

Year (3) Issue 1 (Jan./ Feb./ March 2009)



The judiciary in Egypt, is it fair or biased?

Female Coptic lawyer gets 6 months imprisonment and 3000 pound fine after being assaulted by Islamist lawyers because she said "I complain to the Attorney-General".



The case is a testimony to bias of the Egyptian police and judiciary against Christians.

In another battle to obtain justice by the 25-year old female Coptic lawyer against the Muslim Brotherhood infested police, lawyers and judges in Abu-Korkas, Upper Egypt, Lawyer Mervat Ragy was handed an unfair 6 months prison sentence and a bail of £3000. She was charged with insulting the prosecutor during her court case by saying "I will complain to the Attorney General" for being treated unfairly.

The facts of the case goes back to March 24, 2008 when Mervat and her mother, were falsely accused of bodily assaulting a girl called Basma Metwalli. Prosecutor Mohanad threatened Mervat to issue a warrant to force her and her mother to appear before court, on the evening of that same day, if both did not willingly attend, although this procedure is only reserved for felonies.

Mervat went with her mother that evening, to find another surprise awaiting her by the prosecution. Prosecutor Mohanad forced her to have a lawyer accompany them, according to Article 124 of procedures, although this article was canceled a long time before. She argued that she would give up her right for the presence of counsel, and being a lawyer, she would represent herself. However, the prosecutor insisted on the implementation of a canceled Article, as a matter of procrastination to the investigation.

Due to his demeaning and threatening behavior, Mervat sent on March 25, 2008, a petition to the Attorney General, to which the Prosecutor surprised her on March 29 by submitting a memorandum against her for insulting him by saying: "I will complain to the Attorney General".

He also reported that she allegedly insulted him, in the corridors of the building, by saying: "You should get a Muslim Brotherhood lawyer to help you in writing the report", and "all lawyers in Menya belong to the Muslim Brotherhood". Mervat was charged with a misdemeanor case for contempt of a public officer while performing his duty.

Lawyer Mervat refuted his allegations, besides the investigations carried out confirmed that it could not reach a conclusion to back the truthfulness of the prosecutor's claims. She added that it is not a crime to say that she would report him to the Attorney General, as it is the right of any citizen to file complaints with the Attorney General.

However, judge Hatem Ghazoli, President of the divisional Court in Abu-Korkas, handed her the maximum penalty of 6 months imprisonment, despite the triviality of the offense, besides ignoring the second part of the sentence, which should be a monetary fine of £200 and replaced it with a bail of 3000 Egyptian Pounds, knowing that without first paying

Continuation on Page 2

this huge bail sum, she would be unable, under the law, to make an appeal.

Outspoken Mervat Nagy commented that judge Ghazoli has a lot of activities among lawyers representing the Muslim Brotherhood, where they pray together every afternoon, and he also makes speeches to them, including those detrimental to her reputation, resulting in previous abuses committed against her by some of them.

Mervat confirmed that she has sent several complaints against the judge in question to the Egyptian President, the Attorney General, Minister of Justice and Interior Minister accusing him of collusion with the Muslim Brotherhood lawyers to issue this rule against her, which is exaggerated and not commensurate with the seriousness of her charge, which was fabricated by the prosecutor.

It is worth noting that Ms. Ragy was assaulted twice on Thursday 22nd January 2009, one attack in the morning, and

the second in the evening, while she was on her way to complete the investigations of the morning assault.

She was intercepted behind the court building by two Muslim brotherhood lawyers who assaulted her, and tore her clothes off. She was left unconscious during which her personal ID was stolen, and was later transported to hospital.

Instead of being intimidated by the previous attacks, young lawyer Mervat Ragy went public unveiling the facts of the attacks on her, and exposing the collusion between the police and the Muslim Brotherhood lawyers.

We alert the Egyptian police and the Egyptian judiciary to their obligation to treat all citizens equally and we also remind the Egyptian government of its duty to weed out the fundamentalists elements which have infested police and judiciary.

* Source of the news Coptreal

ISLAMIC LAWYERS URGE DEATH SENTENCE FOR CONVERT

In case on whether he can legally change religion, Christian is accused of ‘apostasy.’

In the latest hearing of a Muslim-born Egyptian’s effort to officially convert to Christianity, opposing lawyers advocated he be convicted of “apostasy,” or leaving Islam, and sentenced to death.

More than 20 Islamic lawyers attended the hearing on Sunday (Feb. 22) in Maher Ahmad El-Mo’otahssem Bellah El-Gohary’s case to obtain identification papers with Christianity designated as his religious affiliation. Two lawyers led the charge, Ahmed Dia El-Din and Abdel Al-Migid El-Anani.

“[El-Din] started to talk about the Quran being in a higher position than the Bible,” one of El-Gohary’s lawyers, Said Fayez, told Compass. “[El-Din said] people can move to a higher religion but not down, so people cannot move away from Islam because it is highest in rank.”

Memos submitted by opposing lawyers asserted that cases such as El-Gohary’s form part of a U.S. Zionist attack on Islam in Egypt, that Christianity is an inferior religion to Islam and that Copts protect and defend converts from Islam at their own peril.

“We received 150 pages from them that talked about religion,” said Fayez. “We are not in a position to talk about religion, we are only talking about the law.”

El-Gohary Beaten

El-Gohary was not present at the hearing, as attendance would put him at extreme personal risk. He had planned to obtain papers authorizing attorney Nabil Ghobreyal to act as his proxy representation in court, but staff members at the registry office swore at and beat him, lawyers said.

Judge Hamdy Yasin was forced to ad-

journal the case until March 28 because El-Gohary did not obtain the necessary proxy representation documents.

“I am now in a position where I can’t do anything else,” El-Gohary, who has been in hiding, told Compass. “I have to go [to court] despite the danger. I believe God will protect me. It’s a very hard decision, but I have to go.”

Copts and Christian converts have to face such systemic prejudice daily in the battle for their rights, he said.

“Our rights in Egypt, as Christians or converts, are less than the rights of animals,” El-Gohary said. “We are deprived of social and civil rights, deprived of our inheritance and left to the fundamentalists to be killed. Nobody bothers to investigate or care about us.”

El-Gohary, 56, has been attacked in the street, spat at and knocked down in his



effort to win the right to officially convert. He said he and his 14-year-old daughter continue to receive death threats by text message and phone call.

But he also has received text messages, he said, of encouragement from other Muslim-born converts too fearful to take a similar stand.

“Everyday I get calls from people who have converted but are secret,” said El-Gohary. “They ask me every day about what is happening, because it affects their future.”

The danger to himself and his daughter has led El-Gohary to suggest that he will most likely leave Egypt, but not until the case is over.

“He wouldn’t go without doing this trial, he doesn’t want to leave before it is finished,” said attorney Ghobreyal.

Continuation on Page 3

“Because it [conversion] is his right, then he will do whatever he likes.”

El-Gohary said he feels a responsibility to witness about God and Jesus. “I have to do what I am doing for the sake of God and the sake of the converts, to the glory of God,” he said.

He decided to legally change his religious affiliation out of concern over the effects that his “unofficial Christianity” has on his family, saying he was particularly concerned about his daughter, Dina Maher Ahmad Mo’otahsem. Though raised as a Christian, when she reaches age 16 she will be issued an identification card stating her religion as Muslim unless her father’s appeal is successful.

At school, she has been refused the right to attend Christian religious classes offered to Egypt’s Christian

minorities and has been forced to attend Muslim classes. Religion is a mandatory part of the Egyptian curriculum.

Encouraging Horizon

Despite setbacks, delays and the vitriol on display in the courtroom, El-Gohary and his lawyers reserve optimism not only about the future of the case but the future of the country as well.

“There is evidence and signs on the horizon that are very encouraging, that there will be a time in the future that equal rights will be achieved,” said Fayeze. “People have started to ask for their rights and demand to have the freedom of religion. This is a good sign.”

Mohammed Hegazy, the first Muslim-born Christian convert to attempt to have his new religion officially regis-

tered, is also in hiding after receiving death threats.

Despite a constitution that grants religious freedom, legal conversion from Islam to another faith remains unprecedented. Hegazy, who filed his case on Aug. 2, 2007, was denied the right to officially convert in a Jan. 29, 2008 court ruling that declared it was against Islamic law for a Muslim to leave Islam.

The judge based his decision on Article II of the Egyptian constitution, which enshrines Islamic law, or sharia, as the source of Egyptian law. The judge said that, according to *sharia*, Islam is the final and most complete religion and therefore Muslims already practice full freedom of religion and cannot return to an older belief (Christianity or Judaism).

Egyptian Judge Tells of Desire to Kill Christian

Bail granted to convert from Islam barred from legally changing religious ID.

After her arrest at Cairo’s airport on Dec. 13 while attempting to flee anti-Christian hostilities in Egypt, convert Martha Samuel Makkar was granted bail on Saturday (Jan. 24), but not before a judge took her aside and said he would like to kill her, according to her lawyer.

Attorney Nadia Tawfiq said Judge Abdelaa Hashem questioned Makkar extensively about her Christian faith during the hearing. Makkar, charged with forging identification documents, explained her reasons for her conversion, avowing her Christian faith and repudiating the judge’s claims that converting from Islam to Christianity was impossible.

“Then he said, ‘I want to talk with Martha alone,’ so we all left the room, and he said to her, ‘Nobody changes from Muslim to Christian – you are a Muslim,’” Tawfiq said. “And she said, ‘No, I am a Christian.’ He told her, ‘If I had a knife now, I would kill you.’ [Makkar] came out crying and depressed, but at least he gave the decision to let her go free.”

Makkar, 24, had planned to escape the dangers she has faced in Egypt by travelling to Russia with her family. She says that since converting to Christianity five years ago, police and members of her extended family have threatened her incessantly, the relatives vowing to kill her.

Airport security personnel had been notified of Makkar’s plans, according to a Coptic rights group.



“They had both [her original and Christian] names and maybe a picture before she reached the airport,” said Helmy Guirguis, president of the UK Coptic Association. “They did not [arrest her] to apply the law, they did it because of hate for Muslims converting to Christianity. It is like a great occasion to go and arrest some poor lady like her in the airport.”

After her arrest, Makkar was charged with carrying forged documents and taken to El-Nozha police station. Authorities also took her husband and two children into custody. The identification that Makkar carried listed her religion as Christian and bore the name she had chosen for herself rather than her given name, Zainab Said Abdel-Aziz.

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.

According to Tawfiq, Makkar said authorities held her in a room at the airport, hit her and denied food to her children.

“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.”

Continuation on Page 4

Abuse from Police, Prisoners

Before authorities took Makkar to prison, her two children, Morkes, 2, and Amanwael, 4, were handed into the care of family friends. Authorities took Makkar's Christian husband, 32-year-old Fadl Thabet, to the national security office in Alexandria for questioning.

The prosecution office later ordered his release after testimony from Makkar, who claimed that Thabet did not know she was a convert. Despite this order, authorities did not release Thabet but instead placed him under "emergency arrest." This form of incarceration requires no charges and provides no recourse to legal counsel. He remained in prison until Jan. 19.

Authorities had also arrested George Abyad, 67, and Masood Guirges, 55, employees of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate in Alexandria, on suspicion of helping Makkar obtain false papers. The prosecution office ordered their release along with that of Thabet based on Makkar's testimony.

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.

"She has some difficulty with the other prisoners in prison," said Tawfiq. "One of them kicked her and tried to kill her; one took the Bible and threw it on the floor, pushed her and tried to make her go back to Islam. But she is strong, she is strong."

Makkar remained in pre-trial detention until Thursday (Jan. 22), when she was briefly released on a bail of 3,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$540). She was then rearrested after prosecutors filed an appeal. The appeal failed, and on Saturday

(Jan. 24) Makkar was allowed to return home to her husband and children pending trial.

Tawfiq and two other lawyers, Nabil Azmi and Magdy Shounda, will represent Makkar when her trial resumes before a different judge. Tawfiq, however, is not hopeful that they will face any less of a bias.

"I think it will be the same, because all the judges are Muslim and are naturally upset about that [conversion]," she said.

Source:  **Compass**
DIRECT NEWS
News from the Frontlines of Persecution

تهديد قاض مصري لفتاة اعتنقت المسيحية بالقتل



Court of Cassation Accepts the appeal of twin, Andrew and Mario

Chamber advise in the Court of Cassation in Cairo decided to accept the appeal filed by the Attorney-General on the issue of twins Andrew and Mario as a theme and set the next meeting April 6 to consider the case again after the announcement of the Registry of the book to include items from the case papers and documents.

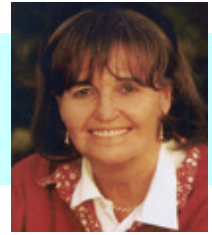
The decision is a good omen towards the restoration of the right of the mother custody of her children in accordance with the provisions of the Egyptian Constitution and international covenants, and close the door for extremists who exploit the polemics of religion for fires and the loss of natural rights and added that the ruling will be the next to end the tragedy of a case that has rocked the largest public opinion and decide the future of the children who are in danger in view of their threat, particularly in education and trying to force them to test in the Islamic religion and are therefore refused this so such a provision would be a victory of law and citizenship and this is what everyone hoped.



كاميليا تنتظر شهرين ونصف آخرين من خوف التنفيذ اولادها بضمهم الى الاب المسلم. يبدو أن الأمر عسيراً جداً على قضاء النقض بأن يحكم لصالح اندرو وماريو، كما يبدو أن القضاء المصري مصمم بأن يقوم بتعذيب اولادى الى اخر لحظة لحين بلوغهم السن القانونى . بهذه العبارات نقلت كاميليا وعبرت بها عندما اطلعنا بأن جلسة اندرو وماريو تأجلت للحكم الى يوم 15 يونيه 2009

وكان من المفروض ان النقض يريح قلب ام ينزف بدلا من الانتظار شهرين ونصف آخرين تحت وطأة التنفيذ الذى من المفترض ان يتم فى أى لحظة ، لان نقض الحكم لا يوقف التنفيذ بالقوة الجبرية ضدهم. وبهذه المدة الطويلة شهرين ونصف للحكم والذى ليس له أى مبرر قانونى قد يضعف ولن تستفيد الأم كاميليا ولا اندرو وماريو من طعن النائب العام بطلب الغاء الحكم الصادر ضدهما وبالتالي سوف لا يكون له قيمة قانونية فى حالة بلوغ الصغيرين السن القانونى فى اختيار معتقدهم وهو 15 سنة، وهو اليوم الذى سيوافق 24 يونيه 2009 يوم اتمامهما السن القانونى فى اختيار عقيدتهم الدينية، وكان النائب العام قدم طعنا فى غايه من الابداع القانونى لالغاء الحكم الصادر ضد اندرو وماريو والغاء كافة الآثار المترتبة عليه سابقا ولاحقا وحتى تصبح قاعدة قانونية يعمل القضاء المصرى بها فى دعاوى ضم الصغار فى حالة اسلام الاب أو احد الوالدين. الا اننا مازلنا نحرث فى المياه بدون جدوى .

A debate about religious persecution around the world at the House of Lords



Tabled By Baroness Cox

- **Baroness Cox asks Her Majesty's government to appoint a "special Envoy for Freedom of Religion"**
- **Christians in Nigeria, Sudan, India, North Korea, Egypt are severely persecuted.**
- **Copts are treated as second class citizen; converts in Egypt are persecuted with dire consequence in marriage and custody of children.**
- **The historic Abu Fana monastery has been attacked 15 times since 2004.**

My Lords, 60 years after the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, millions of people around the world still suffer because of their beliefs and the expression of those beliefs. Article 18 is often half-heartedly supported by national Governments, and, at the United Nations, it is one of the least-developed freedoms in terms of international human rights mechanisms, and is currently being contested through anti-defamation resolutions.

The subject is so vast that I cannot do justice to it. I am therefore extremely grateful to all noble Lords speaking in the debate, who will address issues that I cannot include.

Paul Marshall, in the definitive book *Religious Freedom in the World* highlights the extent of violations of this freedom. He says:

"Some—the Baha'is in Iran, Ahmadis in Pakistan, Buddhists in China-Tibet, Falun Gong in China, Christians in Saudi Arabia—are now among the most intensely persecuted, but there is no group in the world that does not suffer to some degree because of its beliefs.

Atheists and agnostics can also suffer from religious persecution... violations of religious freedom are massive, widespread and, in many parts of the world, intensifying". I briefly highlight a few examples.

I refer, first, to **Nigeria**, because of the urgency of the situation there. In Bauchi state the Christian community were attacked last weekend. At least 12 people were killed, more than 1,500 were displaced, and 14 churches, eight vicarages, one mosque and numerous Christian homes were destroyed. At least one person was killed yesterday, and, with disturbing reports of, "armed men gathering in the bush", further attacks are feared. There have been many such outbreaks of orchestrated violence since the introduction of Sharia law in 12 northern and central states, causing an estimated 60,000 deaths and much destruction.

Last July I visited a town in Bauchi state where eight churches had recently been destroyed. In Kano city, the authorities bulldozed a Roman Catholic Church the week we were there. Last November, Jos suffered a series of well-planned and co-ordinated attacks by Islamist extremists. Will Her Majesty's Government urge the Government of Nigeria to fulfil their constitutional responsi-

bility to protect all their citizens?

In Burma, the SPDC military regime is notorious for its brutal suppression of Buddhist monks and systematic oppression of non-Buddhists. Rohingya Muslims are denied citizenship and suffer systematic discrimination; mosques and madrassas have been demolished and, to quote a Rohingya leader, "We are a people at the brink of extermination".

Christians also suffer. Last month more than 100 house churches were forced to close, and pastors were threatened with imprisonment, while in the Chin state, Christians have been forced to destroy crosses and churches and to build Buddhist pagodas in their place. Will Her Majesty's Government make strong representations to the SPDC concerning religious persecution in Burma today?

In Sudan, in 1983 the Government's attempt to introduce Sharia law throughout this religiously diverse country led to the outbreak of civil war. Subsequently, the Islamist National Islamic Front regime, the NIF, seized power in 1989 and explicitly declared jihad against the predominantly Christian and animist African tribes of southern Sudan and the religiously diverse people of the Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile. I visited these war-torn areas 30 times. I witnessed the use by the NIF of aerial bombardment of civilian targets, massacres, torture, rape and scorched earth policies, resulting in 2 million dead, 4 million displaced and thousands taken into slavery.

In 2005, a comprehensive peace agreement, CPA, was signed, but the National Congress Party's policies in Darfur still include forcible Arabisation of African peoples and lands, and the imposition of its extremist form of Islam. Will Her Majesty's Government do more to impress upon the Government of northern Sudan their responsibility to ensure the safety of all their citizens?

In India, the recent terrorist attack in Mumbai, which caused such massive suffering, is widely believed to have been Islamist-inspired. Previous outbreaks of violence include massacres in Gujarat in 2002 when up to 2,000 people, mostly Muslims, perished and, subsequently, in 2008, attacks on Christians in Orissa state by Hindu fundamentalists with more than 50,000 people displaced, 70 confirmed dead—

Continuation on Page 6

Continuation of Page 5

some burnt alive—252 Christian places of worship and some 4,000 Christians' homes destroyed. Christians continue to be threatened with forced conversion to Hinduism if they return to their villages. During a visit in October, we met many of the thousands of Christians still living in appalling conditions in overcrowded camps. Will Her Majesty's Government urge the Indian Government to ensure that the state Government bring to justice those responsible for the violence, provide all help needed to enable people to return to their homes and, in the mean time, ensure adequate health care and food in the camps?

In North Korea, given the obligatory personality cult of the political leadership, there has been harsh repression of religion. Buddhist temples and other places of worship have been eliminated and defectors testify to public executions of Christians and their harsh treatment in prison camps, where many perish. Three weeks ago, my noble friend Lord Alton and I visited North Korea. We concluded that it is better to build bridges than walls and recommended, inter alia, that the time has come for the United States to normalise relations with North Korea. We welcomed educational exchanges with Britain. However, we also emphasised concerns over human rights violations, including religious persecution.

We visited the Roman Catholic church in Pyongyang and expressed our concern that there is still no Catholic priest in North Korea. We were slightly more encouraged by the beautiful new Russian Orthodox cathedral, with two priests who had studied in Moscow. We were pleased to see that the Protestant church at Bongsu has been enlarged since I worshipped there five years ago and that there is now a seminary with 10 students, which has academic links to Kim Il-sung University and the Academy of Social Sciences, allowing academic exchange between secular and theological institutions.

In Egypt, there are serious concerns over human rights violations of non-Muslims. Muslim converts to Christianity are regularly detained without charges and tortured. The Egyptian state continues to prohibit changes in the religion section of national ID cards, with dire consequences for the Baha'is and Muslim-background Christians with regard to marriage, education and even the custody rights of their own children. Throughout 2007 to 2009, incidents of violence against the 10 million-strong Coptic community increased, often resulting in serious injury and material damage. The historical Abu

Fana monastery has been attacked 15 times since 2004, and those responsible were not brought to justice. The Copts are still treated as second-class, or "dhimmi", citizens, with limited access to their civic and political rights. Even here, in Britain, there is concern over pressures in some communities to inhibit freedom to choose and change religion—in particular, over reported cases of intimidation of British Muslims who wish to leave Islam and/or convert to another faith.

The final issue that I wish to raise is the worrying resolution, adopted by the UN General Assembly for a fourth consecutive year, entitled "Combating defamation of religions". This calls on national Governments to legislate for the protection of religion from defamation. It is sponsored by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, and seeks to criminalise any criticism of Islam, with specific reference to human rights abuses and terrorism. It is widely seen as a device to protect Islamic states from any criticisms of violations of human rights. In an interim report, the United Nations special rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief highlights concerns that:

"The lack of an objective definition of the term 'defamation of religions' makes the whole concept open to abuse", and that, "attempts to protect religions from 'defamation' are really seeking to protect religion from critical evaluation and aim to stifle religious dissent".

I ask the Minister whether Her Majesty's Government will continue to resist these proposals.

In conclusion, many people argue that freedom of religion and belief should be given greater weight in British foreign policy. Unlike the US State Department, which has an entire department dedicated to freedom of religion and belief, the Foreign Office has only one person in its human rights team responsible for this issue, along with other human rights concerns. I therefore ask the Minister whether Her Majesty's Government will give serious consideration to responding positively to this proposal, perhaps by the appointment of a special envoy for freedom of religion and belief.

We who have freedom surely have an obligation to use our freedom on behalf of those who are denied it. It is my hope that this debate may make some contribution, however small, to highlighting these issues and the need to respond more effectively to those suffering for their beliefs, whatever those beliefs may be. William Wilberforce's words when introducing legislation to end the slave trade apply to violations of religious freedom today:

"We can no longer plead ignorance. We cannot turn aside".

To Join and support UCGB

To Join the United Copts of Great Britain Write to :

E-mail: info@unitedcopts.org

Or log on <http://www.unitedcopts.org/content/view/391/118/>

And fill the form Or speak to Tel: 07976710729

To Support United Copts of Great Britain:

You can fill in the Standing Order attached or log on

<http://www.unitedcopts.org/images/stories/pdf/ucgb%20standing%20order.pdf>





The Response on the debate of Baroness Cox

By: Rt. Hon Lord Malloch – Brown

My Lords, let me join those of your Lordships who have spoken this evening in thanking the noble Baroness, Lady Cox, not just for bringing this subject before us, but for her lifetime commitment as an advocate of these issues and a frequent traveller of astonishing proportions in directly going to bear personal witness to issues of religious discrimination and the oppression of religious freedom around the world. In doing that, she is very much part of a British tradition with that great concern for religious freedom that has, for many centuries, pre-occupied us as a country here and abroad.

During the Lambeth Conference organised last year by the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury, I recall being privileged to lunch with an extraordinary group of religious leaders—including the Archbishop of Sudan, the Bishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka, and bishops covering north and southern Africa and to hear their extraordinary stories of maintaining the freedom of all their congregations against threats that were political, economic and social in character. They were convinced of the need not just to protect the freedoms of their own congregations but those of other religions, understanding that only when all religions are free is any religion free. As Ministers, we raise the issue when we travel to countries of concern and with visitors from those countries when they see us here. The Foreign Office is producing guidelines for our posts on how to promote freedom of religion or belief, and to combat violations of it. We also maintain regular dialogue with representatives of religious groups whose members frequently suffer violations of their rights, such as the Bahá'ís, the Ahmadiyyas, the Jehovah's Witnesses and other Christian groups. Apostasy is a difficult issue, especially when it concerns Islam, as several Islamic countries prohibit and punish apostasy. In some countries, it is even punishable by death. In others, apostates are charged with other offences such as blasphemy, defaming Islam or

insulting their country. However, this does not deter us from making representations to promote the freedom of individuals to change their religion, nor from promoting Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has been quoted tonight and is a formidable article of an extraordinary document. We strongly believe that people have the right to practise their beliefs as well as to change their religion if they so wish. Some of the countries in which we have made this case are Eritrea, China, Mauritania, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Libya, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria and Pakistan, among others. The noble Baroness, Lady Cox, talked about Nigeria. The UK raised the issue of economic, social and cultural rights. We also recommended that Nigeria should take further steps to address discrimination against minority and vulnerable groups. Last week, I met a remarkable Muslim leader from northern Nigeria, the Sultan of Sokoto, who agreed with me, and indeed volunteered the point, that those who are responsible for the intercommunal violence last year needed to be held to account and brought to justice, and that only if that sort of impunity was brought to an end would these problems be resolved.

The noble Baroness, Lady Cox, also raised the case of Burma. I reassure her that our ambassador in Rangoon frequently presses the Burmese authorities to end human rights abuses. We condemn the marginalisation or persecution of any community based on its religious beliefs. Although it makes the abuses no less serious, the persecution of religious minority groups by the Burmese authorities is often based in reality on their ethnicity and a perceived threat to security rather than solely on their faith.

Sudan was also mentioned. We have reminded the Government of Sudan of their responsibility to maintain order, to protect the deployment of UNAMID, which is so important in Darfur, and to allow full access for humanitarian assistance. More critically, we must ensure the effective implementation of the north-south agreement, the CPA,

because it was from that agreement that the release of those in the south from the violent persecution of those in the north finally came. Ensuring that the steps laid out in that agreement are fully honoured and lead to elections and a referendum that allows the people of the south to choose whether they wish to remain in Sudan is the critical political track to solving this issue. As to India, the noble Baroness will be aware that through the EU delegation, which visited Orissa state in December, and through the EU-India human rights dialogue, which will take place later this month, we will continue to press our concerns about what happened in Orissa. I have raised this issue directly with the high commissioner here and with officials in India.

Equally, in the case of Egypt, former Minister Kim Howells raised the issue of religious freedom directly with the Speaker of the Egyptian Parliament about a year ago. On 11 March last year, our embassy in Cairo met the Egyptian Deputy Minister for Human Rights, and again there was a discussion of the freedom of religion and Egypt's wider commitment under these conventions.

As regards the DPRK, North Korea, there is no freedom of religion. While I am delighted to hear perhaps the first green shoot—a term that a politician uses carefully—of some freedom, when it comes to the orthodox church, our view remains that those churches are primarily limited showcases for outsiders and that nothing close to freedom of religion is operating across the country as a whole. We will work closely with NGOs, including Christian NGOs, in the run-up to the Human Rights Council review of the DPRK this year.

We are all aware that the defamation of religions, which has come up in several forms, is difficult.

In closing, a debate like this is heard everywhere around the world by those religious minorities who feel oppressed and feel that their case has been forgotten. Let us hope that we have lit one more candle in this long quest for religious freedom for all.



Human Rights: Religious Belief *Question for Short Debate*



Statement by Baroness Cox and Lord Pearson

Cranmer has received the following press statement from The Rt. Hon. Professor The Baroness Cox, of Queensbury, and Lord Pearson of Rannoch, joint sponsors of the screening of *Fitna* and the conference at the House of Lords entitled 'The Koran and Freedom of Speech':

"The Koran and Freedom of Speech" . Her Majesty's Government bans Geert Wilders from the United Kingdom. Would this have happened if Mr. Wilders had said "Ban the Bible"?

Our western society, and indeed the majority of peaceful Muslims, are being intimidated far too much by violent Islamists. On this occasion, the British government is guilty of appeasement.

We do not agree with Geert Wilders that the Koran should be banned even in Holland where 'Mein Kampf' is banned. We don't want it banned but discussed – particularly by the majority Muslim community; and specifically as to whether it may promote or justify or has promoted or justified violence. We are therefore promoting freedom of speech.

Geert Wilder's 'Fitna' film (available on the web) is not a threat to anyone. It merely suggests how the Koran has been used by militant Islamists to promote and justify their vio-

lence.

They react in fury and menace to our intention to show the film and have boasted that their threats of aggressive demonstrations prevented its previous showing in the Mother of Parliaments. This was not the case – the event was postponed to clarify issues of freedom of speech.

The threat of intimidation in fact increases the justification for the film to be shown and discussed in Parliament and by the British and international press.

Indeed, any alleged threats associated with Lord Ahmed of attempts to prevent the showing of the film would themselves be a confirmation of the film's message and the need for it to be shown.

The subsequent action by the Home Office to try to deter Mr. Wilders from coming to the UK has, we believe, been rightly condemned by the Dutch foreign minister, and is a further example of the appeasement policies of the British government in giving in to the threats of militant Islam.

We intend to show and discuss the film with members of the British Parliament and the press as previously indicated, with or without Mr. Wilders.

Egypt village mob torches Bahai homes

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian villagers have set fire to Bahai homes after a member of the religion said on television the village was "full of Bahais," the latest incident to reflect religious tensions in the country.

Furious villagers rampaged through Sharoniyah, near Sohag in southern Egypt, on Monday and Tuesday, setting fire to and damaging four Bahai homes, a security official told AFP, asking not to be named.

The fires spread to two Muslim homes which were also damaged, the official said. The villagers also threatened the village's roughly 30 Bahais with death, the official said, after which all of them fled.

Police have detained six people in relation to the attacks and are questioning them, and additional police have been deployed in the area.

The arson attacks were the culmination of unrest that began with stone throw-

ing immediately after a Bahai named Ahmed called a television talk show that was discussing the religious minority on Saturday night.

Ahmed, who now lives in Cairo after fleeing persecution in Sharoniyah, described the village as "full of Bahais," which showed that Egypt's around 2,000 Bahais are not just a minority in Cairo. Several human rights organisations denounced the "criminal aggression" against the Bahais and called on the authorities to prosecute those responsible.

Sectarian tensions run high in Egypt, with sporadic violence erupting between Muslims and Coptic Christians. Reports of anti-Bahai violence are rare. Clashes and killings between Muslims and Copts have broken out sporadically over the past decades in Egypt, where Copts account for an estimated six to 10 percent of the country's 80 million inhabitants.

In March, a village north of Cairo saw three days of violent clashes between Muslims and Copts that left one Copt dead. In October, a Copt shot at his sister and her family, killing her husband, after she converted to Islam and married a Muslim.

Bahais frequently complain of persecution in Egypt, which until recently only allowed citizens to put Islam, Christianity or Judaism as their religion on identity cards. A recent court ruling has allowed citizens to leave the religion field blank.

A column in the state-owned Al-Gomhuriyah newspaper said on Tuesday that the Bahais, whose world headquarters are in Haifa, Israel, are connected to "world Zionism."

Columnist Gamal Abdel Rahim described the Bahai as "a deviant group which seeks to harm Islam to serve the interests of the enemies of the Muslim

Continuation on P9

كمبيوتر وزارة الداخلية المصرية يتحرك لأسلمة أقباط المهجر

لا تتم مراسيم الزواج الكنسي في مصر. ولكن المفاجأة كانت عند إستلامه البطاقة ووجد أمام خانة الديانة مسلم. فيكتور عبد الملك حنا غيريال مسلم!!!

ذهب فوراً إلى الموظف المختص في القنصلية بنيويورك ليخبره بهذا الخطأ الجسيم، ولكن كان رد الموظف ببرود نحن لا نستطيع أن نفعل شيئاً لك.. عليك أن تصحح الخطأ في القاهرة. على المهندس فيكتور أن يذهب إلى مصر ليستخرج شهادة ميلاد له ولابوه ولجده لكي يثبت إنهم مسيحيون، ثم عليه أن يحضر شهادة من الأزهر تقول إنه لم يعلن إسلامه في أى وقت من قبل.. وبعد كل ذلك يذهب إلى كمبيوتر وزارة الداخلية لكي يصحح خانة الديانة إذا قبلوا ذلك، وإذا رفضوا عليه أن يذهب للمحكمة الإدارية ليثبت إنه لم يعلن إسلامه وأنه مسيحي وأنه شماس وأنه عضو نشط في الهيئات القبطية في الخارج التي تقاوم الإضطهاد والإسلمة....

وحتى تحكم له المحكمة بعد سنوات طويلة، بعد أن يتدخل المحامي العناني ونيبه الوحش ووزارة الداخلية لتطعن في الحكم ولتثبت عبقرية الكمبيوتر الخاص بها وفاعليته في تخفيض اعداد الأقباط في مصر بتحويلهم إلى مسلمين. وربما بعد كل هذه السنين ينتقل السيد فيكتور إلى جوار ربه قبل أن يحقق حلمه في الزواج الثاني... وربما كانت هذه دعوة زوجته الأولى عليه بأن يلحقها قبل أن يتزوج مرة أخرى بعدها.

فهل بحق القنصل المصري حلم المهندس فيكتور في الزواج بتصحيح بياناته قبل فوات الأوان، وكفاح هذه الاعاييب القنطرة في مصر. أما كمبيوتر وزارة الداخلية اللعين الذي أنتقل بالاعيبه إلى المهجر سقاومه في الخارج كما سقاومه في الداخل، حتى يلغى تماماً ذكر الديانة في بطاقات الهوية والاوراق الثبوتية كما هي في الدول المتحضرة .

يصر الأقباط في الداخل والخارج على ضرورة حذف خانة الديانة من بطاقات الرقم القومي ومن جميع الاوراق الرسمية، فهل تعرف لماذا كل هذا الاصرار، اذا لم تكن تعرف فاقراً هذه الرواية الغريبة العجيبة التي حدث مثلها مئات المرات من قبل، ومازالت تحدث نتيجة التخلف والجهل والتعصب الاعمى. والامر الغريب ايضا ان الكمبيوتر يخطيء فقط عندما يحول الشخص من مسيحي الى مسلم، ولا يخطئ ولو لمرة واحدة في تحويل شخص من مسلم الى مسيحي، اليس في ذلك منتهى الغرابية؟ والسؤال المهم ايضا هو هل يعمل الكمبيوتر من تلقاء نفسه، ام ان هناك من يمدد بالمعلومات؟ عموماً نتركم مع هذا الخبر الغريب الذي نقله لنا موقع "الأقباط الاحرار"، ونحن ننقله لكم بدون حذف او اضافة على النحو التالي:



لم يكتفى رجال المخابرات بتجنيد بعض ضعاف النفوس الذين يتلقون الأوامر مباشرة من مقر المخابرات بدقائق القبة ومن مقر أمن الدولة بلاطوغى وإنما جاءوا في محاولة لتهدئة الأقباط في الخارج من أجل تحسين صورة نظامهم أمام ساكن البيت الأبيض الجديد.

المهم أن كمبيوتر وزارة الداخلية اللعين بدأ يمارس هوايته في المهجر، وكانت هذه المرة من نصيب المهندس فيكتور عبد الملك حنا غيريال، وهو من المهاجرين القدامى في كنيسة مار جرجس ببروكلين نيويورك، وعضو نشط في الهيئة القبطية الأمريكية منذ مدة طويلة.

القنصلية المصرية بنيويورك تستخرج بطاقة الرقم القومي لقبطى على أنه مسلم وتطالبه باثبات العكس! ذهب السيد فيكتور إلى القنصلية المصرية بنيويورك لاستخراج بطاقة الرقم القومي ودفع الرسوم، ولأنه ارمل ويرغب في الزواج ثانية من مصر فقد سارع بإستخراج هذه البطاقة التي بدونها

"هل سمعتم عن كمبيوتر وزارة الداخلية في مصر، إنه الكمبيوتر العجيب الذي يحول الكثير من المسيحيين إلى مسلمين عند استخراج شهادات الميلاد وبطاقات الهوية والاوراق الثبوتية الأخرى، ويقولون خطأ من الكمبيوتر، ولكن هذا الكمبيوتر ذاته لم يحدث مطلقاً أن حول المسلم إلى مسيحي.. هذا الكمبيوتر مثله مثل الدراما التليفزيونية التي يتحول فيها المسيحي إلى مسلم وسط ابتهاج صناع الدراما، ولكن ممنوع تماماً أن يتحول المسلم إلى مسيحي في أى شكل من أشكال هذه الدراما.

الجديد في الامر انتقال كمبيوتر وزارة الداخلية المصري إلى المهجر لأسلمة أقباط المهجر أيضاً.

جاء وفد من وزارة الخارجية إلى أمريكا - نصفه من رجال المخابرات - في زيارة وتجارة كما يقولون، أما الزيارة فلتسهيل إجراءات استخراج بطاقة الرقم القومي للمصريين في الخارج كما أعلنوا، أما التجارة فهي من نصيب رجال المخابرات ليلعبوا مع أقباط المهجر.

religion, in particular world Zionism." "I know very well that the villagers of Sharoniyah protect their religion and their beliefs. The proof is that the Bahai Ahmed himself admitted during the programme that he had stones thrown at him at his home because he abandoned Islam." Bahais consider Bahaulah, born in 1817, the last prophet sent by God, while Muslims believe the last messenger of God was the Prophet Mohammed.

Of the faith's 12 principles including the unity of mankind, the elimination of all forms of prejudice, gender equality and independent investigation of truth, it is obedience to government that Bahais most stress in Egypt. Egyptian Bahais do not join political parties, take part in demonstrations or hold elections for their spiritual assemblies.

القبض على 3 اراهبيين مصريين بالعراق



بقية المنشور صفحة 11

- الهجوم على دير ابو فانا في 31 مايو وإحتجاز الرهبان كرهائن وتعذيبهم ومحاولة إجبارهم على البصق على الصليب وترك دينهم، وقد برنت المحكمة كافة المعتدين.
- هجوم حوالي 4000 شخص على كنيسة السيدة العذراء والابنا ابرام بعين شمس في 23 نوفمبر 2008 وحطموا اجزاء من مباني الكنيسة وأشعلوا النار في 8 سيارات وبعض ممتلكات الأقباط واصيب 8 افراد من جراء هذا الهجوم وأجبروا الأقباط على عدم الصلاة في الكنيسة وهي مغلقة حالياً.
- في 20 يوليو هاجم الآلاف بيوت وممتلكات الأقباط في قرية النزلة بمحافظة الفيوم بحجة هروب فتاة كانت مسيحية من زوجها المسلم، وقد دمروا ونهبوا وخربوا في ممتلكات الأقباط على نطاق واسع وأشاعوا الرعب والهلع بين الأسر القبطية.
- في 4 أكتوبر تعرضت أيضا قرية الطيبة بمركز سمالوط بالمنيا لهجوم واسع كما أذاعت رويترز وتم مقتل الشاب جمال ناشد 19 سنة، واصابة ثلاثة آخرين علاوة على التخريب والنهب لممتلكات الأقباط، وقد تكررت هذه الأحداث عدة مرات في هذه القرية.
- وتعرضت قرية دفش بسمالوط أيضا لعدة مرات من الهجوم الغوغائي في عام 2008 ونتج عن ذلك مقتل ميلاد فرج ابراهيم واصابة وتدمير ونهب ممتلكات للأقباط.
- وفي شهر نوفمبر قامت محافظة اسكندرية بهدم مبنى لإيواء الأطفال والمسنين تابع لكنيسة ابو

سيفين بكنج مربوط رغم حصول المبنى على كافة التصاريح القانونية اللازمة.

- لأول مرة منذ مائتي عام يقتيد كاهن بملابسه الكهنوتية للسجن مباشرة من قاعة المحكمة بعد صدور حكم مشدد عليه بالحبس 5 سنوات بتهمة المشاركة في تزويج فتاة ببطاقة مزورة، وهو القس متاؤس وهبة من كنيسة السيدة العذراء بكرداة بالجيزة. والقصة ببساطة أن فتاة تنصرت، ولإستحالة تغيير بطاقتها بعد التنصير قامت بتزوير بطاقة لكي تستطيع ان تتزوج، وتحمل الكاهن مسئولية ذلك رغم انه دوره فقط كان التزويج وليس التزوير. وقد صدر تقرير محترم لمنظمة هيوم رايتس ووتش في ديسمبر 2007 بعنوان " هويات ممنوعة" طالب الدولة بعدم معاقبة هؤلاء الذين يزورون في اوراقهم الرسمية لأن الدولة المصرية لم تترك لهم حلا آخرًا ، ولأنهم في حالة موت مندى.
- في 28 مايو حدثت مذبحة لتاجر مجوهرات قبطي بحى الزيتون راح ضحيته اربعة اشخاص، وبعد ساعة واحدة من وقوع الحادث اصدرت وزارة الداخلية بيانا يقول ان الحدث غير طائفي، ولأن هذا الرجل نسب أخى فقد استدعوه للتحقيق وحتى الآن لم يقولوا لنا من هو القاتل إذا كان الحادث غير طائفي، وفي نفس العام أيضا قتل صاحب محل مصوغات في بشتيل اسمه معوض فاضل، وقيلها بشهور قتل صاحب محل مصوغات قبطي اخر في الجيزة، وهوجمت في نفس السنة عدة محلات مصوغات لأقباط في مناطق متفرقة من مصر.
- في 6 نوفمبر 2008 تم الإستلاء على قطعة مساحتها 1350 مترا بقرية ميت نما تابعة لمطرانية

شبرا الخيمة، وتم الإستيلاء أيضا على كنيسة تابعة للأقباط في رشيد بالقوة والبطجة.

- في نفس سنة 2008 رفض أحد القضاة بمحكمة شبرا الخيمة بتاريخ 12 اغسطس شهادة احد المسيحيين بحجة إنه لا يجوز شهادته، ورفضت نقابة الأطباء نقل الأعضاء بين المسلم والمسيحي لأن الاخوان المسيطرين على النقابة يعتبرون جسد المسيحي نجس. وفي 17 سبتمبر صدر حكم بحبس السيدة بهية السيسى بالسجن 3 سنوات لأن والدها ترك المسيحية لفترة قصيرة منذ 33 سنة وكان عليها ان تتبع والدها منذ هذه السنوات الطويلة، وفي نفس السنة أيدت المحكمة حضانة الأطفال ماريو واندرلو لوالدهم المسلم رغم إعلان الأطفال على الملأ بأنهم مسيحيون، ومن قبلهم حكمت المحكمة بحضانة الأطفال اشرفت وماريا لوالدهم الذي أسلم، وامتنع الأمن عن تسليم الطفلة بارثينيا (3 سنوات) لحضانة والدتها ميرفت رزق الله فهمي من زوجها الذي أسلم بحجة أن الطفلة أصبحت مسلمة.
- وفي نفس السنة أيضا تحرشت الدولة بأرضى دير ابو مقار في محاولة للإستيلاء عليها، وبدأ الطمع في أرضى الاديرة التى اصلحها الرهبان منذ مئات السنين عندما كانت الصحراء خالية وموحشة.

هذه فقط عينات لما حدث للأقباط في عام 2008 وساهمت الدولة بجزء كبير منها اما مباشرة أو بعدم معاقبة المعتدين أو بالتواطى أو بعدم وجود ردع أو بنقص الحماية لأقلية مستهدفة.

* المصدر : جريدة ايلاف يوم 31 يناير 2009

صمود الحركة القبطية في المهجر

لتعلم القيادة السياسية في مصر وكل أجهزتها أن المنظمات القبطية الشريفة في المهجر



يقدم د. سليم نجيب، رئيس الهيئة القبطية الكندية :

حينما تأسست الهيئة القبطية الكندية عام 1969، كان هدفها الأساسي رفع الاضطهاد والتمييز والظلم الذي يتعرض له إخواننا الأقباط في مصر بصورة يومية وحتى وقتنا هذا. وظل وسيظل صوت أقباط المهجر عالياً مديوناً ولو كره الكارهون. لقد أعطى الرعي الأول من الجهود العظيمة أمام الساحات الدولية والمحلية لكيما يسترد الأقباط حقوقهم المسلوبة. والهيئة القبطية الكندية تترحم على كل الذين جاهدوا جهاداً قومياً وطنياً جباراً، أعطوا زهرة شبابهم وشيوخهم من أجل القضية القبطية.

فنذكر وتذكر المرحوم الدكتور شوقي كراس مؤسس ورئيس الهيئة القبطية الأمريكية، والمرحوم الشهيد الدكتور مكين مرقص الذي قتل قتلاً بيد الغدر والارهاب والتعصب وهو خارج من عيادته الطبية. كما نذكر وتذكر المرحوم الأستاذ الكبير رمسيس جيراوي المحامي مؤسس ورئيس الهيئة القبطية الاسترالية، كما نذكر وتذكر دينامو الهيئة القبطية الأمريكية المرحوم المهندس مراد سليمان الذي كان يجلس بصوته الرنان أمام البيت الأبيض حينما كان يتواجد آنذاك الرئيس الراحل أنور السادات وأيام الرئيس حسني مبارك أيضاً.

كما لا ننسى المتحدث الرسمي للهيئة القبطية الأمريكية المرحوم المهندس ناجي خير فنذكر وتذكر مذكراته العديدة المدافعة عن إضطهاد الأقباط والقضية القبطية كاملة وكان الكونجرس الأمريكي يحاط بها علماً. كما نذكر وتذكر المرحوم المهندس/ سمير عوض الله والمرحوم المهندس سرتيال مسداري.

كان الجميع يعمل بكل إخلاص وتفان وإنكار للذات ولم تتجاسر المخابرات المصرية إختراق صفوف الأقباط لاضطهاد اي قبطي في المهجر ليعمل عميلاً لهم أو يستدرجوه ويخدعوه ويلعبون به بعد ذلك "كالكرة الشراة" أو لعمل

وقية بين صفوف الأقباط بحجة تمصير القضية القبطية. ماذا جرى؟؟؟ ففي أواخر التسعينات وما يليها، نجحت المخابرات المصرية برئاسة سيادة اللواء عمر سليمان في إختراق "بعض ضعاف النفوس" لتنفيذ مخطط قذر ومحاولة الوقيعة فيما بين صفوف الأقباط بالمهجر ولكن نقول "ماذا يفعل الانسان لو ربح العالم كله وخسر نفسه" لأنهم باعوا القضية القبطية وخانوها طمعاً في جاه أو تقريباً للسلطات الحكومية أملين بعود حكومية كاذبة وخادعة بغرض تميع وتمهيش وتمويه المخطط العنصري وإضطهاد الأقباط.

يا حضرات السادة الذين تزمعون القيام بالحوارات والمؤتمرات، لدينا في دستورنا المصري نصوصاً عن المواطنة (المادة الأولى) وعن المساواة وحرية العقيدة وحرية مباشرة الشعائر الدينية (المادتين 40 و 46) ومع ذلك هذه النصوص حبر على ورق. هل يتم بالفعل إعمال مبدأ المواطنة أم لا؟؟؟

أيها الشباب القبطي من الجيل الحالي توحدا وكونوا على بيعة بما يحكيه النظام الحاكم لتمويت قضية الأقباط بإجرائها للدراسة والحوارات واللجان فإن الوجه الحقيقي للنظام الحاكم وللمخابرات العامة في مصر تجاه الأقباط دليل قاطع على أن النظام ليس لديه أي نية في إصلاح الأمور إطلاقاً.

إننا نخاطب الضمائر الحية المؤمنة برفع الظلم عن الأقباط ورفع صوتهم في الخارج في كافة المحافل الدولية

أيها الشباب القبطي كونوا صامدين إلى النهاية لا يخيفنا الوعيد والتهديد. وإعلموا أن دوام الحال من المحال.

ولتعلم القيادة السياسية في مصر وكل أجهزتها أن المنظمات القبطية الشريفة في المهجر سائرة ومستمرة في طريق الكفاح السلمي القانوني وفقاً للمواثيق الدولية لحقوق الانسان وصوت الأقباط في المهجر لن يخذم ولو كره الكارهون..



ورقة عمل حول خطوات بناء الثقة مع الأقباط

بقلم : مجدي خليل *

المسلمين استنادا إلى المسودة التي اتفقت عليها الطوائف المسيحية وقدمت لوزارة العدل منذ أكثر من عشرين سنة. ومن أهم أسسه أن يكون العقد شريعة المتعاقدين (أي لا تطبق الشريعة الإسلامية في حالة تغيير الدين أو المذهب)، وجعل حضانة الأطفال تطبق بشكل متساو بين الطرفين المسلم والمسيحي، وعدم إجبار الطفل على اتباع «أفضل الديانتين» في حالة تغيير أحد الوالدين لديانته. ثالثاً: البحث عن طريقة تضمن التمثيل العادل للمسيحيين في المجالس التشريعية والمناصب السياسية. وهناك العديد من الدراسات التي تمثل التجارب العالمية في دول استطاعت التغلب على هذه المسألة وإدماج أقليتها بشكل فعال في هيكل الدولة على كافة مستوياته. أما مسألة التعيينات السياسية فهي بيد الدولة، وعليها فتح كافة المؤسسات السيادية وتعيين نسبة معقولة من الأقباط بها، لأن هذا الإستيعاب هو إضطهاد مباشر تقوم به الدولة ضد الأقباط، ويعطي «لضعاف النفوس» النموذج السيء لما يمكنهم عمله على مستوى فردي.

رابعاً: لا بد للدولة ان تتخذ خطوات عاجلة بمنع الهجوم تماما على المسيحية وعلى الأقباط وعقائدهم وتراثهم وثقافتهم في وسائل الإعلام التي تقع تحت سيطرتها المباشرة، ومعاقبه من يفعل ذلك بطرده ومنعه من الظهور والكتابة في هذه الصحف المملوكة للدولة، والتي تمول من جيوب داعية الضرائب من المسلمين والأقباط، وهذه مسألة ليست صعبة ويمكن تنفيذها بمجرد صدور الأوامر اللازمة!!

خامساً: يحتاج النظام التعليمي إلى تغيير جذري لتقديم تعليم عصري يرتقى بالمواطن ويضعه على الخريطة التعليمية لدول العالم، وفي انتظار عملية التحديث يجب أن يحذف فوراً هذا العبث الفج المتعلق بتحويل دروس اللغة العربية إلى دروس إجبارية في الدين الإسلامي، وبالهجوم على الآخر وتسفيه معتقداته وتراثه وثقافته ونشر الكراهية والحقد ضده.

الخلاصة هي أن الأقباط لم يعزلوا أنفسهم، بل إن الدولة المصرية هي التي همتهم وعزلتهم. وعلى الدولة، إن كانت جادة، أن تسرع ببدء من إجراءات بناء الثقة بينها وبين الأقباط والعمل على إعطاهم حقوق المواطنة كاملة وبدون نقصان، علماً بأن الأقباط لا يطلبون «مميزات» خاصة، بل مجرد حقوق مواطنة وحقوق إنسان طبقاً للمواثيق الدولية. أما إذا تمادت الدولة في ظلمها وغياها، فلن يجد الأقباط مفراً من النضال السلمي الحقوقي من أجل الوصول إلى حقوقهم الوطنية المشروعة.

ملحق:
مراجعة على سبيل المثال وليس الحصر ما حدث من إعتداءات على الأقباط وحقوقهم في عام 2008 نجد:

بل إن بعضهم معادى لمطالب الأقباط المشروعة. وإذا حاولت بعض الأحزاب وضع أقباط على قوامها، فإن الحزب الحاكم يلعب «بورقة الدين» ليفوز بأي ثمن وبأي طريقة.

- الجهاز التعليمي أصبح يمثل نظاماً تمييزياً يحرم الأقباط من الكثير من المراكز التي يستحقونها ويتجاهل تاريخهم وتراثهم، بل وممثلة بكل ما يهين معتقداتهم وكتبهم المقدسة ويكرس الإستعلاء الديني عليهم. ويمكن الرجوع إلى الدراسات التي قام بها دكتور كمال مغيث عن التمييز الديني في التعليم المصري وأيضاً الدراسة المميزة للأستاذ عادل جندى بعنوان " طلبنة التعليم المصري" لإدراك كم أصبح هذا التعليم تمييزياً وعدوانياً ومتخلفاً، وفي بعض أجزائه عنصرياً.

- المنظومة الإعلامية مليئة بالكثير من التطاول على معتقدات الأقباط وتسفيه كتبهم المقدسة وإيمانهم. وتتيح وسائل الإعلام القومية مساحات واسعة وثابتة لكتاب كل همهم الإزدراء بالديانة المسيحية ونشر الكراهية والتحريض على الأقباط بدون أن تسمح حتى بحق الرد. وكل هذا أدى لتعبئة مشاعر الكراهية الشعبية التي نراها كلما انفجرت «الأحداث الطائفية» التي ليست سوى اعتداءات ضد الأبرياء.

- المؤسسات السيادية «الخاصة» (الأمنية والمخابراتية و رئاسة الجمهورية ومؤسسات صنع القرار) يبدو أنها لا تعترف بشريك الوطن من الأساس، بدليل عدم وجود قبضي واحد فيها. المسألة إذن ليست إنعزال الأقباط بل عزلهم وتهميشهم.

وإنهيار الثقة لم يأت من فراغ بل هو نتيجة حتمية لممارسات وسياسات متواصلة ومستمرة لسنوات طويلة، وتتحمل الدولة وخاصة القيادة السياسية المسؤولية الرئيسية عن إعادة بناء هذه الثقة المفقودة عن طريق تصحيح هذه الأوضاع المختلفة الظالمة.

إن على الدولة، والقيادة السياسية، مسؤولية البدء في بناء الثقة التي دمرتها مع الأقباط لسنوات طويلة، والمسألة تحتاج إلى خطوات جادة لبناء هذه الثقة خطوة خطوة ونقترح في هذه الصدد البدء وبطريقة عاجلة بهذه الخطوات:

أولاً: سرعة إصدار القانون الموحد لبناء دار العبادة. وهناك مشروع القانون الذي قدمه المستشار الجولي عضو المجلس منذ سنوات، وهو موجود في أدراج مجلس الشعب، كما أن المجلس القومي لحقوق الإنسان قدم مشروع قانون آخر في السنة الماضية.

وهذا القانون سيحل مشاكل العنف المصاحب لبناء الكنائس، بشرط أن يصدر بشكل عادل وينص صراحة على إلغاء الخط الهامبوني والشروط العشرة المقيدة لبناء الكنائس، ويمنع أي إشراف أمني على إنشاء هذه الكنائس، ولا يضع الغاماً تفرغ القانون من هدفه وتعقد الأمور أكثر، ونأمل أن يصدر هذا القانون بسرعة قبل زيارة الرئيس مبارك لواشنطن لمقابلة الرئيس باراك أوباما، وإذا خلصت النوايا فالمسألة لا تتعدى عدة ساعات أو بالأكثر عدة أيام لإصداره.

ثانياً: سرعة تعديل قانون الأحوال الشخصية لغير

هناك إتهام شائع بأن الأقباط في مصر اختاروا العزلة والإنزواء داخل الكنائس بدلاً عن المشاركة السياسية والإنخراط في العمل العام، فهل هذا التوصيف دقيق؟

المسألة ليست بهذه البساطة، ونقطة البداية هي أن الأقباط تم إستبعادهم عمداً عن المشاركة في إدارة شؤون بلدهم. والخيارات المتاحة أمامهم ليست بين المشاركة أو الإنعزال، وإلا لكانوا اختاروا المشاركة بالتأكيد، وإنما هي بين النضال السياسي والحقوقي لنزع الحق في المشاركة وبين الإنعزال المريح. وقد اختار الكثيرون الإنعزال ولجأوا إلى الملاذ الأمن داخل الكنائس، ودور الكنيسة تمثل فقط في الحضانة التي تستقبل أبناءها وتحاول أن تخفف عنهم مشاعر الظلم بسبب ما يمارس ضدهم من قبل مؤسسات الدولة.

وبجانب الإستبعاد من المشاركة، هناك الكثير من المظالم التي مورست ضد الأقباط خلال العقود الثلاثة الأخيرة والتي أدت في النهاية إلى إنهيار الثقة بين الأقباط ومؤسسات الدولة. والخطورة هي أن هذه الثقة لم تنهار بين الأقباط و«النظام السياسي» فحسب ولكن بينهم وبين «مؤسسات الدولة» ذاتها:

- المؤسسة الأمنية (الشرطة وأمن الدولة) منحازة بشكل سافر ضد الأقباط ليس فقط في حالات تغيير الدين ولكن في كل ما يقع على الأقباط من مظالم، وهناك تقارير عديدة من منظمات حقوق مصرية ودولية ترصد هذا الإنحياز الأمني ضد الأقباط بل وفي كثير من الحوادث التواطئ ضدهم. أضف لهذا إصرار القيادة السياسية على ترك «الملف القبطي» في يد أجهزة الأمن بالكامل.

- المؤسسة القضائية التي تمثل الملاذ الأمان للمظلومين لم تكن هكذا بالنسبة للأقباط، فالعدالة غائبة بالنسبة للأقباط ليس فقط في المسائل المتعلقة بالحريات الدينية والأحوال الشخصية، وإنما في

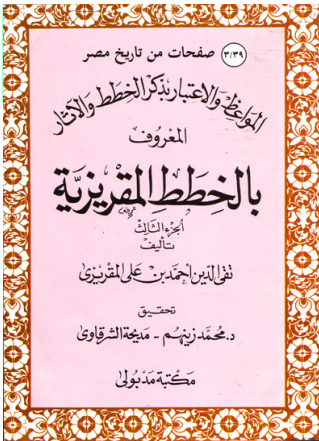
التعامل مع العنف الذي مورس ضدهم في العقود الثلاثة الماضية. وهناك أكثر من 1500 حادثة إعتداء وقعت على الأقباط خلال تلك الفترة منها 240 حادثة إعتداء كبيرة، وقد قدرت ضحايا الأقباط بحوالي 4000 قتيل وجريح، علوة على تدمير ونهب مئات الملايين من ممتلكاتهم الخاصة. فهل كانت العدالة على مستوى هذه الأحداث؟

الإجابة قطعاً بالنفي، فلم تكن هناك العدالة التي تردع المعتدين وترجع المتألمين، ولا حتى تحقيقات شرطة كانت عادلة في أغلبية هذه الأحداث.

- السلطة التشريعية منحازة أيضاً ليس فقط في تهمة الأقباط بها وتمثيلها بشكل رمزي تافه، بل ومن خلال تعطيل كل التشريعات التي تحاول إنصافهم وأخرها القانون الموحد لدور العبادة.

- السلطة التنفيذية تتحمل الجزء الأكبر من المسؤولية عن اضطهاد وتهمة الأقباط وعن المظالم التي تقع عليهم، وهي مسؤولة قانونياً عن كل ما يقع ضدهم.

- حتى الأحزاب السياسية فالتفتة فيها ضعيفة جداً، وكفينا القول أن الحزب الحاكم لم يرشح قبطياً واحداً على قوائم عام 1995، وفي الانتخابات التالية رشح أقل من نصف في المائة من الأقباط من مجمل قوائمهم، ويقوم بتعيين الأقباط «المهادنين»،



A Window on History

From The Book of Maqrizi

written by:
a Muslim scholar in the thirteen century

نافذة على التاريخ

مقتبسة من كتاب "المواعظ والإعتبار بذكر الخطط والآثار" للمقريزي



The Muslim mobs were incited and followed their (the Christians) footsteps, and took them on the roads and cut off their clothes and did not leave them until they (the Christians) surrendered, (and pronounced the Islamic creed and testifies that there is no god but allah and Mohammed is his messenger). The mobs set big fires to show their intention of throwing Christians in the fire then Christians would not dare to go out of their homes. It was then called in public to stop attacking the Christians so the mobs sought to demolish of Christian houses what was higher than the Muslim houses.

Christians and Jews went into hiding that they were

not seen in the streets.

Then the mobs claimed that Christians built extensions inside their churches. Great crowd gathered in Cairo citadel. The Sultan ordered the "Wali" to find out what happened but the mobs did not wait and rushed and desecrated several churches and monasteries and plundered only one church was saved in Cairo. The rulers found great difficulty in stopped the attacks on Christians.

It was written to the governors in Egypt and Syria not to employ a Christian nor to let a Christian convert to Islam to return home until the household convert to Islam too and to keep newly converted Muslims inside mosques and if he dies, his passions are divided between Muslims.

قناطر السباع، وكنيسة بطريق مصر للاسرى، وكنيسة الفهادين بالجوانية من القاهرة، ودير نهيا من الجيزة، وكنيسة بناحية بولاق التكروري، ونهبوا حواصل ما خربوه من ذلك وكانت كثيرة واخذوا اشبابها ورخامها وهاجموا كنائس مصر والقاهرة ولم يبق الا ان يخرّبوا كنيسة البندقيين بالقاهرة، فركب الوالي ومنعهم منها واشتدت العامة وعجز الحكام عن كفههم وكان قد كتب الى جميع اعمال مصر وبلاد الشام ان لا يستخدم يهودي ولا نصراني ولو اسلم، وانه من اسلم منهم لا يمكن من العبور الى بيته ولا من معاشرته اهله الا ان يسلموا وان يلزم من اسلم منهم بملازمة المساجد والجموع لشهود الصلوات الخمس والجمع وان من مات من اهل النمة يتولى المسلمون قسمة تركته على ورثته ان كان له وارث والا فهي لبيت المال وكان يلي ذلك البطريرك وكتب بذلك مرسوم قرني على الأمراء ثم...

(البقية في العدد المقبل)

... فتسلطت العامة عليهم وتبعوا آثارهم، واخذوهم في الطرقات وقطعوا ما عليهم من ثياب، واوجعوهم ضربا ولم يتركوهم حتى يسلموا، وصاروا يضرمون لهم النار ليلقوهم فيها، فاختنقوا في بيوتهم، ولم يتجاسروا على المشي بين الناس، فنودي بالمنع من التعرض لآذاهم فاخذت العامة في تتبع عوراتهم، وما علوه من دورهم على بناء المسلمين فهدموه، واشتد الامر على النصارى باختفائهم حتى انهم فقدوا من الطرقات مدة، فلم ير منهم ولا من اليهود احد، فرجع المسلمون قصة قرنت في دار العدل في يوم الاثنين رابع عشر من شهر رجب تتضمن ان النصارى قد استجدوا عمارات في كنائسهم ووسعوها.

هذا وقد اجتمع بالقلعة عالم عظيم واستغاثوا بالسلطان من النصارى فرسم بركوب والي القاهرة وكشفه على ذلك فلم تتمهل العامة ومرت بسرعة فخربت كنيسة بجوار

Gowhari Court Hearing today adjourned to 2nd May 2009

In a phone call to Nabil Gobrial, Gowhari lawyer today, United Copts GB learned that today's Administrative court hearing in Cairo, was adjourned to 2nd May 2009.

Maher Ahmed El-Mota'sem Bellah Al-Gowhari, a secret convert from Islam to Christianity for over 30 years, his conversion remained secret because of predicted great hardship which could result from openly converting to Christianity in increasingly radicalised society. Al-Gowhari decided to take the brave step and declare his conversion to Christianity as he felt " it was his duty is to witness to Christ for the sake of could be up to 4 million secret converts to Christianity in Egypt who have not been able to declare their faith out of fear" Al-Gowhary said.

Al-Gowhari has taken the Minister of Interior and the Egyptian Civil Registration Office to court because he was refused

a change of his ID card to reflect his conversion to Christianity. Shari'a "Islamic Rules" which is a de facto law in Personal Affairs in Egypt prevents conversion from Islam to any other religion in stark contradiction to international Human Rights treaties and covenants. Mobs often threaten to kill Muslim converts "Apostates" and police does not give any protection to converts either, converts from Islam to Christianity have to go into hiding as in Mohammed Ahmed Hegazy case. In today's hearing the judge Hamdi Yasin throwing the ball into the Coptic church quarter, has asked the Coptic church for a letter of acceptance of the new convert and referred the certificate of conversion provided by a Cypriot orthodox church to State Expert Council to pass an opinion and ordered the Egyptian Civil Registration Office to present its file to the courts by 11/4/09.