



Note No. 46/2010

Warsaw, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2010

Mr. Janusz Kochanowski  
Human Rights Defender  
Republic of Poland

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank you for your letter No. RPO-R-071-2/10 dated 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2010 where you expressed your concern about incident in Nagaa Hamadi that occurred on Christmas Eve , January 7<sup>th</sup>, taking away the lives of 6 Coptic Christians and one Muslim.

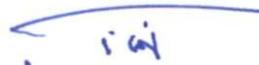
I would like to assure you, Sir, that the Government of Egypt is taking all necessary steps to protect human rights of all its citizens, including Coptic Christians.

With reference to it please find enclosed a copy of the Letter addressed by H.E. Prof. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, President of the Egyptian People's Assembly to H. E. Prof. Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament as well as :

1. Declaration of Joint Committee of the Committees on Defense and national Security, National Mobilization and Human Rights and the Bureau of the Committees on Religion and Wakfs Affairs;
2. Statement of Prof. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, President of the Egyptian People's Assembly.

Once more I would like to underline that such very sad, but individual incident can not reflect the attitude towards Christian Copts in Egypt because with the Muslims they form , on the equal rights , the Egyptian society and they refuse being regarded as religious minority.

I remain,



Fahmy Fayed  
Ambassador



PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY  
THE PRESIDENT

Honorable Jerzy Buzek  
President of the European Parliament

Cairo, 17 Jan. 2010

Having been informed of the fact that the European Parliament will discuss this week the incident of Nagaa Hamadi, one of Upper Egypt's cities, that occurred on the eve of Christmas, taking away the lives of 6 Copts and one Muslim;

I would like to keep you informed that those accused of committing this heinous crime were referred by the Prosecutor-General to the Court of Felonies considering crimes against State security. We expect a speedy trial of culprits. Meanwhile the Prosecutor-General has referred the Christian perpetrator of the crime of raping a Muslim girl child, who is a dweller in a nearby village in Nagaa Hamadi City of Upper Egypt.

These individual incidents do not reflect any kind of persecution of the rights of Christian Copts in Egypt who, with Muslims, form the integral fabric of the people of Egypt, and therefore Egyptian Copts refuse being regarded as among religious minorities.

The Egyptian Parliament has addressed this incident so as not to be construed as scathing to national unity and thus issued the enclosed declaration. It was before the debate that I personally made a statement to this effect which is also attached to this letter.

I wish you are positive about judging these actions as criminal and individual and further cannot be viewed as state or community policy. I wish if you can make sure such criminal acts will be brought to justice in accordance with the law, and that they are a



PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY  
THE PRESIDENT

purely domestic affair that is duly dealt with by virtue of law and fairness.

In our country, there is no such thing that can be surmised as conflict between religions, or factional rivalry or religious minorities.

Kindly accept our best assurances of highest consideration,

Truly,  
Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour

President of the People's Assembly of Egypt

Attached:

**1- Enclosure (1):**

Declaration Joint Committee of The Committees on Defense and National Security, National Mobilization and Human Rights and the Bureau of The Committees on Religious, Social and Wakfs Affairs (Approved by the Assembly of people, on 17 Jan. 2010)

**2- Enclosure (2):**

Statement of Prof, Ahmed Fathi Sorour The President of the Egyptian's Assembly ( On 17 Jan. 2010)



**PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY  
THE PRESIDENT**

**Honorable Bronislaw Komorowski  
President of the Parliament  
Poland**

Cairo, 17 Jan. 2010

We wish to inform you that those accused of committing the crime of Naja' Hammadi, a town in Upper Egypt, at the Christmas night, killing six Christians and one Moslem, have been sent by the Prosecutor General to the criminal court which considers cases associated with State security. We expect that the accused will be tried without delay together with the Christian living in a village near Naja' Hammadi and accused of raping the Moslem girl.

I would like to keep you informed that those accused of committing this heinous crime were referred by the Prosecutor-General to the Court of Felonies considering crimes against State security. We expect a **speedy** trial of culprits; Meanwhile the Prosecutor-General has referred the Christian perpetrator of the crime of raping a Muslim girl child, who is a dweller in a nearby village in Nagaa Hamadi City of Upper Egypt.

These individual incidents do not reflect any kind of persecution of the rights of Christian Copts in Egypt who, with Muslims, form the integral fabric of the people of Egypt, and therefore Egyptian Copts refuse being regarded as among religious minorities.

The Egyptian Parliament has addressed this incident so as not to be construed as



**PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY  
THE PRESIDENT**

enclosed declaration. It was before the debate that I personally made a statement to this effect which is also attached to this letter.

I wish you are positive about judging these actions as criminal and individual and further cannot be viewed as state or community policy. I wish if you can make sure such criminal acts will be brought to justice in accordance with the law, and that they are a purely domestic affair that is duly dealt with by virtue of law and fairness.

In our country, there is no such thing that can be surmised as conflict between religions, or factional rivalry or religious minorities.

Kindly accept our best assurances of highest consideration,

Truly,  
**Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour**

**President of the People's Assembly of Egypt**

Attached:

• **Enclosure (1):**

Declaration Joint Committee of The Committees on Defense and National Security, National Mobilization and Human Rights and the Bureau of The Committees on Religious, Social and Wakf's Affairs (Approved by the Assembly of people, on 17 Jan. 2010)

• **Enclosure (2):**

Statement of Prof. Ahmed Fathi Sorour The President of the Egyptian's Assembly ( On 17 Jan. 2010)

**Enclosure (1)**

**Declaration**

**Joint Committee of The Committees on  
Defense and National Security, National Mobilization and  
Human Rights and the Bureau of The Committees on  
Religious, Social and Wakf's Affairs  
(Approved by the Assembly of people, on 17 Jan. 2010)**

The joint committee having followed the atrocious criminal act committed by a group of criminals on Christmas Evening.

Strongly condemns this regrettable act that took place in Nag'a Hamadi, **Jan. 2010**, Quena Governorate, where some innocent Egyptians were killed and injured by outrageous bullets, followed by riots and violence as a result of vicious rumors and irresponsible inside and outside voices.

- Expresses its deep sorrow and regret for this grave act and conveys condolences to all Egyptian people in general and to our dear Coptic brothers and families of the victims in particular. The committee emphasizes that this horrible act will not pass without fair and deterring punishment that stresses security and safety of all people in a sedition-proof nation which relinquishes fanaticism and apathy and restores peace and tranquility to the bereaved hearts.
  
- The committee highlights that the national unity which we inherited under the banner of amity is safe in our hands. It also stresses the unity of this nation's texture, where our people proved to be of pure noble origin, by encountering all attempts of spreading discord among its sons, and where Moslems and Christians are equal.
  
- The committee appreciates the performance of all concerned bodies, whether security, executive or public,

whose concerted efforts resulted in the follow up of fleeing criminals, besieging their hide outs, till they were arrested, and sent to justice so that the society may take revenge of them.

- Believing in the importance of national unity, the Committee calls on everyone to swiftly heal the wounds, restore means of stability, spread the culture of tolerance rather than hatred and animosity, discard irrational fanaticism and extremism, contain the situation quickly and maintain means of calmness and security which are based on noble brotherhood and citizenship.

In this context, the Committee calls on media people whether on press or satellite channels to shoulder their responsibility, stand up to the suspicious attempts to fan the fire and not to be tempted by the vicious rumors that aim only at the destabilization of safety and security of the nation and the spreading of discord among its people.

- Stressing that Egypt is still and will always be the paragon of coexistence and entente among its people regardless of their religion or race where all, Muslims and Christians, hand in hand take part towards Egypt's sublimity and renaissance and stand side by side in front of any attempt to arouse sedition.
- Affirming that this is the message and responsibility we have undertaken and the preservation thereof is the whole society's responsibility and its first message and main role at the present time.
- Let's proceed together towards the achievement of our comprehensive renaissance without discrimination among citizens and let's all enjoy security, stability and prosperity, despite criminals and conspirators.

**Enclosure (2)**  
**Statement of Prof. Ahmed Fathi Sorour**  
**The President of the Egyptian's Assembly**  
**(On 17 Jan. 2010)**

**Dear colleagues,**

I have been deeply shocked as much as you and all the Egyptians were shocked and traumatized at the Christmas night by the sounds of bullets that interrupted the peaceful sound of hymns and killed innocent people at the ecstasy of their celebrations. This dreadful accident of Naja' Hammadi flabbergasted the whole country as such outrageous bullets were directed to our national unity which has become an essential landmark of our civilizational heritage and political structure.

To begin with, I wish to emphasize that we never accept any disrespect to Islam or Christianity, and we reject false allegation that slanderously link Islam with terrorism or extremism. It is also erroneous and dangerous to consider any individual offence an evidence of conflict between religions. This individual accident deprived of all moral and religious values is strictly prohibited by Islam.

In the Holy Qoran, Allah the Almighty said: "Those who believe in Allah, including the Jews and Christians who believe in God and the Day of Judgment and behave righteously will be rewarded by God and suffer no fear or sadness." The Almighty also said: "Never argue with the Jews and Christians except in the most polite manner." Allah even said: " The best among you are those who are most God-fearing." These precise verses need no more clarification.

In this context, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to remind you that Omar ibn El-Khattab, when he entered Jerusalem, refused to perform his prayers inside the church lest Moslems should follow suit afterwards and consider it a mosque. He even gave a solemn pledge to the people of Jerusalem whereby he promised to protect then property and places of worship in respect of the

sanctity of that holy city. That pledge included: "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. This is a promise from the servant of Allah, Omar ibn El-Khattab, the Leader of Moslems, to the people of Jerusalem, to protect their property, places of worship and crosses. Their churches shall never be occupied, infringed upon or demolished, their property shall never be expropriated and none of them shall be compelled to convert to Islam.

Since Amru ibn El-Aas opened Egypt, Moslems and Christians have been living together, regardless of their religions, and both parties have no allegiance but to the common homeland, dignity, coexistence and the mother land to which we all belong. In his first Friday sermon in the old city of Fostat, Amru ibn El-Aas said: "Behave properly to you Christian neighbors as you gave them a solemn pledge and have matrimonial relations with them."

It is no wonder that Egyptian Christians, throughout history, have resisted, side by side with Moslems, invaders and tyrants including the crusaders who claimed to fight allegedly in the name of the Cross. Egyptian Christians were even deprived of their right to perform pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the sake of Egypt. They also refuse European allegations that Christians are a vulnerable religious minority in Egypt. They fought the crusade, together with their Moslem brothers. When Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi was victorious he returned to the Orthodox church its property in appreciation of their role in the war. In return, Christians called the church the "Sultan's Church".

The firm position of Christians with regard to invasions, aggressions and occupation to which Egypt was exposed throughout history is nothing but an indication of the unified texture of Moslems and Christians. Both the crescent and the cross joined forces during national struggle against occupation, particularly during the 1919 uprising, against the 1956 tripartite aggression, the attrition war and the 1973 war. Egypt fought

those wars with two arms: one is Moslem and the other is Christian, in defense of the common homeland.

Throughout our modern history, imperialists and enemies, despite their conspiracies and plots, failed to break our unity. The historical and geographical genius of Egypt melted both Moslems and Christians in one pot. Thus, they live together, one unit, not two elements. They speak one language, have one culture and share one future. This unity is unbreakable, and this citizenship is irrefutable.

This national unity is the product of Moslem and Christian intellects and men of letters. They expressed this unity in writing, painting, sculpture and music. In this context, Ahmad Shawqi, the Egyptian poet laureate wrote:

We and the Copts are but one nations,  
Living on one land in one unity.  
We respect the teachings of Jesus Christ,  
Andy they respect our Islam.  
Religion belongs to God,  
Who, if He wished, could have created people the same.  
These are your lands, and those are ours,  
Side by side at all times.  
These are your graves, and those are ours,  
Our skulls and bones lie side by side.

Honorable members

If we leave history and culture behind and look forward to our contemporary country, here we find the Constitution which the parliament drafted its amendments with its best intellect, depth of its conscience and belief in the nation. The Constitution asserted and approved of this unity as a translation of a social and political reality and great history, emphasized in its first article that the Arab Republic of Egypt is a State based on a democratic system which is built on citizenship. In its Article 3, it was stressed that the people safeguard the national unity as stipulated for in the Constitution. Confirming that, it states in

article 5, that it is not allowed to exercise any political activity or establish political parties on religions basis, or discrimination because of sex or origin. Article 40 of the Constitution established the principle of equality and non-discrimination based on religion or belief. Article 60 of the Constitution stated that safeguarding the national unity is a duty of every citizen. Article 64 of the Constitution stressed that the rule of law is the basis of government in the state. Law is always there for those fools who try to disturb our national unity and be in their pursuit through criminal procedures as they will get their due punishment with deterring verdicts. The penal code confirmed in its article 98 (w) the national unity, warned and punished anyone who may use religion to promote by saying, writing or any other means extreme ideas with the purpose of inciting dissension, disrespect, denigration of religion, factions related to it or harm national unity.

Nevertheless, we can not claim that this unity could not prevent individual criminal acts here or there whatever their motives might be, that may happen to two siblings living under the same roof. The rest of the family should stand against such acts and contain them with various political, cultural and security measures, provided that perpetrator should receive the punishment he/she deserves. I may mention here some important points to be taken into consideration:

- First** : An individual and limited act can never destroy our eternal national unity.
- Second:** Right understanding of religion should be realized as revealed by the Almighty God: belief, worship, transactions, and morals, the freedom of performing our rituals and expressing them in the context of public order.
- Third:** National unity, should be put above any other consideration, denouncing the factional dissensions as an outside ailment to the Egyptian nation, that may be

moved by envious foreign fingers against the national unity and stability of Egypt.

**Fourth:** Working on confronting the extreme ideology and beating the hands of those who are blinded by black thinking and irrational fanaticism through the values of justice and Law and thrown them into the furnace of crime and swamp of extremism.

Finally, we should realize that any problem threatening the national unity we should solve it by the Constitution and Law as well as education, culture and mass media.

The accumulated national practices assert that President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak is one of the most keen Egyptian presidents to keep and safeguard safety, national unity and remedy the problems of the Coptic issue under all circumstances. You may remember, all of you, the Republican decree which pleased all the Egyptian of making the 7<sup>th</sup> January witnessing the date of the glorious Christmas.... A national feast and official holiday for Egypt that should be celebrated by everyone.

This keenness on the part of the political leadership

- necessitates that we all should stand against the attempts of planting dissension and instigating hatred as we are all targeted by those who are not relieved to see Egypt's rise and coherence of its people. Copts are an integral part of the Egyptian national fabric and are not a religious minority. They enjoy all rights and duties on equal foot without any discrimination. We Muslims have a duty to listen to the Copts demands within the framework of the Rule of the Law and principle of citizenship. It is not convenient to consider any individual criminal act as being an evidence on having a religious conflict. This is a wrong concept held by those who are encouraging the conflict of religions, and xenophobia in their countries. We love the Christian Copts in our country and respect them because they are our brothers and this is done in compliance with our religion teachings.