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EGYPT | CSW Expresses Concern About Attacks Against Christians

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is deeply concerned by continuing attacks against Egyptian Christians, which have increased in frequency since the removal of the Morsi regime and have prompted Pope Tawadros II to cancel his weekly public sermons.

Violence and hate speech targeting religious minorities was already on the increase under the former president's rule. Since his removal from power, attacks on the Coptic community in particular have increased sharply, primarily but not exclusively in Upper Egypt, following allegations from several Islamist sources that Christians played a pivotal role in the removal of Morsi's regime.

On Aug. 7, 16 Egyptian human rights organizations issued a statement expressing "grave concern regarding the increasing sectarian violence which has targeted Christians and their churches since the June 30 uprising" and denounced the "continued negligence of the institutions of the state to provide the necessary protection to Christian citizens, to decisively confront sectarian attacks, and to enforce the law by holding those responsible for the acts of sectarian violence, which have been seen in several governorates to account."

In a statement issued Aug. 8, Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, said, "Egypt cannot move forward while state apparatus does not hold people accountable for these unlawful hate crimes that stand to divide the country further, promoting increased polarization at every level. Proactive efforts must be made towards promoting social cohesion and inclusion for all members of society so that this new phase of Egyptian history can be built upon true unity, collaboration, and reconciliation."

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "CSW urges the interim government to ensure security for the Coptic community, and that those perpetrating sectarian violence are apprehended and charged. Egypt's Christians must be afforded the same protection under the law as their fellow citizens. We continue to pray and stand in solidarity with all Egyptians at this critical time in their nation's journey to full democracy."

