



Egypt - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 26 and 27 March 2013

Information on Christian - Muslim issues between March 2012 and March 2013. Information on the Muslim Brotherhood intimidating Christians in an attempt to get them to convert to Islam. Information on general religious conflict.

In March 2013 a document released by *Amnesty International* states:

“...religious minorities have continued to suffer discrimination by the authorities and receive inadequate protection from the state from sectarian violence. Discrimination and attacks against Coptic Christians, the largest religious minority in Egypt, are particularly prevalent” (Amnesty International (15 March 2013) *Fighting For Justice And Human Rights, Egypt’s Women Activists Tell Of Their Struggle*, p.9).

Reuters in March 2013 states:

“Incidents of Christian-Muslim strife have increased in Egypt, an overwhelmingly Muslim nation with a Coptic Christian minority of about 10 percent, since the uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak in 2011” (Reuters (1 March 2013) *Egyptian Muslims in clash over conversion to Christianity rumor*).

Commenting on events of 2013 a report issued in January 2013 by *Human Rights Watch* notes:

“Incidents of sectarian violence between Copts and Muslims continued throughout 2012 with no new prosecutions or serious investigations...” (Human Rights Watch (31 January 2013) *World Report 2013 - Egypt*).

An article published in November 2012 by *Reuters* notes:

“Christians, who make up about a tenth of Egypt's 83 million population, worry about political gains made by Islamists since Hosni Mubarak was ousted last year. Radical Islamists have been blamed for attacks on churches several times since, but Copts have long complained of discrimination in Muslim-majority Egypt” (Reuters (4 November 2012) *In Islamist-led Egypt, Coptic Christians name new pope*).

This document also states:

“Sectarian tensions have often flared into violence, particularly in rural areas where rivalries between clans or families sometimes add to friction” (ibid).

BBC News in January 2013 states:

“Egypt's Coptic Christians are facing an uncertain future, as they prepare to celebrate Christmas on 7 January. About 10% of Egyptians are Copts, making up the largest Christian minority in the Middle East. But many are concerned about the rise of President Mohammed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood and the more radical Salafis” (BBC News (3 January 2013) *Worry taints Egyptian Coptic Christmas*).

A report issued in February 2013 by *Freedom House* commenting on events of 2012 states:

“Sectarian bloodshed has increased in recent years, with Christians suffering the brunt of the violence” (Freedom House (1 February 2013) *Freedom in the World 2013 - Egypt*).

In December 2012 *IRIN News* notes:

“Members of Egypt's religious minorities say the change of regime has benefited some groups, particularly Islamists, but that this has led to an upsurge in religious intolerance and a reduction in religious freedoms, for Christians, Bahais, and even Shiites” (IRIN News (10 December 2012) *Egypt: Fresh worries for religious minorities*).

In August 2012 *Agence France Presse* states:

“Muslims have in the past burned the homes of Copts during sectarian clashes, with dozens of Christians killed in the past 18 months alone since president Hosni Mubarak's overthrow in a popular uprising” (Agence France Presse (1 August 2012) *6 wounded in sectarian clashes outside Cairo*).

Research compiled by the *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* in July 2012 states:

“Several 2012 sources report on an increase of sectarian tension...” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (31 July 2012) *Egypt: Situation and treatment of Christians; availability of state protection*).

A report issued in July 2012 by *Christian Solidarity International* notes:

“For over thirty years, reports of Coptic women being kidnapped, forcibly converted and married to Muslim men have been emerging from Egypt” (Christian Solidarity International (July 2012) *“Tell My Mother I Miss Her”: The Disappearance, Forced Conversions and Forced Marriages of Coptic Christian Women in Egypt (II)*, p.8).

References

Agence France Presse (1 August 2012) *6 wounded in sectarian clashes outside Cairo*
<http://reliefweb.int/report/egypt/6-wounded-sectarian-clashes-outside-cairo>
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<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/04/us-egypt-christians-idUSBRE8A306B20121104>

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to

the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

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