

Muslim Rioters Kill Christians, Attack Mourners in Egypt

One Christian was killed and at least 21 were injured by Muslim rioters during a violent assault on mourners attending a funeral at St. Mark's Coptic Cathedral in Cairo on Sunday. The attack was the third day of anti-Christian violence in Egypt which has claimed five Christian lives.

A funeral procession held at St. Mark's Cathedral in Abbassia, Cairo, honoring four Christians who were killed on Friday, was attacked by a mob of some 200 Muslims on Sunday. The assault started when Muslims began pelting mourners with stones on Sunday morning. This quickly escalated into a massive attack on the cathedral involving firearms, Molotov cocktails, and tear gas, *Morning Star News* reports. At least one Christian was killed from gunshot wounds and more than a dozen were injured.

Tensions leading up to the assault ignited Friday when youth spray-painted inflammatory symbols, including a swastika, on an Islamic institution that led to a quarrel with onlookers in Shubra el-Kheima, located just north of Cairo. The argument spiraled into a street fight involving automatic weapons, *Deutsche Welle* reports.

Meanwhile, a local imam called on Muslims who own weapons to, "Kill the Christians and cleanse el-Kheima [of] infidels," during Friday prayers, *Morning Star News* reports. The mob attacked a Baptist church and damaged a nursery run by St. George Coptic Church, in addition to destroying and looting several Christian-owned businesses. Four Christians and one Muslim were killed in the violence.

"It was a problem between a few people. The church and others

had nothing to do with it,” Wagih Yacoub, a Coptic human rights activist, told International Christian Concern. “But, since one person was Christian, the Muslims decided to unleash their rage against the entire Christian community and the church.”

Hundreds of Christians and sympathetic Muslims had gathered at the funeral procession, calling on President Mohammad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party to step down from power. The protestors accused the Brotherhood of failing to protect religious minorities. “With our blood and our soul we will sacrifice ourselves for the cross,” chanted protestors, according to *The New York Times*.

“The Brotherhood doesn’t like Christians, it’s that simple,” said Yacoub. “They believe Egypt is their own country and that Christians are inferior, second-class citizens. It’s in their books and a core value of their beliefs. Christians will never have freedoms until the Brotherhood steps down.”

Aidan Clay, ICC regional manager for the Middle East, said, “Though the weekend’s violence was the worst anti-Christian assault in Egypt this year, there have been several churches attacked and more than a dozen Christians killed since the **Muslim Brotherhood** rose to power last year. In the face of mounting **Islamic aggression** and the Brotherhood’s failure to protect non-Muslim minorities, Christians see no other alternative but to leave the country for good. And who can blame them?

“Christian rights are now practically non-existent following the country’s 2011 revolution, which many hoped would bring greater freedoms and equality, but has instead only given control to a new form of tyranny under an Islamist-dominated government. The hopes of Christians in the country have been all but dashed and little incentive remains for the community to remain in their homeland. ICC calls on Egyptian officials to carry out a thorough investigation and arrest those

responsible for the killing of five Christians and the attack on mourners at St. Mark's Cathedral."