept around checking the hands of protesters, because most Copts put crosses on their hands, and there are people in this room that are Copts in this room with crosses in their hands who wouldn't have passed this test of the military. It was something that was also happening.

This was the situation at Maspero, and it was even so much worse. If I had more time, I could even write a book from the amount of testimonies and my personal friends and my losses, my personal loss that day.

I would like to add that right now currently the Egyptian regime, military regime, is transforming into a Pakistani model. We are now approaching another Pakistan in Egypt. It is going to be inevitable unless there are serious measures taken to dismantle the current status quo.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar are now funding Salafi jihadists and the Muslim Brotherhood, and the U.S. is now currently funding the military that has evidently funded the Muslim Brotherhood in the past elections, as former Ambassador Marc Ginsberg states in his article last month. He confirms that the military is funding Salafi jihadists, the Al Qaeda style jihadists, and the Muslim Brotherhood, obviously, from money that might have come from the USA. Also, they have brokered a deal with Salafi jihadists.

Now to force the west, the equation is they want to force the western so called allies to choose either between the military dictatorship or between the Islamists. That is the equation, although that is not the reality of things. Tahrir Square was filled with moderates and was filled with secular Muslims. There are 6 million Suffis that are formerly cooperating with the Copts that could be a better alternative instead of this vicious equation.

Right now, the equation is Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafi jihadists, Egyptian military and the U.S. on one side, and now the Copts and seculars, moderate forces, moderate Muslims are on the other. I think the U.S. has always been our ally, and this is not part of the equation that they should be.

When President Bush's administration suggested that they might condition aid, our lives became immediately better in Egypt. It was like someone clicked on a button, and the world looked totally and entirely and completely different. What happened was Mubarak had to leverage, because that is how America gets leveraged, and by giving us more freedom.

What we did was we started co-founding secular political parties that called for -- that were against Islamic imperialism and against theocracy and pro free market and human rights. In this atmosphere we were able to work, because that is how countries reform to better ideas and modern ideas.

When secular Muslims and moderate Muslims and Copts are getting death threats, how are we going to spread our ideas? Not everyone can tolerate getting messages like the messages and the death threats I used to get. That is not an atmosphere that is open to spread ideas of reform and modernity.

So that is the current situation now. What we would like to ask -- sorry. My conclusion of this is America should look at the plight of Copts as a national security issue for America. It is not only a humanitarian crisis, but these are the true allies of the United States and true believers of the ideas and the beautiful ideas that this country stands for. These are the true allies.

In conclusion, three things must happen in order the Coptic Christians and moderate Muslims to stand a chance of seeing their present human rights situation in Egypt improve significantly.

First, the United States should cease all American aid to Egypt until there is verifiable evidence that the Egyptian Government is allowing non-Muslim religious minorities in Egypt to exercise the freedom of speech and religion without fear of intimidation.

Second, President Obama's administration should explain and possibly reevaluate its vetting process of foreign national employees or advisors of American embassies, particular in Egypt where Egyptian nationals loyal to the regime have used their embassy positions to make it hard for Copts to apply for religious asylum requests to the United

States from the American Embassy in Cairo, out of fear of being targeted by Egyptian state security.

Third and finally, the United States must avoid legitimizing joint effort by the Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's ruling military regime to use blasphemy law against non-Muslim minorities in Egypt and, therefore, should decline to meet with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the OIC, to discuss any agenda to apply blasphemy laws globally under the pretext of confronting Islamophobia.

Mr. PITTS. The chair thanks the gentlelady and now recognizes Mr. Ibrahim for five minutes.

[The statement of Ms. Farahat follows:]

CYNTHIA FARAHAT

**Testimony before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**  
***“Under Threat: The Worsening Plight of Egypt’s Coptic Christians”***  
**December 7, 2011**

Thank you Chairman Wolf and Chairman McGovern for organizing this important hearing. I am very pleased to have the honor of testifying in front of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission today about the current status of Copts in Egypt.

I am an activist and writer in Egypt, and have been involved in the political process for nearly a decade. I am a Copt. I addressed the crowd at last year’s protests in Cairo’s Tahrir Square and have participated in Coptic demonstrations in Maspero.

With my colleagues I helped found two political parties: first, the Masr El-Om (Mother Egypt) Party in 2004, and then the Liberal Egyptian Party in 2006. Both were dedicated to the values of secularism, human rights, capitalism, the rule of law, and rejection of pan-Arabism and Islamic imperialism. This platform was controversial with the Mubarek regime for many reasons, but the most important was the conscious rejection of the application of Islamic law and jurisprudence, *shariah* and *fiqh*, in the state’s affairs. The Liberal Egyptian Party was rebuffed by the regime and rejected as a legal entity twice in court, putting these important ideas outside legal discourse in the country. As a consequence of my activism, I have been living in fear and under constant threat and harassment, from the Mubarek regime and its subsequent military junta and from Salafist jihadists who were as threatened by classical liberalism and freedom as the rulers themselves.

The ideas I dedicated my life to promoting are articulated best in America’s founding documents, in the writings of Thomas Jefferson, and in the Enlightenment works that, in turn, inspired them. The regime’s opposition to these concepts—summed up in a word, *liberty*—also unlocks the reasons for the persecution of Copts.

The large and educated minority of Copts in Egypt is the biggest obstacle for Islamists to turn Egypt into another Iran or another Saudi Arabia. Through propaganda and acts of state violence the governing body of Egypt, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), has attempted to manufacture<sup>1</sup> a violent conflict between Coptic Christians and Muslims. With the full power of the state, media and the military at their disposal, however, any such “civil war” will be one-sided tragedy; it will be a massacre of Christians at the hands of the state, its vast paid militia and Salafis sympathetic to the cause.

At present, SCAF has imprisoned 12,000 civilians in military court for political crimes. Meanwhile, the regime has freed of hundreds of convicted terrorists from prison,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.danielpipes.org/9388/copts-pay-the-price>

like Col. Aboud al-Zomor,<sup>2</sup> the mastermind behind the Sadat assassination, and Badr Makhoul,<sup>3</sup> the Emir of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya of Qena that was convicted with murdering tourists in a 1993 terrorist attack. This double standard sends a message that advocating for freedom and equality for Copts and other minorities in Egypt will have severe consequences.

## MASPERO & THE WAR ON THE COPTS

In contrast to the terrorists released, among those imprisoned were liberal dissidents like Maikel Nabil Sanad, a Coptic blogger and political activist, and Alaa Abdel-Fattah, a secular Muslim pro-freedom blogger who was previously imprisoned by Mubarak's regime in 2006. He has been our ally for years, and has written hundreds of posts on his blog to support freedom of speech and religion for Copts and Bahai's.

As a secular Muslim, Abdel-Fattah was a more serious target of the regime. Under the dictates of *shariah*, he is considered a traitor and apostate from Islam, and the appropriate punishment is death. Abdel-Fattah was at the protests in Maspero on behalf of equality for Copts. Outrageously, he might be facing murder and terrorism charges—as the regime is trying to frame the massacre of dozens of Copts in Maspero on him.

Michael Mosad was, like myself, a liberal Coptic political and human rights activist. I knew him well. He was one of the people killed by the Egyptian military at Maspero on 9 October 2011. He was at the protest with his fiancé, Vivian, and the newly engaged couple was terrified. Suddenly, she said she did not feel Michael's hand in hers. She then saw him caught in the wheels of a military vehicle that drove onto the pavement and ran him over. His skull was fractured and his legs were nearly severed from his body. As she sat next to him crying and calling for help, soldiers gathered around Michael, brutally beating and kicking his motionless body. Vivian threw her body over his to protect him. She begged them to stop, but military officers beat and cursed her; they called her an infidel, "Christian sons of dogs," and worse.

Nawar Negm, a Muslim political activist who was in the protest to support Copts said the peaceful protestors were being randomly shot at, and that organized mobs in civilian clothes started attacking Christians.<sup>4</sup> The mobs were backed by soldiers whom she saw checking the hands of protestors for crosses before brutally beating them, as many Egyptian Christians tattoo crosses on their hands.

Another Muslim photographer, Ali Khalid, who was at the site and was shot in the face said, "I have seen death with my own eyes, at the hands of the people who claim to be the protectors of the country."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/7445/Egypt/Politics-About-and-Tarek-ElZomor-amongst-released-prisoners.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism\\_in\\_Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism_in_Egypt)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zo51tpAWg>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWuC3N9Vpvg>

Bothayna Kamel, another courageous Muslim woman, and a prominent TV presenter and journalist in Egypt who was among the protestors, witnessed the horror herself. She said:

As the attack on the protest started I went to hide with a priest and Muslim and Christian protestors inside a nearby building where Al-Hurra TV station's office is located. We hid inside the office, and I could hear the police and army soldiers attacking the building as they were screaming 'Allahu Akbar' and dragging protestors inside the building. Don't tell me these were Islamic organizations or Salafis; the military and police have the same bigoted minds. After they left the building and we felt it was safe to leave the office, we saw the blood of protestors who were beaten by soldiers screaming 'Allahu Akbar,' covering the floors and stairs of the building. To get out of the building safe, you had to tell the police and the army, 'I'm a Muslim who believes in one God'—otherwise they attack you.<sup>6</sup>

This was happening as the military police attacked the Jan25 television station and terrified the broadcaster, who screamed hysterically on air as they confiscated the video footage that was shot of the protests<sup>7</sup>. Minutes later, an extremely gruesome video<sup>8</sup> of murdered Copts in the entrance of Jan25 station emerged on YouTube. Some of the protestors were dead; others were dying.

Even after the killings, the SCAF and its media machine was intent on flaring tensions. That evening, the regime's state-run television incited Muslims to converge on Maspero and 'defend' the Egyptian army against the gathering of unarmed Christians: "The Egyptian army is under attack from Coptic protestors, and we urge the honorable citizens to go to Maspero and aid the army."<sup>9</sup>

In order to justify their war crime against the Copts, Egyptian officials later claimed<sup>10</sup> to CNN that Copts killed 12 army troops. This propaganda was also repeated by official state TV as the army was massacring Christians in the street. Not only didn't the army not convict the criminals responsible for the murder and torture of Copts at Maspero, the Egyptian army held a press conference claiming their soldiers were not armed, and that the armored vehicle used to crush Copts beneath its treads was stolen by a protestor. In other words, the regime's spin amounted to a theory in which Coptic protestors stole an armored vehicle, ran themselves over, and shot themselves. I'm sure the regime would also give credence to the farcical possibly floated by the Al-Fagr newspaper, blaming the massacre on Israelis.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sbo-lhyxODE>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvPWB-ThuHl>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41PzqZ49kbE>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7m08JJdxao>

<sup>10</sup> [http://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/09/world/meast/egypt-protest-clashes/index.html?hpt=hp\\_t2](http://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/09/world/meast/egypt-protest-clashes/index.html?hpt=hp_t2)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.elfagr.org/Detail.aspx?nwsId=68173&secid=1&vid=2>

The Coptic Christians at Maspero were killed with live ammunition, and with weapons the military probably acquired through its \$1.3 billion in annual military aid from the United States. A massive shipment of 21 tons of tear gas was just sent to Egypt from the US before the elections. These weapons are not used by the military against militant Islamists who are trying to subvert and destroy our country, institute *shariah* law, and inflame the broader Middle East; these weapons are used against the allies of the United States of America, the Copts and the secular moderate Muslims.

Like the regime's hostility toward classical liberalism, the persecution of Coptic Christians in Egypt is deeply embedded in the ideological foundation of the current military oligarchy, which shares history, doctrine and personalities with the Muslim Brotherhood. While the Muslim Brotherhood does not formally or organizationally rule Egypt, its ideas have ideologically controlled the country for nearly sixty years since the overthrow of the monarchy by the July 1952 *coup d'état* (euphemized as the "July Revolution").

The fear of Islamists seizing power in Egypt and the situation worsening for Copts and the whole region, assumes that the Muslim Brotherhood does not already wield power yet may be able to hijack the current political unrest. In fact, this situation already exists; both the Mubarak regime and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) have subtly colluded with Islamists against Copts for decades. The real question, then, is not whether the Muslim Brotherhood and other militant Islamic groups will seize power but whether it will continue to hold it, either directly or by proxy.

In 2005, Mubarak allowed eighty-eight Muslim Brotherhood members into parliament as a useful tool for scaring the Western governments into thinking that democracy in Egypt would inevitably bring the Islamists to power.

#### THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD & THE EGYPTIAN REGIME<sup>12</sup>

Not only does the Egyptian constitution since 1971 make the *shariah* "the principal source of legislation,"<sup>13</sup> but the Free Officers (as the perpetrators of the 1952 putsch called themselves) were closely associated with both the Muslim Brotherhood's military wing or "secret apparatus" (*Nizam al-Khass*) and the Young Egypt Society (*Misr al-Fatat*), a nationalist-fascist militia established in 1929 by religiously-educated lawyer Ahmad Hussein. Both Egyptian presidents hailing from the Free Officers—Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956-1970) and Anwar Sadat (1970-1981)—received their early political schooling in the Young Egypt Society. The Young Egypt Society transformed into the National Islamic Party in 1940.

The Muslim Brotherhood spread its xenophobic and militant ideas through its magazine, *al-Sarkh'a* (Scream), which combined vicious attacks on Western democracy with praise for Fascism and Nazism and advocacy of the implementation of *shariah* rule. In a famous letter, Hussein invited Hitler "to convert to Islam." This outlook was shared

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<sup>12</sup> A more in-depth treatment of the relationship between the Egyptian military regime and the Muslim Brotherhood can be found in "The Arab Upheaval: Egypt's Islamist Shadow," *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2011. <http://www.meforum.org/2887/arab-upheaval-egypt-islamist>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.egypt.gov.eg/english/laws/constitution/chp\\_one/part\\_one.aspx](http://www.egypt.gov.eg/english/laws/constitution/chp_one/part_one.aspx)

by the Muslim Brotherhood's publication, *al-Nazir*, which referred to the Nazi tyrant as "Hajj Hitler." The Brotherhood's founder, Hassan al-Banna, was also an unabashed admirer of Hitler and Mussolini. As late as 1953, Anwar Sadat, whose pro-Nazi sympathies landed him in prison during World War II, wrote an "open letter"<sup>14</sup> to Hitler in a leading Egyptian newspaper. He applauded the genocidal tyrant, pronouncing that the leaders of the Axis Powers, "guided their peoples to unity, order, regeneration, power, and glory."

The Young Egypt Society's attempted assassination in 1937 of Egypt's democratically-elected liberal prime minister, Mustafa Nahhas, got the organization banned. In the 1940s, the officers took their radicalism a step further by collaborating with the Muslim Brotherhood's military wing. Some even joined the Brotherhood themselves; Nasser himself reportedly joined in 1944. In his memoirs, *Khaled Mohieddin*, a fellow Free Officer claimed that Banna had personally asked Nasser to join the Brotherhood, recounting how he and Nasser swore allegiance on a gun and a Qur'an.<sup>15</sup>

This background has continuing relevance because it forms the DNA of the regime that has ruled Egypt from 1952 to the present day; this military oligarchy has pursued means and goals that originated in the Muslim Brotherhood and the Young Egypt Society.

Moreover, the Young Egypt Society's Islamic-socialist and fascistic ideas are very much alive and well today. In 1990, the party was reestablished and granted a license to work as a legal entity by Mubarak's regime that has long been considered an ally of the west. This organization's approval by the state could not be in starker contrast to the rejection of my own Liberal Egyptian Party and its pro-freedom platform.

Following Hassan al-Banna's murder on February 12, 1949, by government agents in retaliation for the assassination of Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasha a few weeks earlier, the military and civilian wings of the Muslim Brotherhood split. Nasser proceeded to form the Free Officers movement, which mounted the 1952 coup. In the coming decades, the military regime and the Brotherhood would maintain a strenuous relationship interrupted by occasional outbursts of violence and terrorism—notably a 1954 attempt by the Brotherhood on Nasser's life—and repressive countermeasures by the regime including mass arrests and sporadic executions. But this should be understood not as a struggle between an autocratic, secular dictatorship and a would-be Islamist one but a struggle between two ideologically similar, if not identical, rival groups, hailing from the same source.

Indeed, the symbiotic relationship between the jihadist ideologues and the current regime continues, as it has from 1952. For example, the SCAF has revealed alarming extremism last summer when they publically consulted with Salafi jihadist Mohammed Hassan on how to deal with Copts instead of prosecuting their attackers.

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<sup>14</sup> Open letter from Anwar Sadat to Adolf Hitler, *al-Musawwar* (Cairo), Sept. 18, 1953.

<sup>15</sup> Khaled Mohieddin, *Memories of a Revolution* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1995), p. 45.

Hassan is known in Egypt for inciting *Mujahedeen* in Gaza to kill Israelis before killing themselves in suicide attacks.<sup>16</sup>

#### A WELL-EXECUTED DRAMA: USING THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AGAINST THE WEST

Given the shared history and entwined ideological affinities of the Muslim Brotherhood and the military regime that has ruled Egypt since 1952, it is hardly surprising that both Mubarak's regime and the SCAF would persecute the Coptic community with religiously motivated enthusiasm. The world often wonders why secularists, liberals and Copts are unorganized in Egypt; this situation exists because we—not the Brotherhood—were under daily threats and state security surveillance, and our parties banned from politics. Meanwhile, the regime cynically empowers the Brotherhood and other Salafi jihadist groups against which it can play out a drama meant to both oppress moderate and liberal opposition internally, and to frighten western governments from the prospect of a peaceful transition of power to a civilian government.

This well-executed drama is not new, and its contours should be familiar to all Americans in two different contexts: the United States' relationships with Pakistan and the Palestinian Authority. In both these cases, "moderate" leaders pose as allies, using the threat of a more radical replacement to blackmail the US for support and funding. In both countries too, there exists a seamless spectrum of potential blackmailers—from "radical" to "moderate" to "ally"—that is based on political expediency rather than on ideology. And the constant refrain is the demand for more American money and support.

Broadly speaking, the template with which these nations play the US is based on the decades-long myth of the secular Turkish military's ability to maintain constitutional, secular and pro-west governance in that country amid threats from Islamist groups. The failure of the Turkish military to stem the tide of the slowly encroaching Islamism of the AKP owes to the fact that, over time, the sympathies of the military will invariably shift; there is no guarantee subsequent generations will feel the same commitment to secular rule that their predecessors had. In Egypt, the situation is even worse. As we have seen, the military regime since 1952 is ideologically committed to oppose secularism and is bound by *shariah*, specifically as it relates to the treatment of minorities or *dhimmis*.

There is overwhelming evidence that Egypt's military is, at present, enacting this play at American expense. Last week, former Ambassador Marc Ginsburg reported that the SCAF has been directly funding the Muslim Brotherhood's efforts in the current parliamentary elections. As the regime receives billions in military aid and assistance from the United States, this collusion between so-called "allies" and the Muslim Brotherhood is a deeply cynical act, and one that betrays the true intentions of the regime. The thought that the empowerment of the Muslim Brotherhood is occurring, albeit indirectly, through the largess of the American taxpayer is shocking, and should cause a re-evaluation of these transfer payments.

As Ambassador Ginsburg also points out,

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1odMl2\\_wBBs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1odMl2_wBBs)

The military leadership has not only channeled financial support to the Islamists, it has also secretly collaborated with Salafists who have attacked Copts throughout Egypt in a show of support for more punitive discriminatory acts against Egypt's Coptic minority to curry further favor with Salafists."<sup>17</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, three things must happen in order for the Coptic Christians to stand a chance of seeing their present human rights situation in Egypt improve significantly:

First, the United States should cease all American aid to Egypt until there is demonstrable, verifiable evidence that the Egyptian government is allowing non-Muslim religious minorities in Egypt to exercise the freedom of speech and religion without fear of intimidation or reprisal.

Second, the Obama administration should explain and possibly reevaluate its vetting process for foreign national employees of or advisors to American embassies, particularly in Egypt, where Egyptian nationals loyal to the military regime have used their embassy positions to deny Coptic religious asylum requests to the United States.

Third and finally, the United States must avoid legitimizing the joint effort by the Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's ruling military regime to use "blasphemy" laws against non-Muslim minorities in Egypt, and therefore should decline to meet with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss any agenda to apply "blasphemy" laws globally under the guise of confronting "Islamophobia."

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amb-marc-ginsberg/unholy-alliance-egypts-mi\\_b\\_1109534.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amb-marc-ginsberg/unholy-alliance-egypts-mi_b_1109534.html)

## STATEMENT OF RAYMOND IBRAHIM

Mr. IBRAHIM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am taking somewhat of a different approach. I think one of the best things to begin to understand the situation for the Copts, and now it is being exacerbated, is to establish context for starters.

The fact is what we are having a hearing about tonight -- or today, I'm sorry -- is about a phenomenon that has been going on for about 1400 years. This is not something new. So the key to understand where we are today is to establish the continuity from former centuries past.

The amazing thing is, when you look at history -- and this is my field, history and doctrine. When you look at these two, especially history, you will find that what happens to the Coptic people when Islam invaded Egypt in the seventh century, and as recorded by reliable Muslim historians, Medieval Muslim historians who had no great love for the Copts -- When you look at these texts, you will find that they are identical to what is happening today. The parallels are just outstanding, how identical they are, and I will just give you some examples.

Of course, there is the attacks on Copts in general. That has been going on. Attacks on churches: I was reading the other day from a Medieval source, a primary source from a Muslim who talked about in one emir's reign in that time, they destroyed 3,000 churches.

Abduction of girls, Christians girls, and rape and forced conversions, plunder, as expectations from second class citizen Copts, taking what is called the Jizya, collective punishment -- All of these have past precedents for 1400 years and are well documented in Islam's own historical texts.

Now when you look at that and you bring it to today, and we fast forward to the 21st Century and what we are seeing today, to me, this is the key. Now you understand that this is not an aberration, what we are seeing. This is not something strange, but rather part and parcel of Islamic history, especially in Egypt.

I am mentioning to you Islamic primary sources. I think that is important, because these are not sources that were written by polemicists or Christians or non-Muslims, but by Islam's own most authoritative and revered historians and theologians, and they make it unequivocally clear that Islam, from its entrance into Egypt, decimated the Coptic people and their churches and all but their civilization.

There were a few, of course, times when it was better, and then it would get worse. One, for example, person is -- He is known as al-Maqrizi, and he is one of the most popular and authoritative historians of Egypt, Medieval Egypt. He -- again, while you read it and you see that he is a very faithful Muslim and he has no great sympathy for the Copts, he is so objective, and he declares all of these points that we are talking about today.

So the reason I bring this to you, again, is to show that the continuity is there. This is nothing new. This is nothing strange.

Now we come up to -- I mentioned a little bit of history. I would like to quickly discuss some doctrinal issues. The word dhimmi, which was not known before but has become somewhat famous nowadays, including a new coinage of it, which is

dhimmitude. I think that is all good, because these words need to come out in the open. I think it is also a little bad, because they have been somewhat taken out of context and popularized inaccurately.

The word itself, in fact, is integral to Islamic law, the word dhimmi, and from the beginning of Islam's entry into Egypt and the other non-Muslim territories, a dhimmi is a person, a non-Muslim, who, of course does not accept Islam, wants to maintain their religious identity, in this case the Christian Copts, but to do so, they have to accept several debilitating and humiliating circumstances.

This goes to the Koran. The Koran itself, Koran 9, sura 9, verse 29, says to Muslims, Fight the people of the book -- and these, of course, include Jews and Christians -- until they pay the jizya -- which basically means tribute to their overlords -- until they pay the jizya with a willing submission and feel themselves utterly subdued.

Now this is the Koran, and to Muslims this is the infallible word of God that transcends all time, and as applied back then in the era that I am discussing and to many Muslims today applies today, and needs to be upheld vis a vis people like the Copts and non-Muslims.

So what ultimately means, this concept of dhimmi, is someone who does not want to become a Muslim, who willingly has to accept second class citizen status and whose rights ultimately depend on the goodwill of the Muslim overlords.

Another seminal treatise that was written and goes back is called the Pact of Omar, named after either the first caliph or probably another caliph by the same name, but this pact again, when you read it, it was what Christians had to sign in order to not be molested and destroyed.

Among the things that it says is, number one, we Christians cannot build or repair our churches; we cannot practice our religion openly; we must show respect to Muslims; we must not offend Muslims. It even says, we shall rise from our seats when they wish to sit down.

All of this was enforced then. All of it coming back now in strong force. Now all of it has been now. For example, the issue of churches in Egypt: Are you see, they are always being attacked. They are always being destroyed. As far as the government is concerned, it is like pulling teeth just to try to get a permit to repair a church.

Again, this goes to these pacts and these doctrines which are so little known in the west and which seem to be just some -- When you talk to people about it, they hear these words, and they think these are just some sort of throwback from ancient history, and they are really not that relevant today, but they are immensely relevant to those and to the practitioners of the faith who think of these as divine institutions of their religion.

Then there is another aspect to all of this. I have discussed the historic and the doctrinal aspects of keeping Copts and other non-Muslims suppressed, but there is a word that is not well known at all, and it was coined a few decades ago. It is called Islamicate.

What Islamicate means is that, just because Islam teaches, let's say, X, Y and Z, but as a culture a Muslim need not necessarily be a religious or a pious Muslim to start doing these things, because they become ingrained and permeate the culture. So seeing a Copt as, for example, a second class citizen, whether you are a secular Muslim or not, these sorts of things feed into the culture and the world view of the general populous of Egypt.

So the radical Muslim, of course, will be more hostile and more fierce, but even the general Muslim or the people in the military who do not identify themselves as radicals, because of the 1400 years of these institutionalized forms of discrimination, these ideas have become just part of the world view of so many people in Egypt, unfortunately.

Usually, it became into sort of a discrimination, but now as you see these Islamist parties such as the Salafists who are getting lots of -- I think, 20 percent of the vote, and what are they doing? They are going beyond little things like discrimination, and now they want to reinstitutionalize things like the jizya which, again, goes back.

This goes back to the Quranic verse I read, which says fight them until they pay tribute. Jizya means paying tribute, which is a way of acknowledging that you are a second class citizen, and you are buying your life. You are paying for it. You are being blackmailed.

So now these people who are being voted into the new government of Egypt, the Salafists, are calling openly for the return of jizya. Of course, it is not just a matter of money, but with the return of jizya comes all of these other aspects of "dhimmitude" to be expected of Copts, which includes no more churches at all whatsoever, no more -- you have to hide your religious identity, no crosses in public and so forth, and all of these other types of debilitations.

Then you have the Brotherhood. Now the Brotherhood, of course -- The problem is I think there are so many people who see the Brotherhood and the Salafists as sort of, you know, one is moderate, and one is radical. That is, of course, a joke. The Muslim Brother: A better way to see it or to give you an American analogy is you can think of them as the Muslim Brotherhood are the Democrats and Salafists are the Republicans.

In other words, they are two faces of the same coin, because in America Democrats and Republicans, of course, have different viewpoints, but they are all based on the same source, and they are all based on the same paradigm. It is the same for the Salafists and the Muslim Brotherhood. Whatever their little differences are, they all go back and trace their sources to Sharia law, which is not very -- which is clearcut, what it says.

Also, the Muslim Brotherhood are a little smarter than the Salafists, because they know the game, and they know they are not going to sit up now and start talking about institutionalizing jizya or dhimmi status for Copts. They are not going to say that now; whereas, the Salafists will say it now.

At any rate, now you have these two groups who are about 60 percent -- who won 60 percent of the votes, and their opinions of the Copts goes straight back to what I was discussing from 1400 years ago, which is this world view that they are there to be plundered, kept suppressed, and their churches destroyed, and this is why we are seeing it all now.

Now I started earlier by saying that somewhat we are here having a hearing about phenomenon that has been going 1400 years. So why are we having a hearing? Why is this new? It is new, because we -- this goes to somewhat of intellectual history, but if you look at what happened the last 200 years of the colonial era when the western powers invaded and colonized the Muslim world, what happened then is, and this is a fact, that so many of the Muslims turned their back on Islam, in a way.

In other words, they were just secular, and Islam was just something that was not taken seriously, and this is well known. A perfect example, of course, is Ataturk who abolished the caliphate in 1928, I believe. He, of course -- this was the nation which was the head of the Muslim world. So right at the early 20th Century, what you had is Muslims were experimenting with westernizing and secularizing and modernization and nationalism. This is what happened.

Now during that era, yes, Coptic persecution was markedly subdued, and this is also a fact. The discrimination, the subtle things, they were still there, but the sort of wholesale attacks that we are seeing today were really not that present.

Now what this has done, though, because this sort of -- or this new approach went on for a few generations, is it has created a western world view that does not see the earlier precedents or the past history. So now in history classes, and when we discuss the history of the Middle East and Egypt, we just start talking about the Muslim world or from about the 1900's and the 20th century where, no, there wasn't a lot of persecution and, if anything, the paradigm is that the west was the evil oppressive force, and the Muslim world was not.

So this, I think, has created an intellectual hurdle to understand what is really going on and, of course, it is exacerbated tremendously by the western mainstream media which, as some of my colleagues have pointed out, never really reports the truth or really equivocates.

They use the term sectarian strife when you have a few thousand Muslims who go burn down a church, and they call that sectarian strife which, in my mind, suggests two equally powerful forces like Sunnis and Shias killing each other. That is not the case, but the media tries so hard to come off neutral.

I even remember during the Maspero massacre where the tanks were intentionally running down and mowing over Copts and killing them and opening fire, Fox News which is considered the conservative balanced one was telling us about how soldiers were crying as they watched Copts attack their fellow soldiers.

Then the holders and the articulators of knowledge in the west have completely undermined reality, and the same goes with academia. Academia, especially area studies, seem to exist solely now just to put the best spin on things and to make -- If your area studies the Muslim world, none of these things that we are talking about, these historical aspects, these primary sources, Quranic and historical, that I quoted -- you will never hear these. I know on firsthand experience.

I was at Georgetown, for instance, for a while, and every class was based upon how either the Islamic world has been abused or how we have to understand them. We have to appease them and this sort of thing. So it is unfortunate that we have all these intellectual hurdles that are making something that is 1400 years old and so obvious to anyone who has studied this and looked at this -- it is unintelligible to us today, and we have to have a hearing to even start talking about it, and it is because of all of these forces, whether they are intellectual history and some sort of anachronisms or whether it is the mainstream media and political correctness sort of muck or academia. But this is the situation we are at, and there is nothing new.

I think the good news, apparently, is that we are still in the early stage. There are still many Egyptians in Egypt, including Muslims who are not of that variety, who are not

the Salafists or the Muslim Brotherhood. So we are not exactly in the medieval era where it is a wholesale massacre.

So I think there is some light at the end of the tunnel, and what needs to be done, of course, is to support and, as my colleagues all said, aid must be conditional upon these sorts of things. We must identify and support the liberal voices, because they are our friends.

The idea of saying democracy, using that word, and everything has to stop and ended before that word is ridiculous, because what is happening in Egypt is democracy means the people are going to bring the sort of government they want. Ostensibly, that sounds good and fair, but when they bring a fascistic government -- Hitler, for instance, the people brought him to power. The people had support for him.

So that doesn't mean -- What I submit then is we should not always stand beholden before the word democracy as if it is this sort of sacrosanct thing. We have to understand, it is a mode of government. What really matters is what the people themselves do create with this mode, once they are empowered.

If the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists and these fellows all get into power, it is going to be a travesty to Copts. It is going to be a travesty to non-Muslims like the Baha'is. It is going to be a travesty to secular Muslims, and it will be also a problem for the international community, including the United States. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Ibrahim follows:]

**Raymond Ibrahim**  
**Testimony Before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**  
**“Under Threat: The Worsening Plight of Egypt’s Coptic Christians”**  
**December 7, 2011**

Since the year 641, when Muslims invaded Egypt, the Copts—Egypt's Christian, indigenous inhabitants—have been subject to persecution, discrimination, and over all subjugation on their homeland ([etymologically](#), the word “Copt” simply means “Egyptian”). The result is an Egyptian culture and mentality that sees Copts as second-class citizens, or, in Islamic legal terminology, *Dhimmis*—“infidels” who are tolerated as long as they embrace their inferior status.

Whole books and treatises have been written on the treatment of Dhimmis (for instance, Ibn Qayyim’s authoritative 8<sup>th</sup> century *Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma*, or “Rulings for Dhimmis”). The idea of subjugating non-Muslims, aptly coined “Dhimmitude,” comes from Quran 9:29: “Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor forbid that which Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, nor follow the religion of Truth [Islam], from the People of the Book [Christians and Jews], until they pay the Jizya [tribute] with willing submission, and feel themselves utterly subdued.”

The so-called [Pact of Omar](#), a foundational text for the treatment of Dhimmis, offers an idea of how this Quranic decree manifested itself in reality. In order to maintain their Christian faith, among other things, conquered Christians had to agree to the following:

We shall not build, in our cities or in their neighborhood, new monasteries, churches, convents, or monks’ cells, nor shall we repair, by day or by night, such of them as fall in ruins or are situated in the quarters of the Muslims ... We shall not manifest our religion publicly nor convert anyone to it. We shall not prevent any of our kin from entering Islam if they wish it. We shall show respect toward the Muslims, and we shall rise from our seats when they wish to sit. We shall not seek to resemble the Muslims... We shall not display our crosses or our books in the roads or markets of the Muslims. We shall use only clappers in our churches very softly. We shall not raise our voices when following our dead... We shall not bury our dead near the Muslims. We shall not build houses overtopping the houses of the Muslims.

During the colonial era and into the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, as Egypt experimented with westernization and nationalism, Christian persecution was markedly subdued. Today, however, as Egypt all but spearheads Islam’s resurgence—giving the world key figures and groups such as Sayyid Qutb, Hassan Bana, the Muslim Brotherhood, and al-Qaeda’s Aymen Zawahiri in the process—that is, as Egypt reclaims its Islamic identity, the Copts find themselves again under persecution.

Today, popular Muslim preachers on Egyptian TV openly condemn Christians, publicly calling for the return of Dhimmi status; Copts and their churches are almost always

attacked on Friday, immediately after the weekly mosque sermons and to cries of “Allahu Akbar!” demonstrating the Islamic pedigree of the attack.

None of this is surprising when one considers that even Egypt’s Grand Mufti himself, often touted in the West as a “moderate,” recently [classified all Christians](#) as “[infidels,](#)” [or kuffar](#), a term that immediately positions Copts as enemies to be suppressed.

Aside from the fact that practically every week an account of Muslims attacking Copts emerges—whether the destroying of churches, the killing of Copts for wearing crosses, the abducting, raping, and force-converting of Coptic girls—perhaps nothing exemplifies their plight as the following governmental, that is, *institutionalized*, stipulations:

According to the Second Article of the [Egyptian Constitution](#), Sharia law—which is based on the anti-Christian words of the Quran and prophet Muhammad as contained in the Hadith—is “the principal source of legislation”; and since Dhimmitude is part and parcel of Sharia law, expectations for Copts to behave as subdued, second-class citizens, or Dhimmis, becomes implicit. For instance, and in accordance with the aforementioned stipulations of the Pact of Omar, it is next to impossible for churches to be built.

The Egyptian government likewise makes it next to impossible for Muslims to convert to Christianity (apostasy is a crime under Sharia). Among the more popular cases are [Mohammad Hegazy](#): he tried formally to change his religion from Muslim to Christian on his I.D. card—in Egypt, people are identified by their religion, again, as stipulated in the Pact of Omar—only [to be denied](#) by the Egyptian court. Conversely, it takes mere days for Christian converts to Islam to change their religious I.D.

Most recently, several aspects of the Maspero massacre revealed the Egyptian government’s inherent hostility to its Christian citizenry:

Soldiers screamed “[Allahu Akbar!](#)” (Islam's primordial war-cry), and cursed “Infidels” as they approached and attacked Coptic protesters; a [video](#) of an Egyptian soldier boasting that he shot a Christian in the chest is greeted by the crowd around him with “Allahu Akbar!”; and after the incident, [Dr. Hind Hanafi](#), president of the University of Cairo, recommended separating wounded Christians from wounded Muslims admitted into the hospital, thereby institutionalizing religious discrimination, even in hospitals.

Aside from these formalized aspects, Egyptian officials are notorious for turning a blind eye to Muslim mob attacks on Christians and their churches. In fact, it is this governmental complacency—or complicity—regarding attacks on Christians that that caused Copts to demonstrate at Maspero in the first place, before the government, including through the use of snipers, death squads, and tanks that intentionally ran over protesters, initiated the bloodbath that followed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Anyone familiar with Muslim doctrine and history, especially as it applies to Egypt and the Copts, will find none of the above surprising; rather, the treatment of Copts in the

Medieval era and their treatment today demonstrate great continuity—from the destruction of churches to the subjugation of Christians.

However, because there was a lull in this animosity, from the colonial era when Islam was on the wane, to just a few decades ago, most Westerners, deeming events closer to their time and space more representative of reality, ignore the continuum of history and doctrine dealing with persecution, and thus fail to comprehend what is otherwise so obvious and open for the world to see. This is exacerbated by the fact that the articulators of knowledge—the media, academia, and apologists of all stripes—in the name of multiculturalism and political correctness, have made uncomfortable truths all but unknowable.

In short, the evidence of Muslim persecution of Christians in general, persecution of Egyptian Copts in particular, is overwhelming—doctrinally, historically, and current events. What is lacking is a Western paradigm that can accept—and act upon—this evidence.

## **Appendix A**

The following two reports discuss the Maspero Massacre and the events leading up to it, namely, the destruction of yet another Coptic Church, and provide proper context to the plight of Egypt's Copts.

### **Report 1: Egypt - Destroying Churches, One at a Time**

What clearer sign that Egypt is turning rabidly Islamist than the fact that hardly a few weeks go by without a church being destroyed, or without protesting Christians being attacked and slaughtered by the military?

The [latest chaos](#) in Egypt—where the military opened fire on unarmed Christians and repeatedly ran armored vehicles over them, killing dozens—originates in Edfu, a onetime tourist destination renowned for its pharaonic antiquities, but now known as the latest region to see a [church destroyed by a Muslim mob](#).

This church attack is itself eye-opening as to the situation in Egypt. To sum, St. George Coptic church, built nearly a century ago, was so dilapidated that the local council and governor of Aswan approved renovating it, and signed off on the design.

It was not long before local Muslims began complaining, making various demands, including that the church be devoid of crosses and bells—even though the permit approved them—[citing](#) that "the Cross irritates Muslims and their children."

Coptic leaders had no choice but to acquiesce, "pointing to the fact that the church was rebuilt legally, and any concessions on the part of the church was done for the love for the country, which is passing through a difficult phase."

Acquiescence breeds more demands: Muslim leaders next insisted that the very dome of the church be removed—so that the building might not even resemble a church—and that it be referred to as a "hospitality home." Arguing that removal of the dome would likely collapse the church, the bishop refused.

The foreboding cries of "[Allahu Akbar!](#)" began: Muslims threatened to raze the church and build a mosque in its place; Copts were "forbidden to leave their homes or buy food until they remove the dome of St. George's Church"; many starved for weeks.

Then, after Friday prayers on September 30, some three thousand Muslims rampaged the church, torched it, and demolished the dome; flames from the wreckage burned nearby Coptic homes, which were further ransacked by rioting Muslims.

This account of anti-church sentiment in Egypt offers several conclusions:

First, the obvious: animosity for churches, demands that they be left to crumble, demands to remove crosses and stifle bells, are an integral part of Islamic history and [dogma](#). That church attacks in Egypt always occur on Friday, Islam's "holy day," and are always accompanied by religious cries of "Allahu Akbar!" should be evidence enough of the Islamist context of these attacks.

Because there was a lull in this animosity from the colonial era to just a few decades ago, most Westerners, deeming events closer to their time and space more representative of reality, incorrectly assume that church toleration is the rule, not the exception in Islamic history, which has more frequently been draconian to churches, and is back: "the [Muslim Brotherhood](#) announced immediately after the revolution that it is impossible to build any new church in Egypt, and churches which are demolished should never be rebuilt, as well as no crosses over churches or bells to be rung."

This is also why Muslim authorities are complacent, if not complicit. According to witnesses, security forces, which were present during the Edfu attack, "stood there watching." Worse, Edfu's Intelligence Unit chief was seen [directing the mob](#) destroying the church.

As for the governor of Aswan, he appeared on State TV and "denied any church being torched," calling it a "guest home" (a [common tactic](#) to excuse the destruction of churches). He even [justified the incident](#) by arguing that the church contractor made the building three meters higher than he permitted: "Copts made a mistake and had to be punished, and Muslims did nothing but set things right, end of story."

Equally telling is that perpetrators of church attacks are seldom if ever punished. Even if sometimes the most rabid church-destroying Muslims get "detained," it is usually for show, as they are released in days, hailed back home as heroes (this, too, goes back to Muslim dogma, which naturally sides with Muslims over infidels).

This year alone has seen the [New Year church attack](#), which left 23 dead; the destruction of the [ancient church of Sool](#), where Muslims "played soccer" with its sacred relics; the [Imbaba attacks](#), where several churches were set aflame; and now Edfu, wherein, as usual "[none of the attackers were arrested](#)."

Indeed, three days after Edfu, Muslims [attacked yet another church](#).

Aware that they are untouchable, at least when it comes to making infidel Christians miserable, anti-Christian Muslims have a simple strategy: destroy churches, even if one at a time, safe in the knowledge that, not only will they not be prosecuted, but Egypt's military and security apparatus will punish the infidel victims should they dare to protest.

## **REPORT 2: EGYPT'S MASSACRE OF CHRISTIANS: WHAT THE MEDIA DOES NOT WANT YOU TO KNOW**

Western media coverage of the recent massacre of Coptic Christians in Cairo, Egypt—in which the military killed dozens of Christians and injured some 300—was, as [discussed earlier](#), deplorable. It merely repeated the false propaganda of the complicit state-run media, without checking facts. Since then, further proofs of the lies and brutality surrounding the massacre have emerged; they are compiled in the following report which consists of facts and videos from Arabic sources—many of which have not appeared in the Western media.

This report documents: 1) the activities of the Supreme Military Council of Egypt and de facto ruler; 2) the lies and duplicitous tactics of both the Military Council and its media mouthpiece, Egyptian TV; and 3) the anti-Christian sentiment pervading all aspects of this incident.

### ***The Egyptian Military***

Along with a new report by [Magdi Khalil](#) asserting that the day before the planned march, a "death squad" of snipers hid atop buildings and shot at protesters, armored vehicles intentionally chased after and ran over protesters, killing and mutilating many:

- Here is perhaps the [clearest video](#); it shows a high-speed armored vehicle willfully plowing over unsuspecting Christian demonstrators.
- [This video](#) shows another armored vehicle chasing protesters, and a soldier opening fire into the fleeing crowds.
- [This video](#) shows high-speed armored cars running amok in the middle of the crowds, including chasing protesters on the curb, as well as soldiers beating protesters.
- As for eyewitness testimonies attesting to the brutality of the massacre, [they are many](#), and [include Muslims](#).
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### ***The Tactics of the Military Council (or "[War is Deceit](#)")***

After the incident and notwithstanding crushing evidence, Egypt's Military Council held a news conference wherein senior official, [Mahmoud Hegazy](#), spun [lie after lie](#): he stated

that the military would "*never, never*" run over civilians; that the very idea was "*impossible, impossible!*" and "Shame on those who accuse the Egyptian military of such things!... *Never* has our military run over a single person, not even when combating the Enemy [Israel]."

Hegazy portrayed the Christian protesters as the aggressors, attacking and killing "honorable" soldiers. To prove his point, he showed an image of a protester on top of a stalled armored vehicle, throwing a rock at the soldier inside, and a video of a military vehicle—that he claimed was hijacked by a protester—driving wildly into the crowd.

Hegazy's deceit lies in the fact that the "hijacked" vehicle running amok, and the one stalled and attacked by a protester, were one and the same vehicle: [Al Dalil](#) revealed that both vehicles had the same identification number. In other words, when the vehicle in which a soldier was chasing and running over protesters finally stalled, the protesters then attacked it. Egypt's leaders willfully manipulated the footage to exonerate themselves and portray the Copts as violent aggressors.

Several eye-witnesses, including Muslims, further stated that, to hide the "evidence," they saw soldiers [hurling the mutilated bodies](#) of those run over into the nearby Nile River. Likewise, among the slain, a dead Muslim soldier, whom the military said was killed by protesters, was actually [killed by friendly-fire](#)—although there are indications that he may have died elsewhere, and his corpse thrown among the dead for show.

As Copts have long suspected, the "thugs" (*al-baltagiyya*) who always appear in protests attacking Christians seem to be men whom the military uses to create an excuse to open fire and exercise brutality. [Muslim eyewitnesses](#) say they saw the thugs coming with State Security: Al Dalil showed a video clip of a soldier exposed dressed as a civilian, interspersed among Coptic protesters, and other videos showing the thugs cooperating with the military.

[This video](#) might offer the greatest proof: Days before the massacre, when Copts were protesting the [destruction of their latest church](#), around 20 Egyptian soldiers and security personnel captured a protester and [mercilessly beat](#) him (while calling him an "infidel," to put the beating in context). Mixed among the military (camouflage uniforms) and security (black uniforms) is what appears to be a plainclothes civilian, who proceeds to stab the Christian protestor in the head with a knife several times; the victim later received 20 stitches. The plainclothesman is most likely a member of the military or security, dressed as a civilian for stealth purposes, otherwise he would not have been able to move among them so casually.

### ***The Role of the Egyptian State Media (or "[War is Deceit](#)")***

"Egyptian TV"—demonstrating, unsurprisingly, that state-run media always serve dictatorial regimes—merely propagated the lies of the Military Council.

Even as armored vehicles were mowing down Christian protesters, Egyptian TV broadcast footage of reporters saying, "Help, the Copts are killing our heroic, patriotic

soldiers and burning Qurans!" One segment on Egyptian TV had an [outraged reporter](#) condemning Christians—"as if they were the Israeli enemy"—for killing "our noble protectors [soldiers], who never once fired a single shot." As a result, many Muslims took to the streets brutally attacking Christians and their property.

Egyptian TV also lied by saying three soldiers died at the hands of Copts: officials at the TV station later confessed to [making it up](#). That, however, did not stop a barrage of [op-eds](#) in Egypt blaming the Christians for their own massacre.

Due to Egyptian TV's misinformation, several Egyptian reporters unequivocally condemned it. Anchorwoman Dina said: "I am ashamed that I work at this despicable TV channel... Egyptian TV was effectively calling for civil war between Muslims and Christians... Egyptian TV has proven that it is a slave to those who rule." Another news anchor, [Mahmoud Yousif](#), announced that he "washes his hands of what Egyptian TV is broadcasting."

### ***Anti-Christian Hate***

Although it should be clear that anti-Christian sentiment fueled this latest Muslim slaughter of Christian minorities, a few specifics follow:

- Soldiers screamed "[Allahu Akbar!](#)" (Islam's primordial war-cry), and cursed "Infidels!" as they approached and attacked the protesters—which of course is not so unexpected when one considers that, even in olden times and in movies, the Egyptian military was called the *Jihadiyya* (the organization that wages holy war).
- A [video](#) of a soldier boasting that he shot a Christian in the chest is greeted by the crowd around him with "Allahu Akbar!"
- After the incident, [Dr. Hind Hanafi](#), president of the University of Cairo, recommended separating wounded Christians from wounded Muslims admitted into the hospital, thereby institutionalizing religious discrimination, even in hospitals.

### ***Conclusion***

A massacre at this level never occurred during the thirty-year reign of ousted president Hosni Mubarak, and yet Mubarak is being charged with "crimes against Egyptians." What about the Military Council? It has committed greater crimes—even though it has been in charge for less than a year. Saddam Hussein was condemned by the international community for using chemicals on his own people; where are the international community, the media, and the so-called human rights groups when it comes to a government running over its own civilians with armored vehicles and having "death squads" of snipers shooting at them?

Finally, if this report testifies to crimes against humanity, consider what it says about diplomacy: If Egyptian leadership lies and deceives to suppress its *internal* "infidel" citizens—whose "crime" was to object to the [continual destruction of their churches](#)—how credible can it be to *external* "infidels," such as the U.S.?

## **Appendix B**

The following list of articles and reports by the author further discuss the plight of Egypt's Copts:

- [Popular Sheikh: Christian Copts are "Infidels"; "Allah's Curse on Them"](#)
- [Muslim Persecution of Christians: October, 2011](#)
- [Egypt: Desire for Money—Jizya—Prompts Attacks on Christians](#)
- [Why Does the Crucifix 'Provoke' Muslims?](#)
- [Top Muslim Declares All Christians 'Infidels'](#)
- [Hillary Clinton Promises to Save Egypt's Christians?](#)
- [The Egyptian Military's Crimes Against Humanity](#)
- [Islam's Uninterrupted History of Forced Conversions](#)
- [Running for Their Lives](#)
- [Why 'Christian' Persecution?](#)
- [Egypt: Why Are Christian Girls Converting to Islam?](#)
- [Casual Hate](#)
- [Egypt: Christian Girls Kidnapped and 'Sold'](#)
- [Conversion, Adultery, and Savagery Strike Egypt](#)
- [Islamists Project Islam's Worst Traits onto Christians](#)
- [Muslim 'Inferiority Complex' Kills Christians](#)
- [Islam's Christian Scapegoats](#)
- [The Silent Extermination of Iraq's 'Christian Dogs'](#)
- [Destroying One Koran vs. Destroying Many Christians](#)
- [No 'Revolution' for Egypt's Christians](#)
- [Egypt's Identity Crisis](#)
- [Is an Egyptian "Democracy" a Good Thing?](#)
- [Is the Media 'Fair and Balanced' on Christian Persecution?](#)
- [Egypt Cuts a Deal: Christians Fed to Muslim 'Lions'](#)
- [Are Judaism and Christianity as Violent as Islam?](#)

# **A P P E N D I X**

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD



**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (TLHRC)  
Hearing:**

***Under Threat: The Worsening Plight of Egypt's Coptic Christians***

**Wednesday, December 7, 2011**

**10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

**334 Cannon HOB**

Please join the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission for a hearing on threats to religious freedom in Egypt, including, the worsening plight of Egypt's Coptic Christians. At a time when the world's attention is on Egypt as it undergoes historic but tumultuous political change, it is important that the U.S. continue to shine the spotlight on the difficulties confronting religious minorities in the country. Egypt is on the cusp of a new era but the transition to a democratic society means more than just holding elections. It means that basic freedoms—such as the freedom of religion— are protected.

The Coptic Christian community, which traces its origins back 2,000 years and is the largest religious minority in Egypt today, is under assault. Churches have been bombed and citizens have been attacked while the Egyptian government seemingly encourages a culture of impunity for those responsible for these acts of violence. This hearing will address the continued discrimination and physical threats to the Coptic community and consider how the United States can better support religious freedom.

**We will hear from the following witnesses: \*\*\***

**Panel 1:**

- Kathy Fitzpatrick, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State

**Panel 2:**

- Nina Shea – Director, Center for Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute
- Dina Guirguis – Egyptian American democracy activist, attorney, and member, Egyptian American Rule of Law Association

**Panel 3:**

- Adel Guindy - President, Coptic Solidarity International
- Cynthia Farahat – Egyptian political activist, writer and researcher
- Raymond Ibrahim – Middle East specialist and Associate fellow, Middle East Forum

\*\*\*Witness list subject to change.

If you have any questions, please contact Kalinda Stephenson (Rep. Wolf) at 202-225-5136 or Mike McVicker (Rep. McGovern) at 202-225-3599.

Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress  
Co-Chair, TLHRC

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress  
Co-Chair, TLHRC