

Sinister Hand Behind Scenes in Egypt?

Egypt's turmoil continued Tuesday, as thousands ignored an emergency curfew.

President Hosni Mubarak attempted to pacify the protestors by announcing a new government Monday, but reports indicated his efforts were met not only with scorn, but also with a unification of the opposition.

This loosely-knit coalition has called for a million people to take to Cairo's streets to demand Mubarak's removal. Rody Rodeheaver with IN Network says, "The fear really is: Is this a movement from the grassroots, or is there a sinister hand behind the scenes?"

Among the members of the coalition are fundamentalist Muslims called the Muslim Brotherhood. "The Muslim Brotherhood's goal really is to institute Sharia law in Egypt." The threat of Mubarak's removal is causing concern among the world leaders, but it's also a point of concern for ministries with partners. "The good thing that was happening through the Mubarak regime was that this organization was being kept in check."

Even though the Muslim Brotherhood has said it would not take a leadership role in the opposition coalition, Rodeheaver says, "It is a very critical time for the church because if the Muslim Brotherhood will come to power and begin to take control of the country, that would be a very bad thing situation for the church in terms of persecution."

The chaos in the country is disruptive to their ministry partners. "Any kinds of church services that you're holding have to be set aside. There's not free movement. Everybody is on edge, and you are limited in where you can go, when you can have meetings." The tension is worsened because "you're always

wondering just how much can we do or say, and who can we trust or who can't we trust?"

Another issue is the threat to family. While in the United States for meetings, the 19-year-old son of IN Network's Egypt director was conscripted into a guard force for their neighborhood apartment complex.

The men in the building were trying to protect family and possessions from the bands of looters taking advantage of the breakdown in law and order.

The risk: the guard force was armed with clubs. The looters had guns. Troops tasked with bringing the gangs to heel would not discriminate much between the two.

Rodeheaver urges prayer for believers in Egypt. "Pray that some normalcy comes back and that peace can be restored. Secondly, we need to pray that God would give the leaders of His church great wisdom at knowing how to proclaim the Gospel at this very difficult time."