

Police Raid Christian Bookstore in Egypt

Egyptian police recently raided an Egyptian Christian bookstore. They arrested an employee and confiscated books, compact discs and issues of a Christian newspaper.



[] Egyptian police recently arrested an Egyptian Christian bookstore employee, confiscating books, compact discs and issues of a Christian newspaper, according to Advocates For The Persecuted (AFTP).

David Joseph—chief editor of *Al Tareek Wa Al Haque* (The Way and The Truth), the only newspaper serving the Christian minority community in Egypt—said that eight undercover policemen stormed into the Nile Christian Book Shop, March 15, and arrested Shenouda Armia Bakhait, Assist News Service (ANS) reported.

Bakhait was released the following day after posting bail, but Egyptian authorities reportedly will issue a summons for him to appear in court. It is not clear what formal accusations have been made, said AFTP, a nonprofit organization that advocates for religious minorities in the Middle East.

Joseph is president of the Egyptian Christian Youth Union, which runs the Nile Christian Book Shop, owned by The Church of God in Egypt. A native Egyptian and American citizen, Joseph is also president of AFTP.

AFTP Executive Director Jan Fletcher said Bakhait's arrest came one day after Mohammed Hegazy visited the bookstore. Hegazy is the first Egyptian Muslim convert to Christianity to petition Egypt's Administrative Court to change his religious affiliation on his national identity card, ANS reported.

A hearing on the petition sparked a melee in an Egyptian

courtroom in January, when a judge denied Hegazy's request, ruling that it was against Islamic law for a Muslim to leave Islam, ANS reported. – **Christian Retailing**