

## **Egypt's Christians face mass slaughter by Islamists**

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Coptic ties to 'anti-Muslim' film used to target minorities

NEW YORK – The Coptic Christian community in Egypt now is under threat of mass slaughter from Islamists under the pretense of revenge for a movie that depicts the Quranic figure Muhammad in a negative light, a senior Egyptian military official told WND.

The producers of the “Innocence of Muslims” movie reportedly are tied to the Coptic faith. Reports are claiming the movie sparked anti-U.S. attacks in Egypt and Libya, including the killing this week of the U.S. ambassador to Libya. However, some security officials believe the violence to be premeditated.

The Egyptian military official said today that Islamic groups are threatening to slaughter “the whole Christian Coptic community” in the city of Naja Hamadi, located about 60 miles from Cairo. Naja Hamadi contains a large Coptic community.

Two Egyptian immigrants from Southern California reportedly were forces behind the “Innocence of Muslims” movie. Joseph Nassralla Abdelmasih, the president of the Duarte-based charity Media for Christ, reportedly was a producer, while Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, a convicted felon, allowed his home to be used in the movie’s shooting.

Due to the Coptic ties of the two men, police in Los Angeles reportedly stepped up patrols around Coptic Christian houses of worship in the city, according to the Los Angeles Times. Similarly, the police presence was reportedly heightened outside Coptic churches in New York City.

Copts in Egypt have reportedly been concerned about the prospects of persecution after the downfall of U.S. ally Hosni Mubarak resulted in the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the country’s parliament, presidency and military.

While Copts were targeted by Islamists during Mubarak’s regime, such persecution has increased exponentially since Mubarak’s ouster.

Just weeks after Mubarak was booted, Muslim villagers in March 2011 reportedly set fire to a Coptic church while attacking Christians on the street.

Since last year, two other churches were set on fire in the Imbaba neighborhood of Cairo and in Edfu in the south of the country. Coptic Christian families were also reportedly evicted from their homes in Alexandria.

Some reports say more than 200,000 Copts already have fled their homes.

When Copts attempted to protest last October, security forces reportedly fired at the protesters, killing 24 and wounding more than 300 people.

The Coptic Church, a major Christian community in Egypt, is said to date back to the origins of Christianity. Christians were the majority in Egypt until several centuries after the Arab conquest of the seventh century. They now make up between 5 and 10 percent of the population.

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