

Egypt Releases Jailed Christian Convert

A Christian convert from Islam was recently released from prison just a few hours after prison officials told him he would serve another 10 years.



A Christian convert from Islam was released recently from an Egyptian prison after serving two years without charges under Egypt's emergency laws, Compass Direct reported. On April 28, Wadi el-Natroun Prison officials gave Bahaa el-Akkad an Egyptian bill worth nearly \$9 for a taxi fare and told him he was free to leave. The official reason for the release is unknown, but it comes as a surprise to many. Just hours before he was released, officers from the State Security Investigation told el-Akkad that he would remain in prison for another 10 years if he did not return to Islam. El-Akkad's lawyer said the prisoner defended his faith. "God has brought me to this place, and He alone will let me go to my home. You cannot do anything against God," el-Akkad said. By nightfall he was reunited with his wife and three children. El-Akkad, who is now 58, was arrested in 2005 after Egypt's secret police learned he had converted to Christianity. "While I was in prison, my family told me thousands of people were praying for me," el-Akkad reportedly told his lawyer after his release. "I was sure that was true because Jesus was with me all through my ordeal." Although el-Akkad is free from prison, he is not free from danger, Compass reported. Despite the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarakis' encouragement of Muslims to be more tolerant, a radical Muslim group, Muslim Brotherhood, has reportedly threatened to kill el-Akkad for his disloyalty to Islam if he was released from prison.