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EGYPT: Mobs attack Christians' homes and businesses

Mobs attack Christians' homes, businesses after church's legal recognition

By Anugrah Kumar

The Christian Post (16.07.2022)- <https://bit.ly/3v5VIwC> – Outraged over the newly received formal legal recognition of a

church in Egypt, Muslims in large crowds attacked and damaged the homes, shops and vehicles of many area Coptic Christians, according to a persecution watchdog.

The U.S.-based group, International Christian Concern, reported this week that Muslim mobs vandalized properties of Christians surrounding the Church of Michael the Archangel.

In the June 23 violence, Muslim mobs hurled rocks through the windows of homes and set fire to buildings and vehicles despite the presence of security personnel deployed in the area to protect the church, ICC said.

The local Christians had been waiting for years for the legal approval of the church, which was originally built in 2003.

“Throughout the process, Muslims in the area have rejected the legitimacy of the new church, asserting that the construction or restoration of a church contradicts Islamic law.

The *Conditions of Omar*, thought to have been written by Caliph Omar I, is one Islamic text that they refer to. The text dictates that no churches should ever be built or repaired, and that Christians must make do with pre-existing churches only,” ICC said.

The Committee for the Legalization of Unlicensed Churches, which was formed in January 2017 comprising the ministers of justice, parliamentary affairs, and local development and

housing, as well as representatives of local authorities and Christian communities, has legalized more than 1,600 churches in the Muslim-majority country.

However, opposition to churches by local Muslims remains.

The Copts, who make up about 10% of Egypt's population, are the descendants of a long line of ancient Egyptians who later converted to Christianity in the early first century, according to Encyclopedia Britannica.

According to the persecution watchdog group Open Doors USA, Egypt is among the 20 worst persecutors of Christians in the world.

Incidents of Christian persecution in Egypt vary from Christian women being harassed while walking in the street to Christian communities being driven out of their homes by extremist mobs, the group says on its website, adding that Christians are typically treated as second-class citizens.

Egypt's government speaks positively about the Egyptian Christian community. Still, the lack of serious law enforcement and the unwillingness of local authorities to protect Christians leave them vulnerable to all kinds of attacks, especially in Upper Egypt, it explains.

"Due to the dictatorial nature of the regime, neither church leaders nor other Christians are in a position to speak out

against these practices.”

Churches and Christian nongovernmental organizations are restricted in their ability to build new churches or run social services, it adds.

“The difficulties come both from state restrictions, as well as from communal hostility and mob violence.”

Photo: Reuters/Amr Abdallah Dalsh

[Further reading about FORB in Egypt on HRWF website](#)

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