

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

1. Please advise whether the treatment of Christian converts in Cairo is any more or less tolerant than in other parts of Egypt?
2. Please advise whether Christian converts living in Cairo rely on the protection of the authorities in that city?
3. Please provide any information regarding the ill-treatment, by authorities in Egypt, of family members (as distinct from the convert) of a convert to Christianity?
4. Is there any information regarding whether Coptic Christians are accepted into the Egyptian police force and if so, what proportion of the police force they comprise?
5. Please provide statistics regarding the number of Coptic Christians and Muslims in Cairo?
6. Please provide some recent information about tensions and conflicts, in Cairo, between Copts and Muslims.

RESPONSE

Preliminary Note

According to the Home Office advice of 13 July 2009, the situation for the minority Coptic population has deteriorated:

Religion(s): Muslim (mostly Sunni) (90%), Coptic Christian (9%) and other (1%)
(Extracted from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile, last reviewed by the FCO 27 January 2008) (pp6)

...

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

The US Department of State (USSD) International Religious Freedom report 2008, released on 19 September 2008, recorded: "The Constitution provides for freedom of belief and the practice of religious rites, although the Government places restrictions on these rights in

practice. Islam is the official state religion, and Shari'a (Islamic law) is the primary source of legislation.”

“Although there were some positive steps in support of religious freedom, the status of respect for religious freedom by the Government declined overall during the period covered by this report. (pp10)

...

Coptic Christians

The FCO Country Profile, last reviewed by the FCO on 27 January 2008, reported:

“The Egyptian Government is sometimes accused of persecuting Coptic Christians and other religious minorities, such as Bahá'ís, and restricting freedom of religion. The President is personally involved in efforts to promote tolerance and inter-faith harmony, and has taken some concrete steps to promote and protect Christian rights, such as appointing Christians to parliament and other senior government posts (including the current head of the National Council for Human Rights, Minister of Finance, Minister of Environment and Governor of Qena) and declaring 7 January – Coptic Christmas – a national holiday. But sectarian tension and discrimination does sometimes exist at grass roots level, and non-Muslims remain under-represented in certain sectors of society e.g. the armed forces.”

The FCO Country Profile continues, “Another concern is the difficulty in obtaining permits for building churches; this eased somewhat after a presidential decree in 2005 devolving the regulation of church repairs to governorate level. Further changes may be on the way if Parliament passes the ‘Unified Building Law’, that will regulate the building and restoration of all places of worship.” However, the May-June 2009 edition of the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs noted the comments of Naguib Gobrail, a Coptic lawyer, that ‘The unified religious building law has been stalled for over 15 years in the parliament—three parliamentary terms and nothing has happened,’ “.

Other issues of concern include difficulties faced by religious minorities including converts from Islam to Christianity when obtaining official documents, and the requirement to stipulate one of the three Abrahamic religions on ID cards.”

In December 2008, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) called for an investigation into a riot in which a church was attacked in Cairo. The CSW press release provided the following details:

“On Sunday, 23 November [2008] the Coptic Church of St. Mary and Anba Abraam was attacked by a mob of thousands, who began by protesting outside the church’s newly constructed extension building. The protest soon degenerated into a riot that lasted until 4am the following morning. The crowd initially threw stones at the new church building, and as the violence escalated, bottles and gas canisters were launched at [the] church, despite the presence of Christians inside the building. Several people were wounded and the glass front of the St. Mary and Anba Abraam church building was completely destroyed in the attack. Video footage of the event shows protestors setting banners alight while chanting Islamic slogans. The violence ended after police reinforcements arrived to disperse the crowd. ...

“Police are reported to have questioned up to 60 rioters; however, eight people who were arrested have since been released, three of whom were Christians.”

The British Broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) Timeline, last updated on 25 May 2009, reported that, in May 2009, clashes occurred between the Egyptian police and Coptic Christian pig farmers who were trying to prevent their animals being taken away for slaughter as a precaution against swine flu. (pp12 -13) (UK Home Office 2009, Country of origin

information key documents. Arab Republic of Egypt, 13 July
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/key-docs-egypt-150709.doc> -
Accessed 19 November 2009 - Attachment 1)

1. Please advise whether the treatment of Christian converts in Cairo is any more or less tolerant than in other parts of Egypt?

There is no indication that Christian converts in Cairo are accorded better treatment than elsewhere. According to this January 2009 report there is currently nationwide sectarianism in Egypt:

Throughout the year we had to deal with an alarming increase of tension [between Copts and Muslims]," Bahgat notes, citing three reports issued by the Egyptian Initiative for Human Rights monitoring relations between Copts and Muslims in Egypt. The increase of tension, the reports warned, "was coupled with an increased frequency of anti- Coptic sentiments". Such sentiments "and behaviour", the reports went on, "assumed a wider geographic scope". "Cases of sectarianism used to be more or less confined to certain neighbourhoods and villages in Upper Egypt, Alexandria and parts of Cairo. Today we are talking about a nationwide phenomenon. From Upper Egypt to the Delta and beyond sectarianism is clearly monitored and is not sufficiently or efficiently confronted," says Bahgat. (pp2)

...

The trouble, says Bahieddin Hassan, director of the Cairo Centre for Human Rights, is that the "exercise of discrimination from Muslims to Copts or the other way round -- although it is more from Muslims towards Copts -- has become so deeply rooted that it takes courage even to admit to its extent, let alone begin working to change it". (pp8)

Ezzat, Dina 2009, 'Blessed be the people of Egypt', *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, Issue No. 929, 8-14 January <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/929/feature.htm> - Accessed 27 October 2009 - Attachment 11)

The following two reports published by a Christian monitoring agency relate to recent incidents in Cairo:

Christian convert Raheal Henen Mussa and her Coptic husband are hiding from police and her Muslim family for violating an article of Islamic law (sharia) that doesn't exist in the Egyptian penal code.

...

Formerly known as Samr Mohamed Hansen, Mussa converted to Christianity three years ago, before marrying Ryiad. Police arrested her as she came home from her workplace at a Cairo salon. They identified her by the Coptic cross tattoo on her right arm – a common mark among Copts.

She was transferred to a station operated by the secret police, where she stayed until Sunday (April 19), when her family took her. While in their custody, her family completely burned off her cross tattoo, according to the U.K. Coptic Association ('Convert arrested for marrying Christian' 2009, *Compass Direct News website*, 22 April - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/3129/> - Accessed 16 November - Attachment 2)

The difficulties involved in obtaining documentation to prove one's conversion is outlined in the following report:

(lawyer) Ghobreyal, adding that the report says El-Gohary's case threatens public order, noted wryly, "In Egypt we have freedom of religion, but these freedoms can't go against Islam."

...

Churches Challenged

To date no Christian convert in Egypt has obtained a baptismal certificate, which amounts to official proof of conversion.

Churches fear that issuing such certificates would create a severe backlash. As a result, converts cannot apply for a change of religion on their ID, but El-Gohary was able to travel abroad to get a baptismal certificate from a well-established church. In April a Coptic Cairo-based priest recognized this certificate and issued him a letter of acceptance, or "conversion certificate," welcoming him to the Coptic Orthodox community.

El-Gohary's baptismal certificate caused a fury among the nation's Islamic lobby, as it led to the first official church recognition of a convert. A number of fatwas (religious edicts) have since been issued against El-Gohary and Father Matthias Nasr Manqarious, the priest who helped him ('Convert's Religious Rights Case Threatens Egypt's Islamists' 2009, *Compass Direct* Website, 12 May - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/3615/> - Accessed 15 November 2009 - Attachment 3)

2. Please advise whether Christian converts living in Cairo rely on the protection of the authorities in that city?

It appears that Christian converts in Cairo are not accorded better protection than those who live elsewhere in the country. The reports surveyed do not indicate that the situation is better for those who live in Cairo.

The following 2007 report from the non-governmental professional institution called "The Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies (ICDS)" found:

a deeply entrenched institutionalized discrimination against the Copts is practiced by the State...

Further, while the Azhar University is supported by public funds it accepts only Muslims. Although not specifically banned in the Constitution, the government prohibits proselytizing by non-Muslims, or the conversion of Muslims to another faith. Converts from Islam to Christianity while not legally prosecuted, nevertheless, face societal discrimination and governmental harassment which may include repeated questioning, denial of travel abroad, and the refusal to amend civil documents to reflect their new religious status. (5. Freedom of Religion. pp58)

...

Although the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, the Coptic Christians, who represent about 10% of the population, have long complained of an entrenched governmental bias against them. They point to restrictions imposed on the building of churches or their repair (while mosques are exempt from such restrictions), and their very low representation—far lower than their weight in the population—in the higher echelons of government. There are 7 Copts in the 454-seat Parliament, 6 of who were appointed by the President (who is entitled to appoint 10 members of parliament). The 32-member cabinet has also 2 Coptic ministers. (6. Women and the Marginalized. pp59)

...

Under Shari'a a case may also be made for imposing restrictions relating to a Copt's testimony in court, and perhaps also extending constraints to other aspects of a Copt's status as an equal citizen. Already in personal status cases, court rulings are sometimes coached in

language which stresses the supremacy of Islamic law and the lowliness of the Christian religion. (Part – II. On Minorities. The Copts in Egypt. pp200)

...

The Dimensions of State Discrimination Against the Copts

The Egyptian Constitution, as set in writing, is irreproachable with regard to the rights of minorities. It advocates the principles of freedom of religion and belief (article 46) and “non-discrimination among citizens on grounds of sex, origin, language, religion or belief” (article 40). But in practice these constitutional guarantees are openly disregarded by the state. Indeed, the Copts, historically, have been discriminated against, both in legislated law and by customary state practices. The state’s repeated references to the equality of all citizens, under the Constitution, is thus of little comfort to the Copts, who correctly perceive that equal words in constitutional law are allowed to disguise a deliberate pattern of discriminatory administration. . (pp201) (Part – II. On Minorities. The Copts in Egypt)

...

The most striking example of legal discrimination is the law—known as the Hamayonic Decree—which governs the building, the renovation, and all repairs in churches. It is designed to severely limit the construction of new churches or the restoration of existing ones. A formidable array of bureaucratic hurdles that eventually culminate in a presidential decree is required even for minor repairs such as that of a toilet; only lately the authority for repairs has been delegated to the Governors. (Part – II. On Minorities. The Copts in Egypt. pp201-202)

...

the Copts have become almost totally estranged from the polity. Consequently, their participation and power in the political domain has declined to the point of nonexistence. At present there are very few of them willing to face the perils of political participation, let alone of leadership.

The general social bias against Copts manifests itself clearly during elections. (Part – II. On Minorities. The Copts in Egypt. pp203)

...

Under current Egyptian law, however, a Muslim renouncing Islam would immediately forfeit his right to enter into any contract, including that of marriage; in addition, he loses all inheritance rights from Muslim relatives. (pp204) (Part – II. On Minorities. The Copts in Egypt. (Zaki, M. 2007, ‘Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World – Annual Report’, Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies website [http://www.eicds.org/english/publications/reports/Annual Report 07.doc](http://www.eicds.org/english/publications/reports/Annual%20Report%2007.doc) – Accessed 13 August 2007 – Attachment 4)

The attitude of one member of the judiciary is illustrated in the following case:

A Cairo judge on Saturday (June 13) rejected an Egyptian’s convert’s attempt to change his identification card’s religious status from Muslim to Christian...

...in a session that lasted no more than 10 minutes, according to one of El-Gohary’s lawyers, Nabil Ghobreyal.

...

The judge rejected El-Gohary’s application even though the convert provided a baptism certificate and a letter of acceptance into the Coptic Orthodox Church that the judge had demanded.

“The judge said he will not accept the [baptism] certificate from Cyprus or the letter from Father Matthias [Nasr Manqarious],” said Ghobreyal. “Even if he gets a letter from the pope, the judge said he would not accept it, because the remit of the church is to deal with Christians, not to deal with Muslims who convert to Christianity; this is outside their remit.”(Egypt Denies Right to Convert to Second Christian’ 2009, Compass-Direct website,

16 June - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/4773/> - Accessed 17 November 2009 - Attachment 5)

A report indicates that the police at times use excessive force:

An Egyptian Christian arrested in Cairo for handing out gospel leaflets...

...

police told him it was "more unlawful" for Christians

...

Police handcuffed Kamel, put him into a police car and seized his leaflets. Authorities then took him to a police station for interrogation. While in custody, Kamel said, he remained in handcuffs for hours, was thrown to the ground, spit upon and threatened with violence.

(Christian Arrested for Distributing Tracts' *Compass Direct News* website, 6 October -

<http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/10377/><http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/10464/> - Accessed 19 November 2009 - Attachment 6)

The following article states that court proceedings can lack impartiality:

"Intimidation from the Islamic lawyers is severe," said El-Gohary in a recent interview.

"They were chanting in the court, 'No god but Allah,' and they were threatening intensely."

...

"I do not leave the house – my life is in real danger and my daughter is in real danger," said El-Gohary. "The pressure is too much. I am thinking seriously that I should leave Egypt."

El-Gohary and his lawyers are now calling for protection from both national security forces and the international community ('Coptic Church issues first Conversion Certificate' 2009, *Compass Direct* Website, 13 April –

<http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/2980/> - Accessed 18 November 2009 - Attachment 7)

Another report outlines poor treatment to a Christian convert:

Legal conversion from Islam to Christianity by Muslim-born Egyptians, and gaining corresponding legitimate documents, is unprecedented in Egypt. Egyptian law does not provide for a means to legally change one's religion on identification papers.

...

"People who convert to Christianity are treated exactly like terrorists," said Guirguis of the UK Coptic Association. "This is not official policy, it's not on paper, it's not the law, but it's what happens."

...

Since Makkar's arrest, she has leveled allegations of sexual abuse and demeaning behavior at police in the El-Nozha station and at personnel of the national security office in Heliopolis.

Makkar said she has also suffered at the hands of fellow inmates at Al-Qanata prison, where authorities later took her ('Judge tells of desire to kill Christian' 2009, *Compass Direct*

Website, 27 January <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/1860/> - Accessed 17 November 2009 - Attachment 8)

A judge is reported to have expelled a lawyer representing a Christian client:

An attempt by an Egyptian convert from Islam to legally change the religion listed on his identification card to "Christian" hit a setback on Jan. 6 when a judge ordered security personnel to remove his lawyer from court.

Attorney Nabil Ghobreyal was expelled from the courtroom at Cairo's Administrative Court following a heated argument with Judge Mohammad Ahmad Atyia.

The dispute arose after Atyia refused to acknowledge the existence of legal documents detailing the successful attempt of a Muslim man to convert to the Baha'i faith. Ghobreyal had planned to submit the court records of the decision in support of his case.

...
many judges are very religious, for many of them it is based on their religion, their thoughts; the law itself allows for people to convert, so that's what we're trying to do, have a decision based on law not on sharia."('Judge ejects lawyer for Christian from court' 2009, *Compass Direct* Website, 13 January -

<http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/ejection/> - Accessed 17 November 2009 - Attachment 9)

3. Please provide any information regarding the ill-treatment, by authorities in Egypt, of family members (as distinct from the convert) of a convert to Christianity?

The following July 2009 by Christian Solidarity Worldwide indicates that the family of a person who converts from Islam to Christianity will also be adversely treated:

Apostates from Islam who are under close surveillance by the State Security Intelligence Service (SSIS) have been intercepted at airports and detained on suspicion of questionable religious activities and espionage.

...
In the Middle East, a person's religion is closely tied to their identity in society and community. Conversion to another religion can therefore be seen as a betrayal of one's community. Conversion from Islam to Christianity is often perceived as siding with and working for the West in a move against national unity. This 'betrayal' is a serious blow to the social standing of the convert's family. A convert from Islam brings shame on the family and community, which then has to be cleansed or corrected.

...
Religious converts from Christianity to Islam face no legal difficulty and can easily change their official records without any court action, although it is possible they will be ostracised by their Christian community. In stark contrast, Christians from Muslim backgrounds face serious legal obstacles. Although there is no Egyptian legislation which deals directly with apostasy, Christians from Muslim backgrounds are often arrested and charged with damaging national unity and social peace in contempt of religion under Article 98F of the Egyptian Penal Code. They can then be tried before the State Security Court as a threat to national security. Christians from Muslim backgrounds who wish to regain their Christian identities must file cases at the Court of Administrative Litigation in order to change their official registration.

...
Apostates from Islam who are under close surveillance by the State Security Intelligence Service (SSIS) have been intercepted at airports and detained on suspicion of questionable religious activities and espionage. The SSIS also regularly intimidates religious apostates by visiting their landlords, employers or neighbours to inform them of the 'truth' about the converts, stirring up animosity and increasing potential danger for them. Those who are detained by security forces face a wide range of physical and psychological abuse. One of the most widely known examples of this was the case of three young male Christians from Muslim backgrounds who were arrested in September and October 1990 and were detained until July 1991 under Article 98F of the Penal Code (High State Security Court Case No 662/1990). Throughout their detention they were tortured repeatedly by security officials in a variety of ways, including electric shocks to the genitals, cigarette burns, beatings, sexual humiliation and isolation in cells too small to lie down in. They were finally released

following widespread international pressure and renunciation of their faith. CSW met them in 2007. They still live in Egypt and face continued intimidation and threats against their families.

...

Since children of Christians from Muslim backgrounds are automatically registered as Muslims even if the parents have been registered as Christian, they are obliged to attend Islamic religious education classes in school.

...

Christians from Muslim backgrounds also face ostracism from Christian churches. Often the indigenous Christian community is suspicious of their conversion, fearing intelligence activities and Islamist threats. In addition, the official acceptance of converts by a church as registered and baptised 'members' can cause the church problems with security forces. (4.1. Apostates. pp8-9) (Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2009, "Egypt – Religious Freedom Profile", July, <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=report&id=118> – Accessed 20 November 2009 – Attachment 10)

According to findings made by academics of Middle Eastern Studies at a workshop in Jordan in 2006, Copts in Egypt are subjected to employment restrictions because of their ethnicity:

Les discriminations à l'embauche, le plafond de verre (notamment dans l'administration et l'armée), l'interdiction de pratiquer l'obstétrique ou d'enseigner l'arabe, les contraintes légales et administratives liées à la construction et à l'entretien des lieux de cultes chrétiens, la faible visibilité de la religion copte dans l'arène politique et les médias d'état ainsi que dans les programmes scolaires et plus généralement l'hostilité de certains musulmans vis-à-vis des coptes, y compris au sein de l'appareil administratif, sont autant de preuves non seulement des discriminations bien réelles auxquelles ceux-ci doivent faire face mais également du manque d'empressement des autorités d'y mettre fin.

(Discrimination in employment, the glass ceiling (particularly in administration and the army), the prohibition to practice obstetrics or to teach Arabic, the legal and administrative constraints linked to the building and maintenance of Christian places of worship, the low visibility of the Coptic religion in the political arena and the state media as well as in school programmes and more generally the hostility of some Muslims towards Copts; including in the Administration are several proofs not only the very real forms of discrimination Copts have to face but it equally demonstrates the lack of zeal on the part of the authorities to end this situation.) [Translation by the Country Adviser] ("Dynamiques et enjeux des relations interconfessionnelles en Égypte », 2006, 11-16 June - <http://calenda.revues.org/report.php?id=626> – Accessed 19 November 2009 – Attachment 12).

4. Is there any information regarding whether Coptic Christians are accepted into the Egyptian police force and if so, what proportion of the police force they comprise?

A search of the resources available to the Tribunals has failed to provide statistical information on the number of Copts in the police force; however, the following report indicates that they are few:

There are no high-ranking Copts in the armed and security forces, although a small number of Copts hold minor offices (6. Equal Opportunities. pp15) (Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2009, "Egypt – Religious Freedom Profile", July, <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=report&id=118> – Accessed 20 November 2009 – Attachment 10)

This is corroborated by the following report:

Thus no Christian Copt has ever served as a governor (save once), or a police commissioner, or city mayor, or a university president or dean. There are few Copts in the upper ranks of the armed forces, and practically none in the security services.

(Zaki, M. 2007, 'Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World – Annual Report', Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies website

http://www.eicds.org/english/publications/reports/Annual_Report_07.doc – Accessed 13 August 2007 – Attachment 4).

5. Please provide statistics regarding the number of Coptic Christians and Muslims in Cairo?

The matter of a true census concerning the Coptic population in Egypt is controversial as is borne out by the following reports which give different estimations.

According to a Christian monitoring agency, the Coptic Church claims to have 10 million adherents:

4. Freedom of religion and belief

Christians form the largest religious minority in Egypt, with the Christian population recorded at around 10%³ of a total of just over 80 million. Various other sources put the figures at between 10-15% of the population. The Coptic Orthodox Church claims to have ten million members. There are around 300,000 Catholic Christians, comprising Greek, Latin, Coptic and Armenian Catholics, with fifteen Catholic Bishops. Other religious confessions such as Jews and Bahá'ís total less than 1% of society; there are an estimated 2,000 Bahá'ís and approximately 200 Jews living in Egypt. The remainder of Egypt's population is Muslim, of which the vast majority is Sunni (Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2009, "Egypt – Religious Freedom Profile", July, <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=report&id=118> – Accessed 20 November 2009. (pp5) – Attachment 10).

According to this recent analysis by the state-controlled *Al-Ahram*, the Egyptian census did not reflect reality:

The census is a very sensitive issue for both Copts and Muslims, for the Church and Al-Azhar and above all for the state. State figures suggest that of the around 80 million Egyptians there are some six to seven per cent Copts. The Church suggests double this figure while radical Islamic organisations claim Copts account for as little as four per cent of the total.

According to some independent sources, in 1995 Copts formed an estimated 15 per cent of Egypt's population. Their declining proportion of the total is not an exclusively Egyptian phenomenon but that applies to Christian communities across the Arab world. (Ezzat, Dina 2009, 'Blessed be the people of Egypt', *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, Issue No. 929, 8-14 January <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/929/feature.htm> - Accessed 27 October 2009 – Attachment 11).

The previously mentioned Middle East academic workshop which took place in 2006 in Jordan provides figures which they claim to have been independently verified:

Le dernier recensement égyptien, effectué en 1996, comptabilisait 3,5 millions de coptes soit environ 6% de la population. Ces chiffres, jugés beaucoup trop faibles par la plupart des coptes mais confirmés par des études indépendantes (Courbage and Fargues 1997; Denis 2000) font néanmoins de ceux-ci la plus importante communauté chrétienne du Moyen-Orient.

(The last Egyptian census which was carried out in 1996, accounted for 3.5 million Copts, that is 6 per cent of the population. These figures were deemed too low by most Copts but were confirmed by independent studies (Courbage and Fargues 1997; Denis 2000), nevertheless they are the largest Christian community in the Middle East.) [Translation by the Country Adviser] (“Dynamiques et enjeux des relations interconfessionnelles en Égypte », 2006, 11-16 June - <http://calenda.revues.org/report.php?id=626> – Accessed 19 November 2009 – Attachment 12).

The following book was published in 1987 as an occasional paper and contains specific statistical data on Cairo:

[in] this study all Egyptian-born Christians will be termed ‘Copt’...the term ‘Christian’ in the national census... is used to include foreign-born Christians..(pp17)

5. The Copts in Cairo

...there is no place in which the Copts are not represented. Each ‘suburb’ has at least 1,000 Christians. There are fourteen with over 10,000 and nine with over 20,000...(pp89)

...

Table 5.1 Christians in Cairo

Total Number of Christians 516,401

Total Number Muslims 4,557,615

Percentage of Christians 10.2 (pp91) (Chitham, EJ, 1986, ‘The Coptic Community in Egypt. Spatial and Social Change, Centre for Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies, University of Durham, England - <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/132/1/32CMEIS.pdf> - Accessed 17 November 2009 – Attachment 13).

6. Please provide some recent information about tensions and conflicts, in Cairo, between Copts and Muslims.

These two reports provide chronological information on recent incidents which occurred in Cairo in recent times:

For example, in November 2008 a mob in the Ain Shams district of Cairo attacked and burned an unlicensed Coptic church. (Introduction)

...

The Government failed to prosecute anyone in connection with the November 24, 2008, attack on an unlicensed Coptic Church in the Matariya area of Cairo. (Section II. Status of Government. Respect for Religious Freedom)

...

At least one sectarian clash was related to the construction of a church. On November 23, 2008, hundreds of Muslims attacked an unlicensed, recently consecrated Coptic Church in a renovated factory in Cairo's Ain Shams district. According to media reports, 13 police and Copts were injured in the attack. Police arrested five Muslims and three Copts on charges of unlawful assembly and disturbing the peace. All were released without charges on November 27.(Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom)

...

On October 7, 2008, Cairo police arrested a Copt who allegedly killed his future Muslim brother-in-law and shot and injured his sister because he opposed their marriage. .(Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom) (US Department of State 2009, *International Religious Freedom Report 2009 – Egypt*, September, Introduction – Attachment 14).

The following report provides a chronology of serious incidents which occurred throughout the year – the articles which pertain to Cairo and its surrounds have been highlighted and are appended in full at the end of the report. ‘Egypt’, 2009, *Compass Direct* website, 23 November - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/> - Accessed 25 November 2009. – Attachment 15)

List of Attachments

1. UK Home Office 2009, Country of origin information key documents. Arab Republic of Egypt, 13 July <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/key-docs-egypt-150709.doc> - Accessed 19 November 2009.
2. ‘Convert arrested for marrying Christian’ 2009, *Compass Direct News* website, 22 April - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/3129/> - Accessed 16 November.
3. ‘Convert’s Religious Rights Case Threatens Egypt’s Islamists’ 2009, *Compass Direct* Website, 12 May - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/3615/> - Accessed 15 November 2009.
4. Zaki, M. 2007, ‘Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World – Annual Report’, Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies website [http://www.eicds.org/english/publications/reports/Annual Report 07.doc](http://www.eicds.org/english/publications/reports/Annual%20Report%2007.doc) – Accessed 13 August 2007.
5. Egypt Denies Right to Convert to Second Christian’ 2009, *Compass-Direct* website, 16 June - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/4773/> - Accessed 17 November 2009.
6. ‘Christian Arrested for Distributing Tracts’ *Compass Direct News* website, 9 October - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/10377/>
<http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/10464/> - Accessed 19 November 2009.
7. ‘Coptic Church issues first Conversion Certificate’ 2009, *Compass Direct* Website, 13 April – Accessed 18 November 2009 - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/2980/>.
8. ‘Judge tells of desire to kill Christian’ 2009, *Compass Direct* Website, 27 January <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/1860/> - Accessed 17 November 2009.
9. ‘Judge ejects lawyer for Christian from court’ 2009, *Compass Direct* Website, 13 January - <http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/egypt/ejection/> - Accessed 17 November 2009.
10. Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2009, “Egypt – Religious Freedom Profile”, July, <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=report&id=118> – Accessed 20 November 2009.
11. Ezzat, Dina 2009, ‘Blessed be the people of Egypt’, *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, Issue No. 929, 8-14 January <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/929/feature.htm> - Accessed 27 October 2009.

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