

# Muslim terrorists kill Coptic Christians on Palm Sunday

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It was a bittersweet day on Palm Sunday this year when ISIS bombed two churches in Egypt, killing 44 and wounding more than 100 others.

The first attack took place in Tanta, a city in the Nile Delta located about 80 miles southeast of Alexandria and 60 miles north of Cairo. Twenty-seven people were killed by a suicide bomber who entered St. George Church while its Palm Sunday service was taking place. At least 78 people were injured.

A few hours later, a second attack took place at St. Mark's Cathedral in Alexandria, also by a suicide bomber. Seventeen people were killed, including three police officers, and 48 others were injured. Coptic Pope Tawadris II was leading a mass at the time, but was not injured in the blast. The bomber had attempted to enter the cathedral, but when police officers stopped him, he detonated the bomb.

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has declared a three-month long state of emergency throughout Egypt, ordering Egyptian troops to secure vital facilities. Al-Sisi was responsible for the 2013 removal of former President Mohamed Mursi, who was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Sisi was elected president in 2014.

Of Egypt's population of 90 million, about 9 million are Coptic Christians. They have been facing an increasing number of attacks since the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

In August of 2016, the Archangel Mikhail Coptic church building was burned to the ground in the southern village of Naj al-Nassara. President al-Sisi has publicly committed to finding those who attacked the church, and has even attended Christmas services at a Coptic church. He has stated his rejection of the notion that Muslims and Christians must be divided, saying that "We are all Egyptians."

Al-Sisi has also stated that Christians have a right to build churches in Egypt, and some believe that this policy may be behind some of the church bombings. Even so, churches in Egypt must obtain a presidential decree and approval from the local Muslim community to build a church. Church construction is prohibited under Islamic rule.

Two months prior to the Palm Sunday bombings, ISIS pledged to kill Coptic Christians all across Egypt. In a video, they claimed that they were responsible for another attack on a Coptic church in Cairo that killed 29 people in December of 2016, and they released another video in 2015 that showed the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians that had been kidnapped in Libya.

They also bombed a Coptic church in Alexandria, Egypt on New Years Day in 2011. 21 Christians were killed and 43 others were injured in that attack.

It was also reported that in 2011 “an estimated 4,000 Muslims violently assaulted Christian homes and burned a church in the Egyptian town of Soul, which is about 18 miles from Cairo.” ISIS is not only targeting Coptic churches in Egypt. Two bombs were defused at the Sidi Abdel Rahim Mosque, also in the city of Tanta.

Coptic (which means Egyptian) Christians claim Mark (the author of the Gospel Mark) as their founder, claiming that their church had its beginning between A.D. 42 and A.D. 62 when Mark arrived on a missionary trip to Egypt. Their beliefs are similar to the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Estimates of the number of Coptic Christians worldwide range widely between 10 and 60 million.

USA Today ran an article regarding the bombings in Egypt and about the Coptic Orthodox Church of St. Mark in Jersey City. They have reportedly stepped up the security at their church after attacks overseas have intensified in recent years. A deacon at the church said that “We have a, ‘If you see something, say something’ policy in our church. There’s always that fear that this will carry into the U.S. It’s the reality of the world we live in.”

If the attacks continue, Egypt may eventually suffer the same fate as Iraq, where until ISIS took over, the Christian Church had existed for 2,000 years. It was the same pattern there – burning churches and killing Christians, forcing them to leave their country. Though the killings had been taking place for some time, it wasn’t until March 17 of last year that the Obama administration finally conceded that a genocide was taking place in the Middle East.

ISIS has warned that there are more attacks on the way, saying “Crusaders and their apostate allies should know the bill between us and them is very big and they will pay it with rivers of blood from their children, god willing. Wait for us, for we will wait for you.”

There is no doubt that unless ISIS is defeated, there will be more attacks.

Question is, will they be coming in America?



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