

## Coptic Solidarity Presses for Urgent Protection of Egypt's Imperiled Coptic Christians

WASHINGTON -- Coptic Solidarity recently calls on the US Department of State and legislators to publicly condemn the rash of fatal attacks and collective punishment inflicted on Egypt's Copts, and to pressure the Egyptian government to fully prosecute perpetrators of these crimes.  
By Christian Newswire  
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Within the last week, the already besieged Coptic community in Egypt has been further terrorized through a series of attacks including:

- On December 12, a Muslim policeman charged with guarding a church in Minya shot and killed two Copts--a father, 49, and his son, 21. Eyewitnesses report a minor verbal dispute ensued before the officer shot the two men. Video surveillance footage of the incident shows the killer-cop brandishing his gun moving around, cursing the two bleeding Christians who were still moving on the ground. Two other police officers arrived but merely watched without providing help to the critically wounded victims as a normal human being would in such situations.

The office of the prosecutor is reported to have charged the murderer with "beating that led to death" with a maximum penalty of seven years in prison, compared to "murder" which could lead to a death sentence.

- On December 9, a brand new and only Coptic church serving 2,500 Copts in the village of Koum al-Raheb in Samalout, Minya was closed by police and the keys confiscated by the local authorities, after Muslim mobs protested its presence during the inaugural mass. Muslim mobs attacked Copts' homes on the 10th, imposing collective punishment on the Coptic villagers simply for exercising their right to religious freedom. A reconciliation meeting concluded with the closure of the church pending the authorities' decision on its "legality."
- On December 10, fire broke out in a church of another village in the same governorate, which was quickly blamed on an electrical malfunction--a manufactured "culprit" repeatedly used to explain numerous cases of church fires.
- A Coptic man, Abdo Adel, 43, in Egypt's Minya governorate, was sentenced to three years in prison after he was found guilty of "insulting Islam in the first degree." Adel's "crime" was to publish a post on Facebook in July that Muslims said insulted Islam. Adel was arrested on July 6th, and a mob of about 90 Muslim villagers attacked Coptic homes to exact collective punishment. The police released most of the perpetrators after a "reconciliation session."

Such attacks and perversions of justice perpetrated both by the Egyptian society and government are compounded by the use of "reconciliation sessions" which force Copts to forgo their legal rights, and by the government which refuses to fully prosecute or carry out sentences on those who attack Copts and their properties. Noticeable is the total lack of coverage by government-controlled media or any ranking official, which underscores the deliberate oppression and humiliation of the Copts, whom the government treats as mere Dhimmis, not citizens in their own homeland. Coptic Solidarity holds the Egyptian government fully culpable and responsible for fostering this culture of

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impunity that encourages the increasing numbers of heinous attacks on Copts.

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Coptic Solidarity urgently calls on US government officials and legislators to unequivocally condemn such religiously-motivated violence and urge immediate protection for Copts in Egypt.  
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Coptic Solidarity is hosting a rally on December 21, to urge the US Administration and Egyptian government to urgently take action to protect Coptic Christians. The rally will start at the main gate of the White House from 11 AM - 1PM and move to the Egyptian Embassy from 1PM -2PM in Washington, DC. The location of the Egyptian Embassy is 3521 International Court, NW Washington, DC 20008.

Coptic Solidarity is an organization seeking to help minorities, particularly the Copts, of Egypt and we support those in Egypt working for upholding values of freedom, equality, and the protection of the fundamental rights of all Egyptian citizens. It advocates in cooperation with the affiliated organizations in Canada and in Europe (Solidarité Copte). For more information, contact Lindsay Griffin at 801-512-1713 or [coptadvocacy@copticsolidarity.org](mailto:coptadvocacy@copticsolidarity.org)