There are currently 1,000-1,500 Jehovah’s Witnesses living in Egypt: despite being a form of Christianity, the faith is not officially recognized. Congregations were formally established in the country from the 1930s and were able to practice with relative freedom until the 1950s. However, despite receiving formal recognition during this period, first in Cairo in 1951 and then in Alexandria in 1956, the Jehovah’s Witnesses suffered an increasing wave of hostile rumours accusing them of being covert Zionists and a threat to national security. In 1959 they were obliged to halt their activities and the following year, like Bahá’í, were declared illegal by presidential decree. In the decade that followed, in particular, its adherents were exposed to serious ill treatment.

Despite repeated legal applications, court rulings have consistently denied them legal status, most recently in a December 2009 ruling. Nevertheless, in 2006 successful negotiations led to the government accepting their right to meet together in worship and prayer without interference, as well as granting them the right to meet in private in groups of up to 30 people. Nevertheless, incidents of surveillance and harassment of Jehovah’s Witnesses by state security continued in intervening years. Though the situation appears to have improved slightly since Mubarak’s departure in 2011, the group still faces monitoring and occasional obstruction of their right to worship.

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