

## Habib: Engaging Copts is Necessary to Prevent Sectarian Conflicts



Egypt's political deadlock needs sincere cooperation between Muslims and Christians to bolster general freedoms, whereas increasing repression will naturally give birth to social and sectarian conflicts, Muslim Brotherhood deputy chairman Mohamed Habib told Ikhwanweb.

Habib said Christians are a deeply-rooted and essential part of Egyptian society.

"They are the partners of Muslims in their country, decision, and destiny, and they should have all citizenship rights," he added.

However, Habib said the Egyptian church contributes to the isolation of the Christian community in Egypt.

"Unfortunately, the church is not keen on engaging Christians in political and social life. But we insist that the current sectarian unrest will gain momentum if our Christian brothers do not come out of their shell and obtain their legitimate rights on all political and social levels."

Christians should not be wary of the Muslim Brotherhood since they seek to implement a moderate Islamist agenda which is undoubtedly compatible with the values of citizenship, justice and freedom for all Christians, he added.

But seeking external support from foreign countries is rejected, he said.

"The Muslim Brotherhood is against resorting to the United States or any other country to solve internal issues, since this might involve the imposition of foreign agendas on our country. It will also lead to further isolation of Egypt's Christian community, and therefore consolidating sectarian tension in the country."

The center for religious freedom at [luncheon discussion](#) Bishop Thomas of Upper Egypt entitled "Egypt Coptic Christians: The Experience of the Largest Christian Community at a time of Rising Islamization." The Bishop recounted injustices against the Coptic minority, saying the Coptic culture is facing the threat of "Arabization" but that Christians will always preserve their Coptic identity.

He talked about lack of religious freedom, the threatening growth of Islamic identity, and tensions between the Muslim and Christian communities. He stated that the government does not actively address the looming religious strife in Egypt. He also said he distrusted the Muslim Brotherhood, but that the threat to the Copts is "inherent" in Egypt's general atmosphere.

[resolution](#) 26 the US Congress passed a Egyptian government to respect human rights and freedoms of religion and expression, focusing on the discrimination against the Christian population, and urging the President and the Secretary of State to put human rights and religious freedom developments in Egypt very high on the United States Government's agenda.