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## Egypt is on the edge of . . . ?

My dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The situation in Egypt is very serious. I do not know where this situation will take us. I feel that Egypt is at the verge of violent demonstrations, another revolution, or civil war. We do not know what is going to happen, but we know that we are at the edge of something drastic.

One year ago Dr. Mohammed Mursi became the President of Egypt, following 18 months of turbulence in the socio-economic and political situation in Egypt. Many had hoped that Egypt would move forward for the better however things became worse and are now very difficult. Egyptians became divided between Islamists and non-Islamists. A constitution that was written and approved in haste was one of the main reasons for these divisions. Other reasons were the exclusion of moderates and non-Islamists from participation in the political life, and the appointment of Islamists as ministers in the Cabinet and other prominent posts.

These divisions led to instability, a lack of security, and many demonstrations which in turn badly affected the economy and tourism. People started to complain from the rise of food prices, the frequent power cuts, the sectarian clashes, and lately the lack of fuel. Two weeks ago there were demonstrations in several governorates in objection to the appointment of new governors who are known Islamists. A new movement called, “*tamarrod*” or “*Rebellion*” was formed last April and they called for massive demonstrations against the President and the government on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. They claim to have gathered the signatures of 15 million supporters.

One week ago the Islamists made big demonstrations in support of the President. They warned the supporters of “*tamarrod*” against demonstrating on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. “*Anyone who will sprinkle water at the President will be sprinkled with blood,*” said one of the supporters of the President. This means that there will be bloodshed if people try to force the President to step down.



Supporters of the President

Some Islamists also threatened the Christians if they participated in the demonstrations. Others produced a fatwa saying that those who would demonstrate are “*kafiroon*” or “*godless*” and deserve to be fought against. The Grand Imam of Al Azhar stated that, “*anyone can demonstrate to express his or her views and this has nothing to do with faith.*” His Holiness, Pope Tawadros II, of the Coptic Orthodox Church said, “*everyone is free to express his or her views.*”

Yesterday, in an attempt to calm the situation, the President delivered a 2.5 hour speech. Unfortunately, the speech stirred the people even more. Demonstrations started yesterday at Tahrir Square and in the Province of Mansoura where dozens were injured and two people were killed. Now the military tanks have started to move in to protect the important sites.



Demonstrations on 26 June in Tahrir Square

What is going to happen on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June? We do not know! All what we know is that when emotions run high, anything can happen. However, we trust that God is in control and we are in His hands. Two days ago during his visit to Egypt, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, encouraged us by using St. Paul’s words, while in the middle of a storm, “*But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost*” (Acts 27:22a).

I am writing this to request your prayers for Egypt and for the people of Egypt.

May the Lord bless you!

+ Mouneer Egypt

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