

**For Immediate Release**

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**Christian newspaper in Egypt discloses facts behind cases of alleged kidnappings of Christians**

*Issue reveals grief of Christian parents; questions motivations for lack of response from Egyptian authorities. One father's cry: "We're drowning, and none can help us."*

El Cajon, Calif. – *El Tareek*, an Egyptian Christian newspaper, has published a thought-provoking and revealing article concerning the continued disappearances of Christian Egyptian girls and women. "O! Pope Shunoda: Say the Truth," appeared in the September 2006 issue.

The article addresses the complexities of attempts by Egyptian Christians to resolve the all-too-frequent disappearances of Christian women. Hundreds of these disappearances occur each year in Egypt, and advocates for Christian families are sure of the involvement of organized Islamic groups.

These groups, say some Egyptian Christians, aim to bring dishonor and discouragement to Christian families, as well as to increase the number of Islamic adherents in Egypt by compelling young women, under pressure, duress, or by trickery, to profess conversion to Islam. Others believe these women are victims of a church and family culture that has failed to meet a young woman's emotional needs. This, they say, leaves young girls prey to "Islamic Romeos" who woo them with feigned love and attention in order to convince them to leave their faith.

What is clear from the article, however, is that the Egyptian government rightly falls under suspicion of foot-dragging in resolving this problem, at best; and at worst, is believed by Egyptian Christians to be aiding and abetting the kidnapers.

The latest case, according to the article, is Mona Yacoub Kriakas, a 23-year-old teacher from an Upper Egyptian family in Fayoum, who vanished a few days before her wedding at the beginning of September 2006. Mr. Mohsen Shukry, Mona's lawyer, declared to El Arabia Net that Anton Azeez, the bishop of the Catholic Church, of which she is a member, wanted to meet with the girl to verify she had left willingly and without compulsion, but he was not allowed to see her.

Sources quoted in the article claim some of these disappearances are "a well arranged process for kidnapping girls done by known assailants and special societies that are supported by foreigners. It is alleged that one of the countries in the Gulf is the supporter for this process." An alleged confession of a man claiming to be involved in seducing and trapping Christian women in Egypt, which has been posted on the Internet, offers support for this view.

Many parents of children who have suddenly vanished have received brief, frantic phone calls from daughters who beg for help. When they try to reestablish contact their children, then they hear nothing more, or, are threatened, and are left in anguish when police refuse to investigate glaring evidence that a crime has been committed.

The article asks: “What are the facts? Who are the beneficiaries? Why are all these things happening?”

To read a translation of the article from Arabic, visit <http://www.thelastharvest.com/newsletter/kidnappings.html>.

According to a news release from Compass Direct News, on October 9, a 15-year-old Egyptian Christian teenager escaped her Muslim kidnappers in early October. (<http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=lead&lang=en&length=long&idement=4573&backpage=>). El Tareek was the first in Egypt to report on this same case.

In an effort to illustrate the nature of this complex issue in terms that make it understandable to American Christians, The Last Harvest has produced a free Sunday school lesson, “The Children of Egypt,” available at <http://www.thelastharvest.com/newsletter/pdf/lessonplan.pdf>.

Written by a professional writer and experienced home educator who is familiar with issues of persecution in the Middle East, this material tells the story of Samira, an Egyptian Christian girl who met a Muslim named Ahmed. He feigned an interest in becoming a Christian so he could trick Samira into running away with him.