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EGYPT Court issues death sentence in Nag Hammadi ruling

A man has been sentenced to death by an Egyptian State Security Court for the killing of six Coptic Christians and a Muslim police officer, who were gunned down outside a church in Nag Hammadi after Coptic New Year's Eve Mass in January 2010.

Reuters news agency reports that Mohamed Ahmed Hussein was charged with "premeditated murder" and "intimidating citizens" in Nag Hammadi. Two other men accused of being his accomplices will receive their sentences on February 20, 2011.

The ruling comes amid heightened tension following the bombing of a Coptic church in Alexandria on New Year's Eve in which 23 people died and 80 were injured.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "A decision on this case is long-overdue, and while CSW values the court's pursuit of justice for the victims, CSW does not condone the death penalty for any crime."