

# EGYPT: 26 DEAD AS GUNMEN FIRE ON BUS CARRYING COPTIC CHRISTIANS

CNN (26.05.2017) – <http://cnn.it/2qWf7za> – Twenty-six people have been killed in Egypt after unidentified gunmen opened fire on a bus carrying Coptic Christians in what officials are calling a terror attack.

Ten assailants wearing fatigues and face masks fired on the passengers from three four-wheel drive vehicles, Egypt's Interior Ministry told CNN.

The Christians were traveling Friday to a monastery, St. Samuel the Confessor, around 100 km (62 miles) northwest of the city of Minya when they came under fire, the ministry said.

Twenty-five others were also injured, some of whom are now in critical condition, Health Ministry spokesman Khaled Mugahed told state-run TV al-Masriya. Men, women and children are among the dead and injured, and 50 ambulances are now at the scene, he said.

The attack comes as the country is still under a three-month state of emergency period following twin attacks on Coptic churches on Palm Sunday last month that killed dozens of people, in attacks claimed by ISIS.

It was not immediately clear who was responsible for the shooting, but Coptic Christians have been targeted by ISIS militants several times in recent years and ongoing violence has triggered a mass exodus of Coptic Christians from some towns.

***Spate of attacks***

Coptic Christians make up about 10% of Egypt's population of 91 million. They base their theology on the teachings of the apostle Mark, who introduced Christianity to Egypt.

Persecution and discrimination against Egypt's Coptic Christians has spiked since the toppling of Hosni Mubarak's regime in 2011.

In December, an attack on a Coptic church in Cairo killed 25 people.

Coptic churches and homes have been set on fire, members of the Coptic minority have been physically attacked, and their property has been looted, [rights group Amnesty International reported in March.](#)

A church in Minya was torched in 2013, gutting its interior.

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