

Egypt and Democracy
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By Dr. Elihu Richter

Last night, France 24 aired a debate between a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood and two other Egyptians, one a human rights advocate, another a thoughtful senior professor of Politics and Economics. The first questioned the legitimacy of the military state of emergency and the overthrow of a legally elected president. The other two were strongly critical of the Muslim Brotherhood and the now deposed Morsi and his use of majority rule to amend the constitution to give himself dictatorial powers.

In my opinion the most telling point was made by the senior professor, who said that the core principle of democracy is not the rule of the majority, but its respect for the inalienable rights of minorities to the basic freedoms guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was ratified one day after the ratification of the UN Convention on Genocide on Jan 10 1948.

The amending of the Egyptian Constitution to give Morsi dictatorial powers is a *modus operandi* of fascist and communist movements once they take power. The senior economist made the point that Egypt was on the verge of starvation and economic collapse--a point admitted by the MB supporter--, and Morsi's monumental ineptitude invited his being removed. Egypt could not afford to wait.

In following the condemnations of the US and Europe of the Egyptian military for the huge number of deaths, I cannot help but note their loud silence on the MB's persecution of the Coptic minority, and the MB's Nazi like Kristallnacht torching and vandalism directed against the Coptic Churches. The timeline for these acts of torching and vandalism goes back many years-- a long, long time. Nor have the media given full coverage to these events. Most disgracefully, Anne Patterson, the outgoing US Ambassador to Egypt, virtually ordered the Copts to stop protesting--thus making the US government complicit in this persecution. .It is no wonder that the US has lost so much credibility among mainstream Egyptians looking for a better way.

I recall that David Ignatius of the Washington Post used the term "enabler" to describe the Administration's posture in facilitating the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) --to power. The role of the MB, a totalitarian Jihadist movement---in mothering the rise of Islamist terror and hate (look at Hamas) throughout the Mid-east and beyond is a well researched field. See the article below:

Churches torched across Egypt in anti-Coptic violence by Morsi loyalists
Violence by Morsi supporters leaves dozens of Christian churches,
Coptic-owned businesses and properties burnt; fears grow among Egypt's
Christian minority of widespread sectarian strife
Ayat Al-Tawy , Ahram online Thursday 15 Aug 2013
<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/79124/Egypt/Politics-/Churches-torched-across-Egypt-in-antiCoptic-violen.aspx>

Churches across Egypt came under frenzied attack Thursday as the country became convulsed in violent turmoil after security forces forcibly broke up two major Cairo protest camps held by supporters of deposed Islamist president Mohamed Morsi.

Incensed by the bloody crackdown that has claimed more than 500 lives, Morsi loyalists orchestrated nationwide assaults on Christian targets, wreaking havoc on churches, homes, and Christian-owned businesses throughout the country.

Coptic rights group the Maspero Youth Union (MYU) estimated that as many as 36 churches were "completely" devastated by fire across nine Egyptian governorates, including Minya, Sohag and Assiut — home to large Coptic communities.

The group, alongside media reports, said that many other churches were looted or stormed in ensuing street violence Wednesday.

Egypt's interior ministry told reporters in Cairo Wednesday that at least seven churches had been vandalised or torched by suspected Islamists.

MYU spokesman Antwan Adel said at least two were confirmed dead — in the cities of Minya and Alexandria — during the anti-Coptic attacks. No independent confirmation of this tally has appeared.

Adel deplored what he termed "criminal acts and terrorist perception" of the Muslim Brotherhood, the group from which deposed president Morsi hailed. "They seek to drive a wedge between Christians and Muslims," Adel told Ahram Online.

"It's Christians in Egypt who pay the price to overthrow tyranny," Adel said, citing sectarian incidents under long-time strongman Hosni Mubarak through until now.

The sectarian conflagration has set off fears of deeper polarisation and insecurity amongst Christians in a predominantly Sunni Muslim state. Coptic Christians — Egypt's largest minority — make up some 10 percent of the national population of 84 million.

The Upper Egypt governorate of Minya was scene of the lion's share of Wednesday's attacks. The MYU put the number of churches assaulted in the city alone at 11, with some "completely burnt."

Gebrial Dafshan of Minya's Christians Youth Centre (Al-Wady), which was stormed and engulfed by flames, blamed lax security on the part of the government at Coptic facilities.

"There was no security presence. Even when we called the Fire Department for help they said they were themselves being attacked," Dafsahn said.

Morsi's Islamist backers set dozens of police stations ablaze across Egypt and attempted to storm provincial governor offices following Wednesday bloody crackdown. A group of Morsi supporters also set fire to the finance ministry building in Cairo's Nasr City district, a few miles away from a main Cairo protest camp they manned for six weeks.

Some Coptic Christians appear understanding of what they deem was "the inevitable" violence that would result from dealing with Islamist "terrorists." Yet critics say there should have been pre-emptive measures taken by both the army and police for what appeared to be a likely scenario of widespread chaos.

Forty-one people were killed in Minya Wednesday in violence sparked by security forces storming pro-Morsi camps in Cairo, health ministry officials said.

On Thursday, Egyptian authorities referred 84 people from the canal city of Suez — including members and supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood movement — to military prosecutors on charges of murder and burning churches, state news agency MENA reported.

Egypt's interim premier, Hazem El-Beblawi, condemned the "criminal acts"

against Copts in a telephone conversation with Coptic Pope Tawadros II, who threw his weight behind the army's ouster of Morsi early in July. El-Beblawi vowed to deal strictly with "terrorism," asserting that "unity between Muslims and Christians is a red line."

Egypt's army chief General Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi pledged the military would cover the costs of restoration for all damaged churches.

Egypt's health ministry said Thursday that some 525 people were killed and more than 3717 injured across Egypt Wednesday, leaving the most populous Arab nation in ferment.

The unrest led the interim government to declare a month-long state of emergency, with a daily curfew between 7:00pm and 6:00am in Cairo and 13 other governorates.

Vice President Mohamed ElBaradei, a Nobel Prize laureate who gave his blessing to the ousting of Egypt's first freely elected president, resigned in protest at the use of force instead of pursuing a political resolution to the six-week stand-off between the army-installed government and the Muslim Brotherhood.