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The Egyptian ambassador
The Egyptian Embassy
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On the 7th of May 12 people were killed “now 3 of the wounded died making the total number of killed 15” and more than 200 were wounded when thousands of salafis attacked two churches and surrounding Christian-owned homes and businesses in Imbaba. This is the second time in two months that a church building in the country has been set ablaze.

Before the attack began, a rumors spread by salafis that a Coptic woman who allegedly converted to Islam was being held in the church against her will, about 4000 crowds of Muslims chanting Islamic slogans and shouting Osama bin Laden’s name began marching down the streets gathered in front of St Mina church to “free her”.

In attempts to dispel the rumors, the head clergy members of St. Mina allowed a group of Islamic imams into the church building to search for the woman. The imams declared to the gathering Muslims that the woman wasn’t in the building, according to witnesses at the scene, this reassurance was not accepted by the Salafis crowd who started to attack the Christians and went into the church smashing the place down then setting it on fire.

The mob went to the Virgin Mary Church, an undefended building a 10-minute walk from St. Mina, the mob shot through the locks on the church doors, went in and set the building on fire. The fire gutted the five-story structure except for a small chapel on the top floor of the building, which sustained substantial smoke damage. A few items scattered throughout the church building – mostly charred pews and one icon – were unscathed.

The Egyptian authorities arrested 223 so far, most of the are Christians and the main suspect is Adel Labib a Coptic Merchant who lives near by St Mina’s church, apparently Chairman Dr I H Ibrahim Mobile +447976710729 e-mail ibrahimhab@aol.com 1

his is accused of firing in the air when he saw the mob coming chanting anti Christians slogans carrying swords and knives.

On the 22nd April 2011 in another incident, violence broke out in the southern Egyptian town of Abu Qurqas El Balad, in Minya Governorate, 260 KM south of Cairo.

The pretext for the attack on Christians in Abu Qurqas El Balad was an allegation that a Muslim woman passenger in a microbus hit her head against the roof of the microbus as the driver went too fast over an artificial speed retarder hump which was made by a Christian lawyer, Mr Alaa Reda Roushdi, opposite his villa, we are not sure whether this hump was built with agreement of the local authorities or not. The hump was to slow down cars travelling at high speed in that stretch of road.

Rumors spread throughout Abu Qurqas of many strangers and of trucks loaded with weapons coming into the village to carry out the threats during the Easter week. The terrorized Christian villagers sent pleas everywhere, asking for protection, even to Coptic groups in Europe and the U.S.

Christian families anticipating a blood bath on that Friday because Muslims announced their intention to avenge the injury of the woman the village the atmosphere was tense.

On that day, the private guard of Mr Alaa Reda Roushdi villa saw a large Muslim salafis group of men armed with sticks and swords approaching. As the Salafis crowd started attacking the Christians and their properties, Mr Roushdi's private guards shot at the attackers in self defense, the guards were both Muslims and Christians; this was followed by rampage of the Christian's properties and shops by Muslim fundamentalist salafis. One Christian Copt was killed, an old woman was thrown out of her second floor balcony and ten Copts were hospitalized. Coptic homes, shops, businesses, fields and livestock were plundered and torched.

The owner of the villa Mr Alaa Reda Roushdi was in Cairo at the time, on his return he was arrested and still under arrest.

On the 14th May 2011 peaceful demonstrators in front of the national TV in Cairo were shot at by "unknown people" injuring 60 and killing 2 as far as we heard from CCN news. I do not believe that in this highly sensitive area people could shoot others without the full police knowledge as the government sources announced.

Since the revolution 25th January till now the Salafis who are extreme Muslim group who bent on applying Sharia and treating non-Muslims as second class citizens were allowed out of prison, treated like cinema stars with several media interviews and in spite of their inflammatory speeches and incitement of violence and hate against Christians and their inflammatory demonstration in front of the Coptic cathedral in Cairo and insults to Christians and Pope Shenouda and their act of extreme violence as they were behind the burning and demolishing the church in Etfieh, south of Cairo and cutting of a Christian mans ear in public applying Sharia as they declared, and in inciting people in Qena governorate to reject the newly appointed Christian governor just because he was Christian, they were invited by the government in each occasion to mediate to resolve each of the crisis. They Salafis leaders failed to convince people in Qena to accept the Christian governor.

Since the 25th Jan 2011 revolution, Christians in Egypt have suffered more persecution than before. It is difficult to understand how the agent of persecution of Copts could be assigned the mediation to solve a problem they created in the first instance.

Copts in Egypt had enough. Copts now demand justice and the rule of law.

The Egyptian supreme Council has encouraged Salafi to oversee the government sponsored reconciliation session where victim has to sit with the criminal and accept to reconcile, a situation never seen in any country and undermines all principles of justice.

We, the Egyptians living in UK, Muslims and Christians, are very concerned with what is being allowed to happen in Egypt and would like our message and voice to be heard by the Supreme Military Council and the Prime Minister and his team in Cairo.

- 1- We, the protesters would like to express our admiration to the Youth revolution of 25th January 2011 and the principle of the Egypt as a Secular State to all Egyptians all with Equal dignity, rights and obligation in under the Egyptian secular law.
- 2- We, the protesters would like to reject all forms of violence, intimidation and discrimination practiced against any member of the Egyptian society; any encroachments must be dealt with according to the Civil Law alone.
- 3- We, the protesters totally reject the government sponsored reconciliation session where the victim is forced to reconcile without restitution of rights, with the criminal the perpetrator of violence; this resulted in a culture of impunity and escalating violence against Copts.
- 4- We, the protesters would like demand the arrest of all who incited violence regardless of their religious status.
- 5- We, the protesters demand an end to the policy of applying balances and the immediate release of innocent used as a bargaining chip to achieve reconciliation and the immediate release of the people who used fire arms in self defense. Self defense is considered legitimate in all laws.
- 6- The safety and security of citizen is the responsibility of the governments. We demand the Egyptian government to show seriousness in protecting all citizens including the minorities.
- 7- We, the protesters demand the reopening of the closed churches and speedy completion the Unified Law of Building of Places of Worship.
- 8- We, the protesters would like to ask for laws to criminalise all forms of discrimination to be produced and applied fairly on all citizens in Egypt.

Yours sincerely

For the protesters

Dr Peter Bibawy

Dr Shenouda Shalaby

Dr Ibrahim Habib

United Action for Copts

Coptic Activist

United Copts GB