

Not a month passes without painful incidents taking place against Egypt's Copts, from attempts of displacement in Upper Egypt to kidnappings, church closures, or other bombings. This article is a simple attempt to monitor the events of one week in the diaries of Egyptian Christians...

Not a month goes by for Christians in Egypt without 8 to 10 painful incidents, from attempts to displace in Upper Egypt to kidnappings, the closure of a church or other bombings, and the killing of a Christian, the end is always "mentally ill."

This article is a simple attempt to monitor the events of one week from the diaries of the Christians of Egypt, one week is enough to realize the extent of the ordeal that surrounds them...

On the first day of last Eid al-Fitr, Egypt witnessed a huge terrorist attack, which claimed the lives of fourteen Egyptians from the Egyptian forces, with their various ranks in the police and army. As no Christian recruit was named, we were surprised by the news of a military funeral in the hometown of one of the Egyptian Christian soldiers, Abanoub Marzouk from the village of Bani Qurra, which is affiliated to the Qusiya Center in Assiut.

I wrote a blog post, in which I asked about the reasons for this blackout around the name of Abanoub. I faced a number of attacks from the users of social networking sites, as well as from Egyptian journalists, who confirmed that these things are "normal", because the armed forces do not publish the names of those who are martyred in terrorist incidents in Sinai for security reasons and the morale of the troops there. All this pressure led me to delete the post. I said I might have misjudged it, and it wasn't an act of discrimination, and I apologized to colleagues for this post.

Hours later, news spread of raging problems in the birthplace of the conscript, Abanoub Marzouk, whose name the armed forces decided to name one of its schools, because the people of the city prevented the implementation of this decision decisively, because the conscript is "Christian." The Egyptian media did not shed enough light on the issue, but a number of Christian journalists and activists voiced their objections.

Nader Shukri, a journalist interested in Christian affairs in Egypt, wrote: "A governor says to the brother of martyr Abanoub Naheh, that if I came to a wedding, gifting newlyweds 10 pounds, don't say I should give them 100 pounds. This is his response to the refusal of a martyr's brother to put the name on a bridge that is just a passage over a canal," pointing out that this sign is not commensurate with the value of honoring a soldier who fell in a terrorist accident. Then Ishaq Ibrahim, a researcher at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, commented on Facebook: "Those who refused to give the name Abanoub to a school are neither from the Muslim brotherhood, nor Salafis, nor hardliners, or anything. Be brave and say that it is a state official with discriminatory convictions that influenced his decisions. Any talk of blaming religious groups is a dilution of responsibility." Then he added: "Assiut Governorate, after criticizing its behavior in not putting the name of the martyr Abanoub on a school, they put his name next to a small bridge in his village on one of the canals, despite the opposition of the

family of the deceased!! With this approach, the governorate wanted to satisfy all parties, formally putting his name on “something”, and on the other hand, it moved away from the hassle stemming from putting his name on a school. By the way, the names of bridges and streets in villages are not important because they are not recorded in official papers and are often not used by the general public.”

Ibrahim pointed out in his post to the absence of the role of the state and the condoning of systematic racism by the people of the village, which officials did not confront and went along with the pressures and did not give his name to the school.

The Egyptian government dealt absolutely passively with the event and did not take any decisive measures to prevent the placement of Abanoub Marzouk's name, so the governor intervened to solve the problem. When I tried to understand how the governor solved this problem, it turned out that he named one of the bridges under construction at the entrance to the village of Abanoub Marzouk, by his name. Thus, the problem, like all the problems of Christians in Egypt, was solved through a “bridge”!

By searching for the ways of honoring fellow officers and enlisted men in the same or other incidents, we find that the government in general has allocated a good number of streets, schools, and popular squares with the names of a number of those who fell in Sinai since the beginning of 2013 until the present day, which prompts us to ask questions on the main reasons for the government's handling of the case of Abanoub Marzouk, the Christian conscript, whose townspeople refused to put his name on the village school, and the governor agreed, fearing the wrath of the militants.

The male gets the inheritance equalling two females, even if you are a Christian!

“We do not have this in the Egyptian judiciary for a male to get the inheritance share of two females.” This is how the judge spoke and the report issued by the court regarding the inheritance declaration of human rights lawyer Hoda Nasrallah, which was issued recently. After Huda's father died, she decided to fight her battle on her own, but not only for her sake, but for the sake of every Christian woman, she says.

The third article of the 2014 constitution states that “the principles of the scriptures of Egyptian Christians and Jews, are the main source of legislation regulating their personal status, religious affairs, and the selection of their spiritual leaders.”

Article 245 of the Coptic Orthodox Regulation issued in 1938 states in the third chapter of it, related to heirs and the entitlement of each of them to inheritance, that “The descendants of the inheritor are given priority over other relatives in inheritance, so they take all the inheritance or what remains of it after the husband or wife's share is fulfilled. In case of multiple inheritors and they were related with the same degree, the estate would be divided among them in equal shares, with no difference between male and female.”

Hoda rejected the proposal of her two brothers, when they demanded that the procedures go through as the judicial authorities are used to dealing with them and that the declaration of inheritance be received in any form, and then the inheritance is divided among them equally. Hoda had a goal higher and far beyond her personal case, which is the establishment of laws that will be used later, due to the injustices faced by Christian women in the Egyptian Personal Status Law, from issues of separation to inheritance. Many Christian males take advantage of the Egyptian judiciary's lack of recognition of the Christian religion in its inheritance legislation and take more than their right according to the Christian religion, given that this is what the court has ordered and they have to implement, and thus the law has become an obstacle for women to obtain their rights, especially Christian women.

This battle shows a form of persecution against Christian women under Islamic law, although the Christian religion does not stipulate these ideas and did not address them from near or from afar, but the diseases of the patriarchal society are basically supported and justified by the law.

“We will not accept your testimony because you are a Christian!”

This post spread remarkably on Facebook a few weeks ago, and it tells what happened with the father of the doctor, Mark Estefanos, and the insults he was subjected to in court. This is after a long history of the father, an engineer, who worked in a government institution for 35 years. The father was supposed to attend the court in order to testify before the judiciary to decide a case concerning one of his co-workers, but the judge rejected the testimony of Engineer Makarios because he is a Christian. “There is no guardianship for a Coptic over a Muslim.” The father and his son, the doctor, felt very upset, so the latter published the post, noting that such circumstances always make him think about leaving Egypt, because he does not enjoy the same rights as others.

This issue was raised for the first time in 2008, when Ahmed Shafiq, a Muslim citizen, requested the testimony of his Christian neighbour, Sami Farag, in the Inheritance Declaration Case 1824 of 2008, but the Shubra El-Kheima Court rejected the testimony of a Christian citizen on the grounds that his testimony was not legally/religiously permissible against a Muslim. The court forced Shafiq to bring a Muslim witness.

Going back to the constitution...

We find that there is a clear inconsistency regarding the right to testify and its regulations, as the second article of it states that “Islam is the religion of the state, the Arabic language is its official language, and the principles of Islamic Sharia are the main source of legislation,” while Article 53 states that “citizens are equal before the law, and they are equal in rights, freedoms and public duties, there is no discrimination between them on the basis of religion, belief, gender, origin, race, color, language, disability, social level, political or geographical affiliation, or any other reason. Discrimination and incitement to hatred is a crime, punishable by law. The state

is obligated to take the necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination, and the law regulates the establishment of an independent commission for this purpose.”

On the other hand, Islamic Sharia does not accept the testimony of a non-Muslim in more than one text. “Nothing in the Evidence Law distinguishes between Christians and Muslims that prevents the testimony of any citizen from being accepted,” said lawyer Reda Bakir of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. By referring to the Law of Evidence, it has already become clear that there is no legal article that prevents the testimony of a non-Muslim from being accepted.

Muhammad Hassan, a former human rights lawyer and legal researcher, confirmed: “I am inclined to Islamic law in matters related to religious constants that are not in dispute. It is not about the law or such. Guardianship is in the home of the Muslims, given that Egypt is the abode of Islam, and the dhimmi (non-Muslim) pays the jizya (taxes) to facilitate his affairs.”

This was a simple observation of what the Christian community in Egypt can live in just one week!