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Title: Why Must Christians Pay the Price Every Time?

"I thank the nation's shield, the Armed Forces, for their heroic role in the restoration of the churches damaged by the Muslim Brotherhood," said Pastor 'Andrīh Zakī, head of the Evangelical community in Egypt.

Thanks should also go to the staff of the Engineering Commission for their reconstruction of the churches, and for fulfilling their national duty towards their partners in this nation, partners who today withstand the grievances of having their brothers targeted by the Salafists and their terrorist followers. These followers burn their churches, kill their youth and threaten their elders. I await the President's announcement regarding the completion of the Church Reconstruction project, as promised in the short speech he delivered among his admirers in the Orthodox Patriarchal in order to bless them on Christmas.

However, Christians would be much happier if they got to return to their houses in al-'Arīsh, so that their absence from their homes and jobs is not extended any longer. As long as they remain far away, Christians' wounds in this country remain exposed to pain and sadness, as well as a grave sense of injustice. Why must Christians pay the price every time?

Christians would be much happier if the state decided to legally tackle the Salafist Party, who trouble their hearts on a daily basis. This party and its representatives have become specialists in depressing Christians, mobilizing against them, secluding them in their own society, and cornering them with their fatwās.

Christians would be much happier when they are allowed to pray in their churches together and when the state tightens its grip on the evil-doers who prevent them from doing so. Christians would be much happier if state officials in every governorate stopped fearing those with beards who ball up their fists in the face of the law, and who extend their influence in those areas devoid of law enforcement. There are those inside state institutions who clear the way for them, allowing them to punish Christians for a crime they did not commit.

Christians would be much happier if media platforms who claim "enlightenment" ceased to differentiate in their delivery of the news, precluding them with labels such as "Christian" and "Coptic." Prejudice is an unfortunate reality in the discourse employed throughout journalistic discourse and satellite TV. This practice completely blinds our citizenry, when the heroes of a particular story are either "Egyptian" or "Christian" - as if Christianity is a nationality, before it is a religion.

Christians would be much happier in their nation if the state treats its citizens based on their citizenship status, and does not ignore them and correspond exclusively with the Church, or rid itself of its social responsibility assuming that the Church will fulfill its role instead. The state must interfere in civil Christian society, based on the fact that it can not exclude this very real facet of Egyptian society.

Christians would really be much happier if the following tactics were not used to appease their demands: annual Christmas Cathedral visits, presidential decrees inaugurating a new church in a new city, or superficially improving hiring practices by employing token Christians to color the situations and showcase exemplary citizenry. The day when the real notion of citizenship becomes firmly established, when one's merit rules above all, is when Christians truly will be happy. Even if then they don't have a Governor or government minister!