

Volume (1) Issue 3 - July/August/ September 2007

## International Religious Freedom Report 2007

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

2007 International Religious Freedom Rep...



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Egypt

\* The Constitution provides for freedom of belief and the practice of religious rites, although the Government places restrictions on these rights in practice

\* Islam is the official state religion and Shari'a (Islamic law) is the primary source of legislation; religious practices that conflict with the Government's interpretation of Shari'a are prohibited.

\* Members of non-Muslim religious minorities officially recognized by the Government generally worship without harassment and maintain links with coreligionists in other countries; however, members of religious groups that are not recognized by the Government, particularly the Baha'i Faith, experience personal and collective hardship.

**This is the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual report on International Religious Freedom, the purpose of this report on religious freedom is to document the actions of governments—those that repress religious expression, persecute innocent believers, or tolerate violence against religious minorities, as well as those that respect, protect, and promote religious freedom. We strive to report with fairness and accuracy on abuses against adherents of all religious traditions and beliefs.**

The governments we report on range from those that provided a high level of protection for religious freedom in the broadest sense (those that "generally respected" religious freedom) to totalitarian regimes that sought to control religious thought and expression and regarded some or all religious groups as threats.

The promotion of religious freedom is a core objective of U.S. foreign policy and is part of the U.S. Department of State's mission.

The commitment of the United States to religious freedom and to international human rights standards is also articulated in such documents as Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which clearly states that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

The report which was released on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2007, concentrated on the religious freedom all over the global. Egypt was one of the countries that the report touched it. From what is written, you can see that there are discrimination against the Copts community more than any other community such as Baha'i, the Quranis, the Shiats...etc. What the report said about Egypt? Here is a summary of what is mentioned about Egypt:

The status of respect for religious freedom by the Government declined during the period covered by this report. The Constitution provides for freedom of belief and the practice of religious rites, although the Government places restrictions on these rights in practice. Religious practices that conflict with the Government's interpretation of Is-

lamic law are prohibited. Members of the non-Muslim religious minorities officially recognized by the Government generally worship without harassment; however, tradition and some aspects of the law discriminate against religious minorities, including Christians and particularly Baha'is.

The Constitution provides for equal public rights and duties without discrimination based on religion or creed, and in general the Government upholds these constitutional protections. On April 24, 2007, the Court of Administrative Justice ruled that the Interior Ministry was not obligated to recognize re-conversion by Christian-born converts to Islam.

While this ruling was inconsistent with verdicts issued over the previous three years by another judge in the same court on behalf of 32 such converts, it reinstated a long-standing government policy not to provide a legal means for converts from Islam to Christianity to amend their civil records to reflect their new religious status.

To be continued on page 4



## Why It's So Hard to Win?

By Victor Davis Hanson

**Is it five or ten or fifteen — years that are necessary to win wars of counterinsurgency such as Iraq? By now, Americans are well acquainted with such warnings that patience — along with political and economic reforms, not just arms — defeats guerrillas**

In these messy fights, Western nations can't, for both practical and moral reasons, use the full advantages of overwhelming arms against terrorists that hide among civilians. Such conflicts are fought far from home for perceived long-term security interests, rather than the immediate survival of the United States. And when the rising cost in blood and treasure cannot be easily explained, restive voters often give up rather than insist on eventual victory. For confirmation of that fickleness, recall the summary Western withdrawals from Algeria, Vietnam, Lebanon, and Mogadishu.

True, in our occasional despair over the bad times in Iraq, we should remember that ultimately the United States defeated the Philippine insurrectionists (1899–1913), the British won in the Malaysia uprising (1948–60), and, by 1971, the Americans had finally, after nine years, gotten counterinsurgency right in Vietnam before funds were cut off.

So what factors in the 21st century now determine whether a Western nation can still succeed in wars not to their liking?

First, there is the degree to which terrorists can obtain weapons sophisticated enough to kill well-protected soldiers of a far more affluent society. That requisite need not mean parity with the arsenal of the more advanced nation, but rather only the ability to nullify much of its technological superiority.

The terrorist always scores points when his cheap, workmanlike weapons triumph over high-tech gadgetry

— think of simple rocket-propelled grenade rounds blowing apart a \$2 million Blackhawk helicopter, or simple, imported roadside bombs still immune to the countermeasures dreamed up by a Pentagon task force.

In the past, the ability of insurrectionists to get their hands on Western weaponry required physical proximity to Westerners. But now, in a globalized marketplace where profit trumps ideology and distance has collapsed, successful killers in the Middle East may need only a petro-rich patron, a mail-order catalog, and an overnight-shipping account. The Israelis learned that lesson well enough in the recent Lebanon conflict when they encountered Hezbollah militiamen wearing jeans but also outfitted with sophisticated, off-the-shelf night-vision goggles, body armor, hand-held rockets, and computer-tracking software.

Second is the enemy's desire and ability to kill the requisite number of Westerners in sufficiently savage fashion — hanging their corpses on a bridge or executing them on the internet — to cause large-scale demoralization on the home front. Savagery is a force multiplier: the more horrific the carnage on the suburban televisions of America, the better.

Losses, and the nature of how they are inflicted, are more critical even than the duration or financial cost of these new wars.

Few worry that we have had American troops in the Balkans for nearly a decade — simply because they are not dying or being tortured on the

internet.

Nihilism is likewise a terrorist plus. Traditional doctrine insists that blowing up Muslims at an Islamic funeral or beheading innocents will eventually turn the populace against such nightmarish terrorists. Perhaps. But in the short term, such grotesqueries may sooner turn off a refined Western public whose support is critical for the continuation of the war.

The more likely response is no longer, "We must defeat such savage bullies," but rather, "Why would we want anything to do with a society that produces such monsters?"

Third, there is the problem of new global communications — another advantage for insurgents who want to exhaust the West. It is often said that had the weeks in the hedgerows after D-Day (June to late July 1944) or the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944 to January 1945) been televised each hour on CNN or Fox — with real-time email and cell phone communications with beleaguered soldiers in the field — we would never have won either battle.

Both victories saw horrific casualties as a result of intelligence failures and sheer incompetence, but our culpable generals counted on enough of a window of public ignorance to rectify their mistakes and continue the battle.

None of these developments means that we won't win in Iraq, stabilize the nascent democracy there, and help bring prosperity to the heart of the Middle East.

But we should accept that in a world of increasing Western material comfort, it is becoming far harder for postmodern societies like the United States and Europe to fight ever more premodern foes.

## The use and abuse of The Egyptian Penal Code 98 H

By : Dr. Ibrahim Habib

In all democratic counties, laws are devised for ALL citizens equally, but in our beloved Egypt the government never fail to amaze , is always able to find reasons for a “special case”.

When you look at the Egyptian Penal Code 98 H, “which is suppose to protect against Despising Heavenly Religions, presumably the three Abrahamic religions, i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam” application by police and judiciary you will be surprised how this “law” is abused and used for travesty of justice.

This notorious article of the Criminal Law imprisons any persons who is convicted under this law to between 6 months and 5 years and fined between 500 and 1000 Egyptian pounds

The application of this law is an example of the Egyptian government ability to twist facts and use double standards. The legal basis of the administration of justice should be to dispense it to **all** citizens in equal measures. The symbol of justice is usually a blindfolded person.

Needless to say, since the time of the “late” president Sadat, i.e. from the early seventies till now, the abuse of Jewish and Christian religions has been the “Standard”. Levels of abuse varied between the customary cursing of Jews and Christians from the mosques minarets loud speakers 5 times a day to a lengthier session of curses during Friday prayers which the Imam seems to gloat in it and seems to exact a revenge on Christians which gives it a special taste, to pleading with god “to orphan of the Jews and the Christian children and to widow Jewish and Christian wives to humiliate Jews and Christians and to make Muslims triumph over them” to programs like “Nor ala Nor” by Ahmed Faraag, to the books which fill the pavements of Egyptian cities and towns claiming “50,000 mistakes in the bible” “Christians and Jews tampered and changed their scripture” “Barnaba Gospel predicted the arrival of Prophet Mohammed”, books written by unknown figures to books by famous scholars like the Shiek Abel-Halim Mahmood Al-Eman Bellah “Believing in Allah” in which he says that it is the duty of Muslims to despise and humiliate Christians and Jews to compel them to enter into Islam to tapes of the famous Sheik Sharawy mocking the Jewish and Christian faith and making fun of Christians “eating dough and saying the it is the body of Christ” and that “Christians are polytheists believing in 3 gods” etc. all this has and still going on under the nose of the Egyptian police, State Security police and judiciary for over 35 years with no case for persecution or even a hint at it.

This year, the highest sales in the Annual Cairo Book Fair was in Islamic religious books, a lot of them attack Christian



or Jewish faith, Sheik Abu-El-Islam Abdallah had a wing in his name devoted in its entirety to attack and despise Christian and Jewish faith. Columns of national newspapers are devoted to people like Zaghlol El-Nagar, Mohammad Emarah and a like.

On the 8th August 2007 **Dr Adel Fawzi** and **Mr Peter Ezzat**, both members of Canadian based Human Rights organisation MECA were arrested in Cairo, they were kept the first 36 hours without food or drink, were imprisoned in a cell 1.75cm x 1.75 cm, were allowed out of the cell one hour per day and kept inside this suffocating tight space for 23 hours/day, their incarceration for 15 days at a time has been renewed twice the charge seems to be in the area of “Despising Heavenly Religion”, why the Egyptian government suddenly remembered this law to be applied against the 2 Christians who committed no crime and choose to turn a blind eye to hundreds or probably thousands of Muslims who abused “Heavenly Religions other than Islam” for decades. Would not it be better to call it the law which protects against despising Islam?

It seems the government, after more than three decades of flirting with Radical Islam is now so worried that genie who got out of the lamp, seem to has grown to an extent is has become impossible to squeeze it back to the lamp, a crack down started to take place, arresting some Christian Human Rights activists and sentencing them, seemed to be a way out to calm down the radicalised Muslim population in Egypt. So, are innocent Christians going to pay the price for the government mistakes and its inability to learn from history?

### Join and support UCGB

To Join the United Copts of Great Britain

Write to :

E-mail: [info@unitedcopts.org](mailto: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>

**Continuation from page 1**

Despite presidential decrees in 1999 and 2005 to facilitate approvals for church repair and rebuilding, many churches continued to encounter the same difficulties as in previous years in obtaining permits.

In May and June 2007, officials of the State Security Intelligence Service (SSIS) arrested five members of "the Quranis," a small group of Muslims who seek to rely largely, if not exclusively, on the Qur'an as the only authoritative source for Islam. They were subsequently charged with "denigrating religions."

One detainee reported that he had been

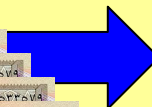
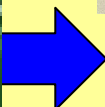
beaten and threatened with rape by an investigator of the SSIS. Sources close to Bahaa al-Accad, a convert from Islam to Christianity who was detained for 25 months without charge, reported that his personal security was threatened by officials of the SSIS following his April 28, 2007 release. On February 22, 2007.

Abdel Karim Nabil Suleiman, whose blog entries had contained strongly-worded critiques of the practice of Islam and Al-Azhar's Sunni Muslim orthodoxy, was sentenced to three years in prison for "denigrating Islam."

In December 2005 the President decreed that permits for church repair and

rebuilding, previously requiring his approval, could be granted by provincial governors. The Government announced that the purpose of this was to reduce delay. However, despite the 2005 decree, as well as a previous presidential decree in 1999 to facilitate approvals, many churches continued to encounter the same difficulties in obtaining permits. The central Government continued to control the granting of permits for construction of new churches. Christians are dispersed throughout the country, although the percentage of Christians is higher in Upper Egypt and some sections of Cairo and Alexandria .

## US: Saudi Arabia failing to stop terrorism funding



Six years after 9/11, the US Treasury Department admitted that much remains to be done in order to stop terrorism financing at its source, something we've been advocating for years.

"If I could somehow snap my fingers and cut off the funding from one country, it would be Saudi Arabia," said Stuart Levey, the US Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, during an interview to [ABC News](#).

No one identified by the United States and the United Nations as a terror financier has been prosecuted by the Saudis, Levey said, adding that "When the evidence is clear that these individuals have funded terrorist organizations, and knowingly done so, then that should be prosecuted and treated as real terrorism because it is".

The [Saudi Foreign minister](#) dismissed Levey's comment by stating that "We hear every now and then that the kingdom does not do enough. But when we meet with officials, they thank us for our efforts to combat terrorism...They describe the programme we are implementing as one of the most effective on the international scene to confront terrorism, be it on the security or material fronts."

Indeed, in [August 2003](#), Saudi King Abdullah stated that "whoever harbors a terrorist is a terrorist like him,

whoever sympathize with a terrorist is a terrorist like him and those who harbor and sympathize with terrorism will receive their just and deterrent punishment".

But Saudi Arabia, labelled the "[epicenter](#)" of terrorism financing by a US official, has demonstrated a poor record in identifying, investigating and blocking assets, and cooperating with foreign investigations on terrorism financing. The latest summary on "[Initiatives and actions taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to combat terrorism](#)", dated December 2006, reflects that in a three-year period the Saudi authorities have been unable to locate and freeze a single additional bank account since 2003.



## Egyptian Christian Convert Vows Not to Give Up

The case of Mohammad Hegazi, young Egyptian converted to Christianity, who wishes to be legally recognized as such, has opened a new debate in the Islamic world on conversions, which are often seen as acts of apostasy that merit death. What has emerged is a veritable obsession in Islam for personal conversions, this religion having been reduced more to an ethnic and sociological submission. There is even talk of a plan to convert Europe and the world to Islam, to which European governments are giving a hand.

Death threats, his family's renunciation of him, and condemnation from most of Egypt have not deterred Christian convert Mohammed Ahmed Hegazy from pursuing his historic case to seek official recognition for his conversion from Islam to Christianity.

"I know there are fatwas (religious edicts) to shed my blood, but I will not give up and I will not leave the country," said 25-year-old Hegazy to The Associated Press from his hideout last Thursday.

Hegazy has been in hiding -- often sleeping in different places each night -- since Muslims threatened to kill him for leaving Islam.

The Christian convert is currently suing Egypt for rejecting his earlier application to officially change his religion on his identification papers.

His wife, Katerina, who is also a Christian convert, is four months pregnant with their son. Hegazy said that his unborn son is the inspiration for wanting to officially change his religion.

"My wife is pregnant. I want my son to be born within my own religion and for the fact that he is Christian to be written on official papers," said Hegazy, according to Agence France-Presse.

In Egypt, a child's registered religion is based on the father's official faith. As a result, Hegazy has to change his religion to Christianity in order for his son to be raised openly as a Christian and be able to enroll in Christian religious classes at school, wed in a church, and attend church services openly without harassment.

Hegazy converted to Christianity nine years ago and attended church in his hometown of Port Said in northeastern Egypt.

"I started readings and comparative studies in religions," he said to AP. "I found that I am not consistent with Islam teachings. The major issue for

me was love. Islam wasn't promoting love as Christianity did."

Since filing the petition in early August, Hegazy has gone through three lawyers with the first lawyer Mamdouh Nakhlah dropping the case after allegedly receiving death threats, according to Compass Direct News.

However, the lawyer said at a press conference that he did not want to cause greater division in the country and blamed Hegazy for not giving him the proper paperwork proving Egyptian officials rejected his application.

Meanwhile, the Orthodox Coptic Church -- Egypt's largest Christian tradition -- has distanced itself from the controversy.

"There is no link between the church and the Hegazy affair," said Father Marcos, a bishop close to Pope Shenouda III, according to the Middle East Times on Tuesday.

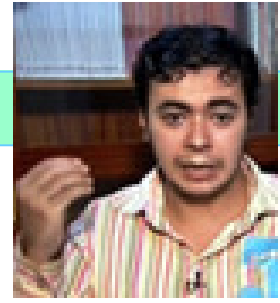
There is no law in Egypt banning conversion from Islam, but the country's Muslims look upon apostasy very negatively with some even calling for punishment by death.

Hegazy said he was detained and tortured by Egyptian police for three days after they found out about his conversion, he told AP. He was again arrested in 2001 after he published a book of poems criticizing the country's security services.

Hegazy's case has put the media spotlight on the inequality of religious conversion in Egypt. Although it is close to impossible for Muslims to legally change their status to Christianity, Christians are free to convert to Islam.

Between 2000 and 2006, some 7,000 Christians legally became Muslims, according to a statement last year by Egypt's top Muslim cleric, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Muhammad Sayed Tantawi.

Egypt's population of 80 million is



composed of about 90 percent Muslims and only about 10 percent Christians. Although the percentage of Christians in Egypt is small, it represents the largest Christian population in the Middle East.

In September, the country will confront another convert case when Egypt's Supreme Court hears the case of 12 former Coptic Christians who want to legally revert back to Christianity.

By Ethan Cole—Christian Post

### Death at the apostate Two different views

**The Grand Mufti of Egypt, Dr Ali**



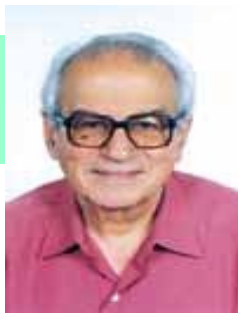
**Gomaa, Egypt's highest religious authority, stated to the Washington Post last June that apostasy "should not" be punished by death, eliciting numerous reactions**

**from Al-Azhar. After many people expressed their approval for a death sentence, he retracted in a confused matter and his stance is still today unclear. On the surface, he wanted to reassure the West by using ambiguous wording, like the one that goes: "Apostasy is to be punished when it represents fitna or when it threatens the foundations of society."**

**Suad Saleh, Muslim judge and dean of the Faculty of Islamic Science at Al-Azhar University, has stated: yes, in matters of faith**



**there is no compulsion, but Hegazi is spreading propaganda and thus the law must be applied. The judge advises that the apostate be given 3 days to repent and reconvert to Islam (istitâbah), then "apply the law" (i.e. execution).**



*Sherif Hetata*

## The Moslem Brotherhood, Political Islam and Democracy

Conference on Religion and Democracy  
Mansfield College, Oxford— 10-12 September 1999  
*Paper presented by*



*Nawal al Saadawi*

The Moslem Brotherhood was founded in 1924 by Hassan al-Banna, a school teacher who studied in Al-Azhar University and Dar al-Ouloum the college from which teachers of Arabic graduated. He started his “da’awa” or preachings in the city of Ismaileya head quarters of the Anglo-French Suez Canal Company and advanced command of the British occupational forces. This detail indicates its close links with colonial circles right from the start.

In 1932 the headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood were moved to “Helmeya al Guedida” a populous district in Cairo. Its third congress held in 1935 laid down the basic tenets of the movement. The Moslem Brotherhood was described as “The Islamic Movement” meaning that only those who belonged to it could be considered “real” Muslims, that it was the only authentic representative of Islam, thus denying all other institutions or movements their true Islamic character.

It was declared a social non-political organization but its members were not allowed to adhere to any other organization, a ruling clearly in contradiction with its alleged non-political aims. It did not seek to define a clear platform or program apart from the general principles of Islam, and the need for a moral reform of society. This left the supreme guide Hassan al Banna free to decide on all matters without making him accountable for any decisions he might take. It also meant a blind obedience and submission on the part of all members to his directives and commands.

During the Second World war the Brotherhood grew rapidly and by the

year 1940 had over two million members and two thousands branches scattered all over the country, an armed militia, 10,000 mosques partially, or wholly under its control, a network of social services including, clinics, hospitals and schools as well as hundreds of small or middle size economic enterprises run by its members, including printing presses, publication houses and a newspaper.

This rapid expansion of its activities was facilitated by several factors. The economic difficulties faced by people during the Second World War, and the social insecurity in a changing situation encouraged many people especially belonging to the lower and middle classes in society to seek refuge in a religious movement. The British colonialists were perceived as the main cause of the worsening situation, of inflation, and rising prices.

The rhetoric of the Muslim Brotherhood against these “foreigners” won support for their cause. On the other hand the colonialists did not consider this religions movement as a threat. On the contrary it could be used as an instrument when the need arose, as a fundamentally autocratic force replacing nationalism with Islam, of democracy with blind obedience, and unification with religious strife. Right from the start the British occupation forces, the palace, the Egyptian police and successive governments with the exception of the Wafd (the main secular democratic and national party of the people) encouraged the movement and gave it financial as well as other forms of support.

In 1946 at the university and schools

the Muslim Brotherhood countered the slogans raised for national independence and democracy by a broad front including most of the political parties, student organizations and Trade Unions, women’s groups and cultural clubs with slogans against alcohol, “material values” and moral corruption. People they said should obey their ruler King Farouk and worship Allah. “Allah is great” was their battle cry and to impress this on people’s minds they beat up those who did not agree with them with iron chains and long curved knives called “gazelle horns”.

By 1945 the Brotherhood had built up an armed militia of 47,000 young men who sometimes paraded through the streets of cities with lighted torches in a show of force. In 1948 just before the movement was disbanded this “militia” called “boy scouts” had reached 75,000 with a well-organized core command, training camps and weapon stores.

To understand the “ideology” of this movement. It might be appropriate to quote some of the ideas formulated by Hassan al Banna at the time.

- Science and art have progressed. Riches have grown and the land has become greener, attractive to the eyes. But does that mean that we know peace when we lie in our beds, and that the tears have ceased to drop from our eyes.

- Foreign legislation has not solved any of our problems. These can only be solved if we apply “Shariat” (religious jurisprudence).

- All parties should be abolished. The struggle between parties is a negative thing. We have only one leader and he is the Prophet.

*To be Continued on Page 7*

## News .. News .. News .. News

### Qaeda urges cartoonist death, threatens Swedish firms

The head of an al Qaeda-led group in Iraq has offered a \$100,000 reward for the killing of a Swedish cartoonist for his drawing of Islam's Prophet Mohammad and threatened to attack major Swedish companies.

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, leader of the self-styled Islamic State in Iraq, also offered \$50,000 in an audiotape posted on an Islamist Web site to anyone who killed the editor of the newspaper that published the drawing by Lars Vilks. "The award will be increased to \$150,000 if he were to be slaughtered like a lamb. "We know how to force them to withdraw and apologies, and if they don't, they can wait for our strikes on their economy and giant companies such as Ericsson, Volvo, Ikea..." The spokesman for Sweden's prime minister, declined to comment on what he said was "police business".

The newspaper published the image, depicting the head of the Prophet on the body of a dog, in what it called a defense of free speech. **(Source: Reuters)**

### Underage Coptic girls disappear

Last February officials for the first time placed a figure on the number of disappearing Coptic women. The report of the National Council for Human Rights declared it had received 32 complaints of missing young Coptic women during the nine-month period from March to December 2006. And these were only the cases brought to the attention of the council; the actual figures are horrifying.

A case in point is the recent disappearance of 17-year-old Injy Atef of Assiut whose father shuttled from Assiut in Upper Egypt to Cairo to Mansoura in the North Delta on rumours that his daughter may have been spotted there. All the while the police was uncooperative and, even worse, downright hostile. To date, Injy has not been found, neither have the large majority of girls who disappeared. All the parents, the Coptic community, and rights activists ask for is that the girls be found and returned home.

### *Continuation of page 6*

We should refuse all Western ideas including democracy. All our ideas should come from Islam. However we can take certain things from the West but only in the following areas:

- \*Administrative systems.
- \*Applied sciences.
- \*Communications. \*Services.
- \* Hospitals and drug stores.
- \*Industry, animal husbandry, agriculture, and environmental production.
- \*Nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.
- \*Urban planning, construction, housing and traffic flow.
- \* Energy.

Apart from this we do not need any thing. Islam includes all things.

- Islam is worship and leadership, religion and state, spirituality and action, prayer and militancy (holy struggle), obedience and ruling, Koran and Sword. All these are inseparable dualities.

- Our system of government should be the Caliphate. It is the only system acceptable to us. It combines political and religious rule in the Caliph with no separation.

### Bishop Nazir-Ali warns that Muslims who convert risk being killed

One of the Church of England's most senior bishops is warning that people will die unless Muslim leaders in Britain speak out in defence of the right to change faith.

Michael Nazir-Ali, the Bishop of Rochester, whose father converted from Islam to Christianity in Pakistan, says he is looking to Muslim leaders in Britain to 'uphold basic civil liberties, including the right for people to believe what they wish to believe and to even change their beliefs if they wish to do so'. Some Islamic texts brand Muslims who convert to other faiths as 'apostates' and call for them to be punished. Seven of the world's 57 Islamic states - including Iran - impose the death penalty for conversion.

Now Ali, expressed his fears about the safety of the estimated 3,000 Muslims who have converted to other faiths in Britain.

'It is very common in the world today, including in this country, for people

who have changed their faith, particularly from being Muslim to being Christian, to be ostracised, to lose their job, for their marriages to be dissolved, for children to be taken away,' Ali said. 'And this is why some leadership is necessary from Muslim leaders themselves to say that this is not what Islam teaches.'

The bishop warns that Muslims who switch faiths in Britain could be killed if the current climate continues.

In 2004, Prince Charles asked British Muslim leaders to renounce laws of apostasy and the death sentence for converts in Islamic countries, but no public statement was ever made.

Dispatches obtained Islamic texts sold in Britain that say the punishment for apostasy is death - according to all four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. One text called for Muslims to cut off the head of those who reject Islam.

A poll of more than 1,000 British Muslims, conducted by the Policy Ex-

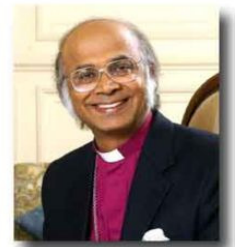
change think-tank this year, found that 36 per cent of Muslims aged between 16 and 24 believe

those who convert to another faith should be punished by death.

Sheikh Mogra, a senior member of the Muslim Council for Britain, told Dispatches: 'We live in a country where we respect people's choices. It is not right for any British Muslim to harm in any way whatsoever; to bully them, to intimidate them, to threaten them, is all against Muslim law.'

One convert interviewed for the programme told how his local Muslim community in Bradford closed ranks against him after he switched to Christianity. 'They told me categorically had I been in an Islamic country - Pakistan, Middle East - that they would actually be the first to chop off my head,' he said.

*Source : The Observer*



## A Window on History

From The Book of Maqrizi

written by: a Muslim scholar in the thirteen century



In the year 120 Hgra (Approx 760AD) JacobianS (Copts) put forward Michael as patriarch and reigned for 23 years before he died.

During his time, there was a rebellion by the Copts in the south of Egypt, and also Bergnes from Samanoode joined the battle, he was also killed with large number of Copts.

Also Copts from Rasheed joined the riot who then sent to them Marawan Ben Mohammed who defeated the Copts and large numbers of them were killed.

The ruler of Egypt, Abdel-malek Ibn Moses Ibn Naseer seized Michael the patriarch and ordered him to pay a large sum of money. So the patriarch and his bishops went through the land of Egypt asking the people for money but he found the people in great hardship. He returned back to the city of Fastat to the Abdel-Malek and handed to him what money he had collected. The ruler freed him but continued to treat him and all the Christians harshly and made the Copts

live real hadrship. Many were killed and crops and parts of Egypt land were burned. Unknown numbers of nuns were taken from monasteries.

The ruler showed interest in one of the nuns, but she managed to buy herself extra time by convincing him that she had a holy oil with special powers. She explained to him that it would give the wearer protection, even from a sword. She told him that she was blessed with this oil and persuaded him to try his sword against her neck. He swung his sword and severed her head. He realised that she had chosen to die rather than submit to him. The patriarch and his people continued to suffer under this ruler until he was killed.

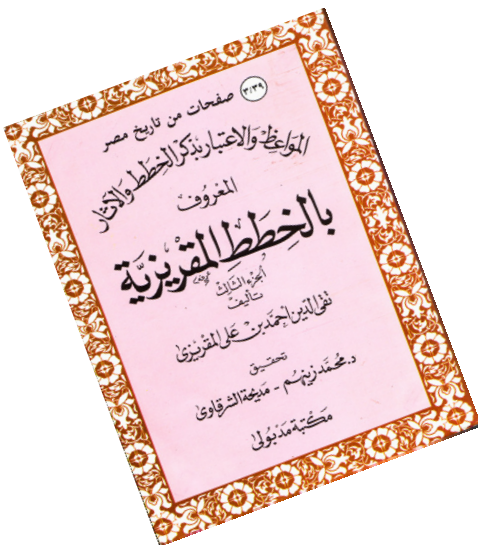
[www.al-emam.com/Islamlib/viewchp.asp?BLD=224&CID=165](http://www.al-emam.com/Islamlib/viewchp.asp?BLD=224&CID=165)

## نافذة على التاريخ

مقتبسة من كتاب "المواعظ والإعتبار بذكر الخطط والآثار" للمقريزي

وفي سنة عشرين ومائة قدم اليعاقبة ميخائيل بطرغا

فأقام ثلاثا وعشرين سنة ومات.



وفي أيامه انتقض القبط بالصعيد وحاربوا العمال في سنة إحدى وعشرين فحوربوا وقتل كثير منهم ثم خرج بجنس بسمنود وحارب وقتل في الحرب وقتل معه قبط كثير في سنة اثنتين وثلاثين ومات ثم خالفت القبط برشيد فبعث إليهم مروان بن محمد لما قدم مصر وهزمهم وقبض عبد الملك بن موسى بن نصير أمير مصر على البطرك ميخائيل فاعتقله وألزمه يمال فصار بأسأفته في أعمال مصر يسأل أهلها فوجدهم في شدائد فعاد إلى الفسطاط ودفع إلى عبد الملك ما حصل له فأفرج عنه فنزل به بلاء كبير من مروان وبطش به وبالنصارى وأحرق مصر وخلتها وأسر عدة من النساء المترهيات ببعض الديارات وراود واحدة منهن عن نفسها فاحتالت عليه ودفعته عنها بأن رغبته في دهن معها إذا أذن به الإنسان لا يعمل فيه السلاح وأوتتته بأن مكنته من التجربة في نفسها فتمت حيلتها عليه وأخرجت زينا أدهنت به ثم مدت عنقها فضربها بسيفه أطار رأسها فعلم أنها اختارت الموت على الزنا وما زال البطرك والنصارى في الحديد مع مروان إلى أن قتل ببوصير فأفرج عنهم.