

Egyptian Christians Concerned About Muslim Brotherhood

International Christian Concern officials recently returned from Egypt, where they met with Egyptian Christians to discuss the mass demonstrations calling for the end of Mubarak's 30-year reign as president.

ICC reports that most Christians share the frustrations of their Muslim countrymen and support the demonstrators for political reform, an end to police brutality, and stagnant incomes. At the same time, many Christians fear that the demonstrations could lead to a power vacuum and possible takeover by the only organized, determined, and moneyed opposition: the Muslim Brotherhood. This would, of course, be a disaster for the Christian population.

"Christians in Egypt are finding themselves at a crossroads. While there is little support for President Mubarak, there is uncertainty over what an alternative government might bring," says Aidan Clay, the Middle East Regional Manager for ICC.

"The Muslim Brotherhood is trying to hijack the revolution and call it their own. If the Brotherhood is able to gain the upper hand, Christians fear that the few religious freedoms they do have will also be taken away from them. While some Christians have a trust in the army to protect them from the Brotherhood, others look to Turkey and how Islamic radicals have neutered the army."

While Coptic Pope Shenouda III vowed support to President Mubarak on Monday, Christians vividly remember the horrific bombing outside a church in Alexandria that killed 24 people on New Year's Eve. While the government blamed the Army of Islam, an Al Qaeda-linked Palestinian network, many Christians believe the attack was executed by Egyptians. ICC reports many

Christians see Mubarak's accusation of the Palestinian group as a cover to avoid addressing internal Islamic terrorism targeting Christians.

Nearly all Christians and many others live in fear. "I'm on the streets right now on watch because we need to protect our families, our homes," the director of an evangelical training center told ICC. "It's really dangerous because of those who got out of the prisons. Everybody is really praying hard for the Lord to have mercy on the people here, because people are starving. They lack food, money, everything. There is no money to buy food because all the banks are closed. The situation is really tough."