



2.16.15

## EGYPT | Air Strikes Launched in Response to Murders

Egypt launched a series of air strikes in response to the murders of 21 Egyptian Christians by Daesh (Islamic State) in Libya.

A video released Feb. 15 showed the mass beheading of the 21 men, who were dressed in orange jumpsuits, on a beach outside the Libyan capital, Tripoli. Prior to the beheadings, a masked militant dressed in military camouflage described the men as “followers of the hostile Egyptian Church.”

The group, from a rural community in the Governorate of Minya in Upper Egypt, travelled to Libya as migrant workers. They were kidnapped in the Libyan city of Sirte between late December 2014 and early January 2015.

President Sisi condemned the “inhuman criminal killers,” declared an official seven-day period of mourning in Egypt and authorized air strikes against Daesh targets in Libya. The Al-Azhar University, the center of Islamic learning in Egypt, also described the killings as “barbaric”.

CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, “We join Egypt in mourning these appalling murders and extend our heartfelt condolences to the communities that have lost family members and friends as a result of these senseless killings. Difficult economic circumstances led these men to Libya to do nothing more than earn a living and provide for their families back home. As well as having lost loved ones, these families have also lost their breadwinners. This was a senseless and barbaric act of sectarian cruelty against people whose only “crimes” were being poor and following a different creed. We pray that the perpetrators of these atrocities would recognize the sanctity of human life and the damage this and other acts of brutality cause to so many, including to their own humanity.”