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EGYPT | Four Killed In Wedding Attack

Four people, including an eight-year old girl, died after masked gunmen opened fire on a wedding in Giza on Oct. 20.

As wedding guests were leaving the Coptic Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary in Warraq al-Hadar, Giza, a car and a motorcycle pulled up and a masked gunman on the motorcycle opened fire with an automatic weapon. At least 15 bullets were fired indiscriminately before the attackers drove away.

Two guests were killed during the attack, with two more dying later from gunshot wounds. Killed were eight year old Mariam Ashraf, 12 year old Miriam Nabil, 45 year old Samir Fahmy and 56 year old Camilia Attiya, the mother of the groom. CSW's sources confirm that 18 others were injured, and all of the deceased were Christians. According to Father Thomas Daoud Ibrahim, priest of the Warraq church, three wedding services had been taking place at the time of the attack.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. It comes after a wave of violence by Muslim Brotherhood supporters targeting the Coptic community, which they claim played a primary role in the removal of former President Morsi.

Groups from across the political and religious spectrum have condemned the Warraq attack, with Prime Minister Hazem el-Beblawi calling it "a cowardly, criminal act", and urging Egyptians not to allow such attacks to sow hatred between communities. Al-Azhar Grand Imam Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb expressed his personal condolences to the families of the victims, denouncing the shootings as "a criminal attack against religion and morals". However, the Maspero Youth Union, a Coptic rights group, faulted the interim government and security forces for failing to protect the Coptic community, which has been targeted since the crackdown on two pro-Morsi sit-ins on Aug. 14.

Islamist groups, including Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya, the Salafi Nour Party and the Muslim Brotherhood, have also condemned the attack and denied involvement. However, senior

members of the Muslim Brotherhood have called for retributive attacks against the Coptic community for their perceived role in the overthrow of the former president.

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of CSW said, “Our heartfelt condolences go out to the families of those killed in this brutal attack, and we pray for speedy recoveries for those who were injured. While the expressions of condolences from all sectors of Egyptian society are encouraging, we continue to urge adequate and timely protection for the Coptic community and Coptic gatherings in order to prevent such tragedies from occurring. Moreover, the culture of hate speech and impunity in which such attacks occur must also be addressed in order to ensure the emergence of a society in which all Egyptians can flourish, regardless of their religion or political affiliation.”