

إقليم الكنيسة الأسقفية / الأنجليكانية القدس والشرق الأوسط
The Episcopal / Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

أبروشية الكنيسة الأسقفية / الأنجليكانية بمصر وشمال أفريقيا والقرن الأفريقي
The Episcopal / Anglican Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa



Bishop: The Most Rev. Dr. Mouneer Hanna Anis
Address: 5 Michel Lutfallah Street, P.O. Box 87
Zamalek, 11211, Cairo, Egypt
Tel.: +20 2 27380821/3/9
Email: bishopmouneer@gmail.com

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“Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.”

Isaiah 64:4

Friday, 25 November 2011

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am sure that you are following the news of our beloved country Egypt. I am very grateful to all of you who wrote to assure us of your prayers. This means a lot to us here.

The situation now is very serious. In the last few days, demonstrations have been going on and continue in Tahrir Square and other locations all over Egypt (Alexandria, Suez, Fayoum, Upper Egypt, etc...). 41 people have been killed and over 2,200 were injured as a result of these demonstrations and violent clashes between the demonstrators and security police. There are rumors about other unknown groups who are provoking this violence.

These current demonstrations were initiated by several Islamic groups. Last Friday's demonstrations were called *“The Friday of Rescuing the Revolution.”* Today it is called *“The Friday of the Last Opportunity”* for the Military.

The known reasons of these current demonstrations are:

- The rejection of a document produced last month by the interim government which will be used as a guideline for the upcoming constitution. This document states clearly that Egypt will be a secular country with the Sharia Law as the main source of legislation. It

also affirms the right of citizenship and equality between all Egyptians. The document also gives some more privileges to the military.

- The fear that the military would not give up its control of the country to a civil government. This fear arose from the nomination of the Head of the Military Council to the presidency by some groups.
- The cessation of the investigation and judgment of civilians by the military as it has happened at the time of the Maspero killings on 9 October 2011. It is worth mentioning that the military was involved in the incident of Maspero and was also involved in the investigation and judgment--which is a conflict of interest.
- The lack of clarity in what is going on and what is going to happen in the future. Both the Military Council and the interim government have not communicated well with the people and there are unacceptable delays in dealing with conflicts and problems. For example, we are still waiting for the results of the investigations of the bombing in Alexandria on 1 January 2011 and all the consequent clashes.

For these reasons, and for *other unknown ones* to me, the demonstrators, the majority of whom are Islamists, are calling for the resignation of the interim government and the withdrawal of the Military Council. They also called for appointing a “rescue government” until an elected government is appointed. I personally wonder if the desire is to create a vacuum of leadership in order to push some extreme Islamic leaders to rule the country. Other moderate Muslims also share this concern with me.

In response to the current demonstrations, the Military Council consulted with politicians from different parties and responded by providing a clear timeline for the hand-over of the country to an elected President on the 30th of June 2012. During this time, the election of the Parliament, the Shura Council (the senate), and the writing of a new constitution would be accomplished. However, the demonstrations continue even today. Thankfully, things are not as violent since yesterday evening because the military built a separating wall between the demonstrators and the security police.

It is worrying to have the Parliamentary elections this Monday (28 November) in this time of chaos and instability. We hope that the upcoming elections will be non-violent and that people will be able to express their views without any pressure. However, there is no doubt that the Islamists will have a majority within the Parliament. This is because they are several parties and the new liberal and democratic parties have not had enough time to develop popularity. Having said that, we cannot rule out surprises!!!

The Church in Egypt is praying hard for the situation. I am proud of courageous Christian young people who were present at Tahrir Square to help the injured in the past few days. It was also great that one of the Presbyterian churches, close to Tahrir Square, opened its doors to receive the injured. Christian and Muslim doctors were serving the injured side-by-side in that church.

We in the Diocese encourage our people to be pro-active, positive, and participate in the upcoming elections. We continue to serve all Egyptians, Christians and Muslims, through our churches, hospitals, community development centres and schools. We believe that sharing the love of Jesus is very much needed at such a time as this. We also believe that God has a great plan and that no one can change this plan. It is a time to fix our eyes on God who grants us hope.

Our prayer requests are:

- Pray that violence would stop completely
- Pray for the upcoming elections—that it will go peacefully and people would have real freedom and not be pressured
- Pray for wisdom and grace for the Military Council and the rescue government to be appointed
- Pray for the deteriorating financial situation of Egypt
- Pray for our churches and institutions in order to demonstrate the love of Christ by serving our country

May the Lord bless you!

Yours in Christ,

+ Mouneer Egypt

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President Bishop of the Episcopal / Anglican
Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East