

**EGYPT: 'THERE
WAS NO DOOR ON
WHICH I DID NOT
KNOCK'**

COPTIC CHRISTIANS
CAUGHT IN ATTACKS AND
STATE'S FAILURES

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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INTRODUCTION

“They did not just kill four Christians in cold blood, they killed the spirit of love and co-existence... The attack went on for 18 hours, and there was not a door on which I did not knock: police, army, local leaders, the Central Security Forces, the Governorate. Nothing was done.”

Father Barsilious, a local priest in the village of Dab'iya

On 5 July 2013, four Coptic Christian men were killed by local residents in the Nagah Hassan district of Dab'iya village, some 18 kilometres west of Luxor. At least four other Coptic Christian men were seriously injured and required hospitalization, and scores of Christian homes were torched and looted. The attack was triggered by the discovery at about 2:30am of Hassaan Sidqi Hanafi's dead body, ditched by the Nile.

According to local religious leaders, the area is home to around 275 Christian families. They make-up under 10 per cent of the population in the small but densely populated village, which lies between the Nile and a canal. While some streets of Nagah Hassan are predominately Muslim or Coptic Christian, the two communities live in close proximity and some areas are mixed. Poverty and unemployment are rampant in the village at the best of times. Living conditions have reportedly deteriorated further in recent years as a result of the drop in tourism in the Luxor Governorate.

The murders mirrored sectarian violence in Abu Musalam village in Giza on 23 June 2013, where local villagers besieged the home of a Shi'a Muslim for hours, eventually breaking-in and stabbing and beating four Shi'a Muslim men to death.¹ In both brutal attacks, security forces were present at the scene, but failed to stop the violence.

The attack by residents of Dab'iya and surrounding areas on Christians, their homes and businesses, continued for 18 hours – from about 3am until about 9pm on 5 July 2013. According to local residents interviewed by Amnesty International, security forces, including police from Qurna and Luxor, and riot police (the Central Security Forces, CSF), were present at the scene intermittently through the day, but failed to defuse the violence and prevent the deaths. Amnesty International was told that the security forces made only

Opposite: The ruins of a Coptic Christian home destroyed in the violence on 5 July 2013.



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The house in which four men were killed by crowds on 5 July 2013.

half-hearted attempts to disperse the crowds using tear gas. During the most brutal attack of the day, security forces evacuated women and children trapped inside a house surrounded by angry, armed crowds, but deliberately left six men behind. Four of the men were then killed by the crowds and another required hospitalization. According to residents' testimonies, security forces used more force, including heavier use of tear gas, while carrying-out arrests in the aftermath of the deaths, than during the day while the attacks were ongoing.

These latest sectarian murders will test the new Egyptian authorities' political will and ability to break the pattern of failure to act and cover-up which has characterized successive governments' responses to sectarian violence. Investigations into the violence must be impartial, full and independent, with the aim of bringing all those responsible to justice. They must provide adequate reparation, including financial compensation, to the victims. Investigations must also look into the role and direct responsibility of the security forces in the brutal deaths. First and foremost, the authorities must immediately take necessary measures to ensure security for Christians and other minorities and uphold their right to life and physical integrity.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST COPTIC CHRISTIANS

Egyptians of all faiths and denominations participated in the “25 January Revolution”. However, religious minorities have continued to suffer discrimination by the authorities and receive inadequate protection from the state from sectarian violence, when not targeted directly by security forces.

Discrimination and attacks against Coptic Christians, the largest religious minority in Egypt, are particularly prevalent. Today, Copts continue to be under-represented in relation to appointments to high public offices, positions of university presidents, as well as key security positions, for instance at the level of the National Security Agency or the General Intelligence. Egypt has for decades witnessed sectarian clashes that varied in intensity but were mostly rooted in religious stereotyping and inequalities, in some cases perpetuated by state actors. Coptic Christians in Egypt have repeatedly complained that the Egyptian authorities have not done enough to protect them or prosecute their attackers. The authorities have often favoured “reconciliation” over the prosecution of offenders.

Under Hosni Mubarak, at least 15 major attacks on Copts were documented. On 6 January 2010, six Coptic Christians and a Muslim police guard were killed in a drive-by shooting as worshippers left a church in the city of Nagaa Hammadi. On 1 January 2011, a bomb attack on a Coptic Christian Church in Alexandria killed over 20 people.

The situation didn't improve under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, the military body which ruled the country between the downfall of Hosni Mubarak and the election of President Mohamed Morsi. On 8 March 2011, clashes between Muslims and Coptic Christians at the Al-Muqattam Hill, east Cairo, left 10 dead. On 9 October 2011, soldiers killed 27 protesters around the state television building, Maspero. All but one were Coptic Christians.

The situation also didn't improve under Mohamed Morsi. In 2013, under the last months of Mohamed Morsi's administration, amid a rise of sectarian rhetoric by members and allied of the Muslim Brotherhood, Coptic Christian activists reported at least six attacks on churches or affiliated buildings, in the Governorates of Aswan, Beni Suef, Cairo, and Fayoum. No adequate investigations were conducted, no measures put in place to avoid further violence, and nobody was punished.

This pattern of inaction is not only a failure of the Egyptian authorities and a breach of their international obligations but it also contributes to the sense of injustice, discrimination and vulnerability felt by Christians in Egypt, and leads perpetrators to believe that they can carry on attacking Christians and get away with it.

These failures violate Egypt's obligations under international human rights law to effectively protect members of minorities from abuses, and to bring perpetrators to justice.

In breach of Articles 2, 18 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which prohibit discrimination and guarantee freedom of thought, conscience and religion and equality before the law, the authorities have failed to end discriminatory practices preventing Copts from building houses of worship or restoring existing ones. Many churches have been closed down or destroyed because the authorities allege they did not get the right permission to be built or renewed.

Other religious minorities also face discrimination in Egypt, including Shi'a and Bahai's.



ATTACK ON CHRISTIANS, THEIR HOMES AND BUSINESSES

“I kissed the police officer’s hands and legs and begged him to protect my two sons and take them out; I told him: ‘their father died after they were born and I raised them – please take them out, we can all fit in one car’, but he completely ignored me and said he would only take women and children...what shall I do? Other people [only have to] bury one; I buried my two sons in one day.”

Nobeya Zaki, mother of Mohareb Noshi and Romani Noshi, both killed in the attack

The attack on Friday 5 July 2013 in Nagah Hassan was triggered by the discovery at about 2:30am of Hassaan Sidqi Hanafi’s dead body, ditched by the Nile near the dwellings of Christian families. While the circumstances of his death remain unclear, his family initially blamed **Magdy Iskandar Farid**, a Coptic Christian. The local priest, Father Barsilious, told Amnesty International that he received the first call for help from panicked Coptic Christian families at 2.45am, as angry crowds of villagers started attacking Coptic Christian homes looking for Magdy Iskandar Farid. The crowds finally found Magdy Iskandar Farid after breaking into the house of Coptic Christian Nasser Issa, where he was hiding on the roof. The villagers then attacked Magdy Iskandar Farid, stabbing him with knives and beating him with metal sticks.

Magdy Iskandar Farid is believed to be the first Christian the villagers attacked that morning, while Nasser Issa’s home was the first they broke into. Magdy Iskandar Farid was found by the police after his attackers left him for dead, and was taken to hospital in the city of Assiut. Magdy Iskandar Farid’s relative, **Shenouda Roumani Girgis**, was also caught by a group of angry villagers, who tied him up, beat him and threw him into the Nile. Local residents told Amnesty International that he managed to survive and swim to safety. Another Christian

Opposite: The ruins of the home of Emil Nessim, destroyed by fire.

man, **Boulos Zaki**, sustained gunshot wounds to both hands and legs when three men on a motorcycle attacked him while he was sitting outside his home. According to his daughter, he survived the attack, and is receiving treatment.

Local residents told Amnesty International that they woke-up on the morning of 5 July 2013 to hear screams of "the Nasara [a derogatory term for Christians] killed a Muslim" and "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great). The Coptic Christian residents saw angry crowds outside their homes and businesses carrying tree branches, metal sticks, blades, knives, hammers and other "white" weapons. The Coptic Christian residents told Amnesty International that the crowds of villagers threatened to burn down their homes if they didn't leave them. According to local Coptic Christian leaders, by 12pm on 5 July 2013, some 110 Christian homes had been attacked, with varying levels of intensity and damage. In some instances, residents said, attackers set the Coptic Christians' homes on fire with petrol bombs and butane.

An 18-year-old woman told Amnesty International:

"We were sleeping, when at about 7.30am we heard a banging on the front door and screaming downstairs... They [the crowds] broke the front door, and got in... We hid upstairs and held our breath... They took some of our valuables like gold, money, a laptop... Then they continued to go from Christian home to Christian home... We were lucky, they did not go upstairs or set the place on fire, like they did to other homes."

Amnesty International spoke to another family who were sitting by the Nile, near the ruins of their home:

"A large group of villagers holding swords, metal sticks, and large hammers approached our street at about 9.30am... They reached our door and forced their way in... Our family of eight decided to escape as our house was not strong enough to sustain an attack – it was only made of sandstone – so we jumped from our roof to the roof of our neighbour's... When they finished with our house, they came to the neighbour's, so we jumped again... four times we had to escape from house to house."

A Coptic Christian resident in the village who witnessed the incidents told Amnesty International:

"On Friday at between 2.30-2.45am I received a call from my niece, who told me that Hassaan Sidqi had been killed and that his family was accusing Christians of the killing. Me and my neighbours took to the roofs of our houses; we heard screams and the sound of breaking objects from over by the Nile. Then we saw smoke coming out of the houses by the Nile. There were around five or six houses burning. I realized that Hassaan's family and other Muslims had started to attack the houses of the Christians on the Nile."

"At around 6am, we saw a police car and few soldiers; their numbers were very few. They were heading towards the burned houses. Some of our neighbours said they would go to the Muslims and mourn with them. We did not want the Muslim family to think that Christians agreed with the killing of Hassaan. A group of them decided to go and they did; however, they were stopped in the middle of the road by some of the other residents who told them to go back and not to put themselves in trouble."

“At 7.15am, a Central Security Forces truck arrived with a fire-fighting vehicle. The [Muslim] residents prevented the vehicle from reaching the burning houses. The [Muslim] residents were saying: ‘Let the houses of the Christians burn’. At around 8.00am, a group of 50 to 60 people came to the streets where we live. The Central Security Forces were present, but they did not prevent the crowds from reaching us. The crowds started to attack our houses. They were holding sticks made from wood and iron, knives and machetes. We started to throw stones at them. The [Muslim] crowds fled to the start of the street and broke down the door of the Mandara [celebration hall] and set it on fire. The Muslims living near the Mandara started to complain that the fire might reach their home and so the attacks stopped.

“There was a security presence during the attacks but they were not trying to stop the violence. The violence lasted for 45 minutes. During the Friday prayer, the police completely disappeared. I saw a low-ranking officer from the police going to my neighbour, Hana, who is a soldier [i.e. another low-ranking police officer] as well. Hana was told to leave the house because the police would not be able to protect him.

“Later, I found Hana and his family leaving the house and heading toward the Nile. I also took my family and headed to the Nile. There were no boats to take us to the other side. All the residents in my street were by the Nile trying to find a way to escape. I followed the crowds to the village of Haddadin, which is next to our village. The residents in the Haddadin welcomed us in their houses. The same day, I took my family and went to Aswan.”

Local Coptic Christian religious leaders contacted the security forces, including the local head of the police investigation unit (normally the second-in-command at a police station), as soon as the violence erupted in the early hours of 5 July 2013. They also called the police and army's hotlines throughout the day in vain. When reinforcement failed to arrive, they went to the city of Luxor, desperately seeking the help of the military police, military forces stationed at the Luxor Governorate building, and security forces stationed near the main Luxor Church. At about 4pm, the activist Safwat Saaman, of the National Centre without Borders, also called a number of security officials, including the local head of the National Security Agency and the Hamindar (major-general, the deputy head of security in Luxor Governorate). Security officials reportedly told a number of residents that they were overwhelmed by the violence and the number of assailants, and could not “fight an entire village.”

According to local residents and religious leaders, sporadic attacks on Christian homes continued until about 9pm, with the exception of a short period of calm during Friday prayers. Most Coptic Christians fled their homes throughout the day – some sheltering at the Church, others staying with relatives in surrounding areas. Stones were hurled at the Church itself, which was initially protected by two low-ranking security officials, until reinforcements arrived at about 11.30 am. Entire families were trapped as angry crowds surrounded their homes, attempting to break-in.

During a visit to Nagah Hassan on 17 and 18 July 2013, Amnesty International representatives examined several Christian homes, where the effects of burning and other destruction were still visible. According to Safwat Saaman, who collated the data on the damage caused, at least 41 homes were attacked and looted.



FOUR CHRISTIANS DIE AMID THE FAILURE OF SECURITY FORCES TO INTERVENE

One of the Coptic Christian men killed in the attack was **Emil Nessim**, a well-known figure in Dab'iya village who was relatively affluent, influential and well-connected, according to both Christian and Muslim villagers. The crowds appeared to single-out his house during the attacks.

Emil Nessim was the co-ordinator of the Tamarrud ("Rebel") campaign, which collected signatures calling for President Mohamed Morsi to be removed from office. However, both Muslim and Coptic Christian residents told Amnesty International they believe he was not targeted because of his involvement with the campaign. They believe that he was targeted as a result of an old enmity between him and an influential Muslim in the village, with political ambitions, who had used the murder of Hassaan Sidqi Hanafi to incite violence against both Emil Nessim, and other Christian residents of the village.

Emil Nessim's nephew, Milad El-Amir Nessim, who survived the attack, told Amnesty International how it unfolded:

"At about 5am, I was sleeping when my paternal uncle [Emil Nessim] called me to ask me to come down to his apartment to put out a fire, after a Molotov Cocktail was thrown through the window... I went down – I live in the apartment upstairs – and we managed to contain the fire... At about 6am, my maternal uncle, who lives about 800 metres away, called saying that a group of villagers were trying to break into his house, and that they were making the rounds of Christian homes... At 10am, the crowd was back in front of our house, they were about 35 people, young men from the village; I know their faces. They were carrying tree branches, metal sticks, water pipes, and trying to break down the front door and windows... Some older men came and tried to calm them down... It didn't work; they continued throwing rocks onto the balcony and trying to force their way in... The situation calmed down around Friday prayer time (12pm)... They didn't all leave, but weren't attacking..."

During the same time, several families were trapped inside the neighbouring Habib family home. Habib Noshi Habib, who survived the attack, told Amnesty International:

"We woke-up to news that there were problems in the village... I was in the house with my mother, and my brothers Roumany, Mahareb and Girgis, and their wives, and Mahareb's children – two girls and a boy – and Girgis' four children... At about 10am, about 50 men surrounded our house and neighbouring houses... They were knocking frantically, but we did not open... They broke into our neighbour Rassem's house, so they [Rassem, his wife, and three daughters] came to seek shelter in our house which is more fortified; we have a higher fence and a metal front door... We were thinking of ways to get

Opposite: The bodies of the four Coptic Christian men killed on 5 July 2013.

out, but couldn't manage [to do so]... We tried to call the police... At about 11am, two police cars came, drove around and drove away... Later Emil, his wife, his sister in law and her children also joined us."

The situation took a deadly turn at around 7.30pm, over 16 hours after the first attack, as the number of attackers increased. A local man speaking through a loudspeaker belonging to a nearby mosque reportedly started inciting the crowd against Christians. Then, they put on the Qur'an.



Milad El-Amir Nessim told Amnesty International:

"They managed to throw a petrol bomb inside our house, and it caught fire... My mother, sisters – the youngest is five – and aunt escaped through the roof to Habib's house... They managed to break down the metal door and got into our house at that time... We turned off the lights inside Habib's house... We all sat terrified in the living room, men, women, and children, including toddlers..."

"After they finished destroying our house, they focused their attention on Habib's... By that time, there were four armed officers in civilian clothes outside knocking on the door. They said: 'Don't worry, we are the police, we will protect you.' As we opened the door, we could feel tear gas, but the attackers were still there standing next to the officers and some of them were armed... The officers said: 'We will take the women, not the men'... Most of the women were wearing two abayas [long

traditional dress] so took one off and gave them to the men... only Girgis, me and Mahareb were in men's clothes..."

"In the meantime, an armoured vehicle tried to drive to the front door, but the crowd spilled petrol on the ground and set it on fire to prevent the car from approaching... The officers did not try to resist at all, and the armoured vehicle drove away, stationing itself at the end of the street... The police were getting the women out, but when the men tried to get out, including those in women's clothes, the crowd started getting agitated and insulted the men, screaming 'infidels' and 'Allahu Akbar'..."

"The officers refused to get the men out, despite the women screaming, crying and begging them... Mahareb's mother went as far as to kiss the officer's feet... eventually the women were dragged out... I could hear someone in the crowd saying: 'If you want to get the women, fine, but the men are ours'... Girgis was the only man to get out, holding his twin girls in both arms... We were six men left behind, my uncle Emil, brothers Habib, Mahareb and Roumany, and Rassem."

Only two would survive what happened next.

Habib Noshi Habib, whose two brothers, **Mahareb Noshi**, 41, and **Roumany Noshi**, 33, were killed, described the frightening moments after the women were taken out of the house and



©Safwat Saaman

the security forces left the men to their fate:

The bodies of the four Coptic Christian men killed on 5 July 2013.

“The officer was still holding the metal door when we tried to lock it, but the attackers started pushing their way through, holding knives, metal sticks with sharp edges... I saw the first two [enter], and ran inside [the house], hiding in the bathroom, then [climbed out] through the window [and] slipped down the airshaft... Before that, I saw Mahareb hiding behind the bathroom door... At this stage, they broke down the living room door... They saw Mahareb, surrounded him, and started beating him on the floor; they dragged him into the corridor... He screamed only once...”

“An officer was going back and forward... I heard them [the crowd] breaking things, screaming ‘Allahu Akbar’, ‘infidels’ and ‘sons of dogs’... I hid for about twenty minutes in the dark until someone aimed a torch in my face; I ran as fast as I could to the officer, who initially wanted me to leave, but eventually, when he saw another officer, ordered soldiers [low-ranking police or riot police] to get me out to the police station... I later found out that Mahareb and Rassem had died immediately inside the house, while Roumany was transferred to the hospital at about 12am, dying two hours later.”

Mahareb was stabbed in the neck several times, and also received severe blows to the head. Roumany sustained multiple stab wounds, blows to the head, and had his left arm broken.

Rassem Tawadros, a 53-year-old civil servant and father of five, was also brutally killed during the attack as a result to severe blows to the head. His wife told Amnesty International:

"We hid inside Habib's house because the attackers broke into ours... They filled the whole street, holding swords, metal sticks, and machetes, and were screaming: 'The nassara killed a Muslim, the nassara are hiding in the Church, let's attack the Church.'... We sat terrified for hours, until the Government [a common expression for the police] came, and promised to protect us... But they refused to take the men.



"I gave Rassem my abaya, but still they wouldn't let the men out... the officer told me: 'Go and I will bring your men to you'... Why did they [the police] let this happen? Why didn't they take the men? They could have saved all of us. They sacrificed the men... Is it our fault that we were born Christian?"

Emil Nessim and his nephew Milad El-Amir Nessim escaped from the house through the roof, but were eventually apprehended outside and brutally beaten. Milad El-Amir Nessim told Amnesty International:

"We jumped into our Muslim neighbour's house... They first hid us, but then one of them got worried that their house would be attacked and asked us to leave... We left their garden, and crouched down on the ground by the fence... We were spotted with torches minutes later, and about 35 of them surrounded us. One of them recognized Emil..."

Milad El-Amir Nessim shows the injuries he sustained to the head.

"From then on, blows started coming down from all directions... I couldn't see anything... but could hear them saying: 'Don't leave them alive'... Eventually the police came, including riot police in black holding shields and batons... we lay there bleeding for a long time, until an armoured vehicle took us away... My head was bleeding, my leg was fractured... They first took us to the Church, but the priest insisted that we be taken to the hospital... The next morning I heard that Emil had died."

Marsa Zekry Atteya, a teacher and the wife of Emil Nessim, told Amnesty International:

"At around 5 or 6am, around 15 young men aged from 17 to 25 attacked our home. They were pouring gas from jerry cans into small bottles and then setting fire to the bottles and throwing them into our house through the window on the ground floor. Emil and myself and the other neighbours went down and contained the fire... the police arrived at 9am. After the Friday prayer the police disappeared and we heard people striking the door fiercely.

"At around 1pm, we took our children and jumped [from the roof] to the [roof of the] house of the Noshis, our neighbours. At 7.00pm, I could hear my house burning and saw it burning through the window. The fire then started to reach Noshi's house, where we were hiding. The police arrived and told us to open the door. Four officers dressed in civilian clothes entered the house. The police were shooting tear gas outside. There were hundreds of people outside

the house. The police officers promised to protect us. However, I could hear the people outside saying that only women and children would be let out but the men will have to stay.

"I took off my abaya and gave it to Emil. We tried to get out with the police dressed as a woman, however a person from the crowds identified Emil and told him to come out. The police officers then said that no man would be allowed out, then they pulled me to an armoured car which was parked on the other side of the street, near where the street began. The police left the door of the house open when they took me. The police did not try to protect Emil. They could have taken him to the same car but they refused. I was screaming: 'I want my husband'. One young guy told me: 'Where is your husband? We will slaughter him.'

"The car then took us to the Church. Emil later called William who was working in the Church and told him that he was in the garden of Madi's house and that the police were not protecting him.² He was calling us to come rescue him. After about an hour a police armoured vehicle arrived at the Church. Emil and Milad were inside, but the priest refused to take them into the Church and told the police to take them to the hospital instead.

"I jumped into the car with Emil. He had three cuts to his head and was bleeding. I asked the police to take us to Luxor International Hospital as it is a well-equipped hospital. However, the police refused and told me that there were other men that they needed to rescue and they took us to Bayada Hospital, which is very basic. The doctors in the hospital could not admit Emil because he was severely injured. After around 30 minutes, an ambulance arrived and took us to Luxor International Hospital.

"Once in the hospital, the doctors took off Emil's shirt. His back was dark blue from the beatings. He was taken to the intensive care where he died in the early morning."

After the attacks, most local Coptic Christian families returned to their homes. When Amnesty International visited Dab'iya village on 17 July 2013, eight families were still sheltering at the Church. Some stayed out of fear, others because their homes remained uninhabitable.



ARRESTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

“If the police had wanted to stop the attack, they could have in minutes... They were around the whole day, drinking tea and praying with us... When the police decided to carry out arrests and came out in full force, everybody was out of the streets in minutes. Why did they let the crimes happen, standing around just watching, and then arrest people?”

Relative of a Muslim man detained on charges of burning and looting Coptic Christian homes

During the night of 5 July 2013, the security forces arrested 25 residents of Nagah Hassan and surrounding areas. A prosecutor in Luxor told Amnesty International that a total of 46 people stand accused of attacks on Coptic Christians. Of these, 10 are accused of murder or attempted murder; and the rest of destroying property, physical assaults and “thuggery”. The prosecutor said that of the 46, 18 people had already been arrested and detained, including two children: four on charges of murder; one on charges of attempted murder; and the remainder on charges of destroying property, physical assaults and “thuggery”. Arrest warrants have been issued for a further 28 in relation to the attacks on Coptic Christians.

There are also arrest warrants for three Christians in relation to the murder of Hassaan Sidqi Hanafi. A local prosecutor investigating the violence told Amnesty International that Magdy Iskandar Farid, Shenouda Roumani Girgis and a third Coptic Christian man, Kiriles Raouf Youssef, are all wanted in connection with the murder of Hassaan Sidqi Hanafi and are now on the run.

The Public Prosecution questioned the accused and several eyewitnesses, including security officials present at the scene, and visited the scene of the crimes, including the houses of Emil Nessim and Habib Noshi. The victims' bodies were referred to forensic pathology; the prosecutor told Amnesty International that the final reports have yet to be issued.

Opposite: The fence where Emil Nessim was fatally beaten.

Families of those detained and newly released detainees complained of

beatings upon arrest. Riot police beat **Mohamed Baghdadi Mohamed** upon arrest with sticks and the backs of their rifles, lawyers and relatives told Amnesty International. A medical report dated 10 July 2013 seen by the organization corroborates their claims.

Hamdi Ali, another newly released detainee, told Amnesty International that upon his arrest from a relative's house at about 11.30pm, three men dressed in civilian clothes punched, kicked and hit him with batons. He estimates that the beating continued for some 15 minutes, leading to a nose bleed and an open wound above the left eyebrow, still visible when Amnesty International delegates interviewed him some 12 days later.

Another detainee released on 10 July 2013 told Amnesty International that he was beaten upon his arrest from the street by about 20 members of the riot police with rifle-butts and batons, mostly on the back and shoulders. He was then forced to strip down to his underwear and blindfolded while the beating continued.

Detainees were held at a Qurna police station for three days before being transferred to the prosecution, in breach of the Egyptian Code of Criminal Procedures. Seven men were held even longer without being referred to a prosecutor, until 10 July, when they were released without charge.

No visits by lawyers or relatives were permitted during the detainees' incarceration at the police station. A resident of Nagah Hassan whose son is detained said to Amnesty International:

"They claim that the police have changed, and that the police and people are 'one hand' and that the police are at the service of the people... it's all lies."

Amnesty International is also concerned that children **Hassan Baghdadi** and **Mohamed Hassan Ahmed** have been detained with adults. Mohamed Hassan Ahmed's father told Amnesty International:

"He is just in first preparatory school, he is scared... He was crying in court, saying he is staying with adults."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Amnesty International calls on the Egyptian authorities to:

- Conduct full, impartial and independent investigations into the violence in Nagah Hassan on 5 July 2013 and bring individuals found responsible for killings and other serious human rights abuses to justice in proceedings meeting international standards for fair trial and without possibility of the death penalty, in line with the UN principles on effective prevention and investigation on extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions;
- Ensure that investigations examine the role of the security forces in failing to stop the violence and hold security officials accountable;
- Take immediate measures to improve security for Christians and other minorities;
- Ensure victims and their families receive full reparations, including but not limited to financial compensation; and ensure families are able to return to their homes in safety;
- Ensure that all eyewitnesses are protected from threats or intimidation;
- Investigate allegations that some of those arrested in connection to the violence by security forces were beaten, and bring those found responsible to justice;
- Ensure that children deprived of their liberty are detained separately from adults; and
- Change all laws and practices that discriminate against Christians and other religious minorities to ensure that they conform to Articles 2, 18 and 26 of the ICCPR, which prohibit discrimination and guarantee freedom of thought, conscience and religion and equality before the law.

ENDNOTES

1 See Amnesty International, "Egypt: President Morsi must send clear message against attacks on Shi'a Muslims", 24 June 2013: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/egypt-shia-killings-2013-06-24>

2 William worked in the Church. Marsa Zekry Atteya was with William when Emil Nessim called.

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