

Future of Egyptian Christians Unclear After Mubarak Resignation

With the resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak today, pro-democracy protesters are celebrating in the streets of Cairo and other cities around the country. According to the Associated Press, power was handed over to the Egyptian military.

An Open Doors source in the area said while international television is showing people celebrating, he has received mixed reaction from Christians to the resignation. How the change will affect the 10 million minority Christians in Egypt is unclear. However, there is a risk of a new government under a conservative Muslim mindset.

“Given recent polling data, if an election were to be held tomorrow, it’s quite likely that Islamic extremists would have a significant—if not dominant—role to play in the new government,” Dr. Carl Moeller, President/CEO of Open Doors USA, told Mission Network News. That, Moeller says, would likely lead to greater hardship for Christians.

The Pew Research Study conducted a survey that indicated 84 percent of Egyptian citizens said they would favor public execution of those who leave Islam for another ‘apostasy’...which is in place in some Muslim countries. Seventy-six percent of Egyptians favor stoning for those caught in adultery.

Earlier this week, George, a church pastor who partners with Open Doors in Egypt, said, “The people are afraid for the future, since this is an extremely critical time. But we trust in God, and we hope and pray for a new Egypt with democracy and freedom for Christians.”

Moeller says prayer is our number one weapon during this transitional period.

“We need to remember the church. We need to remember that the Christians in Egypt face the ‘frying pan and the fire.’ Their hope is in Jesus Christ and in His sovereignty, but the reality for our brothers and sisters in Egypt is that they face an increasingly uncertain future.”

Egypt is ranked No. 19 on the Open Doors 2011 World Watch List of the 50 worst persecutors of Christians. Although Christians have not been targeted in the violence over the past two weeks, there were several attacks in January. On New Year’s Day a suicide bomber killed 22 Christians in front of the Two Saints Church in Alexandria.

Is Mubarak’s decision to step down good for Egypt? Good for Israel? Or is it a disaster in the making?