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EGYPT | Christian Teacher Convicted on Blasphemy Charges

A Christian teacher in Luxor accused of insulting Islam and the Prophet Mohammed was convicted on blasphemy charges on June 11 by a court in Upper Egypt.

Demiana Abdel-Nour, a Coptic Christian teacher, was not given a custodial sentence by the judge, but was fined approximately \$14,300.

Abdel-Nour was accused of blasphemy after complaints were made on April 8 about one of her classes by a few parents and pupils at her school. Although she was cleared by two independent investigations into the case, conducted by the school council and the local office of the Ministry of Education, lawyers representing the parents of one pupil filed a complaint with the prosecutor's office. Abdel-Nour denies any wrongdoing.

Egypt's Christian community is disproportionately affected by blasphemy allegations, facing fines and imprisonment.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "We are very concerned that Demiana Abdel-Nour was prosecuted on blasphemy charges even though she is innocent and was exonerated by the school's own investigation, as well as that of the Ministry of Education. She appears to be being targeted because she is a Christian; we urge the Egyptian government to respect the rights of its citizens without discrimination."

"The situation for Christians in Egypt and the wider Middle East, who were already living with discriminatory legislation and the threat of sectarian attacks, has continued to deteriorate since the Arab Uprisings in 2010," Thomas said. "This will be one of the issues highlighted at the [Middle East Day of Prayer](#) on June 22, hosted jointly by CSW and United Action for Egyptian Christians (UAFEC) at Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) in London. We will continue to stand in solidarity with Christians in the Middle East as they work to claim their equal rights as citizens in their respective countries."

