

Massacre of Egyptian Christians

Contributed by Elias Bejjani
Sunday, 02 January 2011

There are no sufficient or adequate words or sentiments that can express our sorrow, grief and pain with regard to Saturday's barbaric and savage attack that targeted by a car full of explosives and a booby-trapped bomb a Christian Coptic church in the vicinity of the Egyptian city of Alexandria as about a thousand worshipers were leaving the church after taking part in the New Year's mass prayers. Reports stated that 21 Christian worshipers were killed, while more than 80 others seriously injured.

Egyptian President Mubarak publicly condemned the massacre and promised to prosecute and punish the criminals alleging that they were not Egyptians. Meanwhile, many countries all over the world, Church leaders, legal advocates and numerous international humanitarian organizations strongly deplored the brutal bloody premeditated attacks that constantly target and persecute Egyptian Christians. In the same context, two days ago 2 Christians were killed and 11 others injured in the Iraqi capital, Bagdad, when their neighborhoods were hit by an orchestrated series of terrorist explosions.

Apparently, rhetorical means of condemnation, denunciation and deploring are falling on deaf ears and numbed consciences in both Egypt and Iraq. We strongly believe that it is time for the UN and its General Council, Arab states, USA, Russia, Canada and all democratic and free countries to immediately step in and take all needed measures on all levels to actually and not just verbally protect Christians in both Egypt and Iraq, where sadly the ruling authorities and their security apparatuses bear full legal and humanitarian responsibility for the attacks. These authorities in both countries do not only abstain from carrying out their designated security duties, but also encourage encroachment on Christians and their churches, turn a blind eye on all terrorist attacks targeting Christians and help the attackers to escape judicial accountability. Ridiculously most of the Egyptian fanatical attackers who assaulted Christians and their churches were falsely alleged to be mentally sick.

Egypt, the biggest Arabic country, is one of the most notorious countries worldwide that systematically oppresses, discriminates and persecutes its Christian citizens. Egyptian authorities deprive their 12-15 million Christian population of most of their basic rights, while rigorously nurturing and promoting a culture of intolerance, hatred, and fanaticism that tags Christians as infidels and heretics. In the same realm, Egypt does not honor the Charter of Human Rights and instead governs its Christian population in accordance to the discriminative, racial and brutal Ottoman law known as the "Hamayouni Decree". It is worth mentioning that the Arab League has always been indifferent and silent in regard to all the assaults that target Egyptian Christians.

We strongly condemn the failure of the Egyptian authorities on all levels in fulfilling their legal, security and human obligations to protect Christians and hold them fully responsible for the heinous crime that on Saturday targeted faithful, peaceful and unarmed Christian worshipers in the city of Alexandria.

We urge our government of Canada to exert its utmost diplomatic efforts in a bid to help the persecuted Egyptian Christians, advocate for their just humanitarian cause at the UN, take all necessary measures to safeguard their rights, and ensure the freedom of their religious belief.

From the Lebanese Canadian Coordinating Council (LCCC), we extend our warmest heartfelt condolences to the families, relatives and friends of the victims, and wish a fast and complete recovery for all the wounded and injured.

Our conciliation for the ongoing Egyptian Christian ordeal is in the Gospel of Saint Matthew 5/9-12: *ýBlessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.ý 5:10 ýBlessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousnessý sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. 5:11 ýBlessed are you when people reproach you, persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, for my sake.ý 5:12 ýRejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.ý*

Background

The Hamayouni Decree (Wikipedia, encyclopedia).

The Hamayouni Decree, also "Hamayonic", or "Hamayouni" (Arabic: 'D.7 'DGE'JHFI‎), is a clause in Egyptian law, dating back to Ottoman rule (February 1856) that regulates church construction and maintenance. It is currently a cause of much controversy due to the conditions that need to be fulfilled in order for the permit to be granted. These same restrictions do not apply to mosques. The law requires that each permit must be issued by the Egyptian President. The requirements are complex, and frequently arbitrary, for building and repairing churches or church-owned buildings. These

culminate in the requirement that the state president must personally approve all building applications, and the provincial governors must approve all applications for repairs, even for something as small as repairing a toilet or a broken window.

*Elias Bejjani

*Canadian-Lebanese Human Rights activist, journalist and political commentator

*Email phoenicia@hotmail.com

*Web sites <http://www.10452lccc.com> & <http://www.clhrf.com>

*Mailing phoenicia group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Phoenicia/>.