



Modern Coptic Martyrs Remembrance Day

About Us

- **Mission:** dedicated to advocating equal citizenship rights for the Coptic Christians of Egypt and other minorities in the Middle East
 - Watchdog over events and policies in Egypt
 - Increase awareness of the conditions of Copts in Egypt
 - Promote positive developments in Egypt such as a secular system of government, and equality and liberty for all Egyptian citizens

Background

- Islamist Salafists demanded Christian symbols such as church bells, crosses and steeples be removed from a Coptic Orthodox church in Aswan
- Aswan's governor, Mustafa el-Sayyed, called for a meeting between Copts and Salafists, but failed to resolve the conflict
- The Coptic church was demolished by local Islamist Salafists in Oct. 2011
- Governor initially denied existence of church, later deemed it illegal to justify its demolishing by the Muslim fanatics
- Government's mishandling of the conflict sparked Maspero Demonstrations

Protest – Oct. 9, 2011

- Thousands of peaceful demonstrators, majority Copts, marched from Shoubra neighborhood of Cairo towards the state-run television building, Maspero, to protest the destruction of their church
- They planned to have a sit-in in front of the state-run television building, Maspero
- As they approached their destination, the demonstrators were attacked by Muslim fanatic mob hurling stones at them
- Egyptian Army forces suddenly appeared on the scene and attacked the peaceful protestors without warning



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Image: Google Images ●

Maspero Massacre

- The Army forces attacked the peaceful demonstrators using riot gear, batons, live ammunition and armored vehicles
- Soldiers drove their armored vehicles into the protestors in zigzag patterns to hit as many individuals as possible
- Meanwhile, state-owned media deceptively announced on TV that Copts were killing Egyptian soldiers and enticed the “good citizens” to go into the streets to help the soldiers
- Ultimately, 28 protestors were killed and 327 were injured; 27 of those murdered were Copts, 14 of whom were crushed under armed vehicles
- Autopsy reports performed at the church’s request and with the agreement of the victims’ families confirmed the carnage reported.



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Image: Google Images ●



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No Justice

- Interviews and social media updates contradicted official reports of the government which downplayed and even denied accusations made about the incident being ordered by the state's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the only power in the country at the time after the demise of past president Mubarak
- To date, those who ordered the Army units to attack the demonstrators remain unknown and have not been brought to trial
- Only 2 low-ranking soldiers were found guilty of misdemeanors of "involuntary killing", both remain free and continue to serve in their army units
- A Copt protestor was convicted for "aggression against army personnel"

No Justice

- The massacre is still not officially recognized as such by the Egyptian government and investigations remain incomplete and inconclusive.
- Denial of the event and lack of justice for those criminals perpetuates a climate of impunity in which Copts, their churches, homes, and businesses continue to be targeted for violence on a regular basis as reflected in the escalation of violence against the Copts in the past two months, five years after the massacre
- The Maspero Christian youth group movement which organized the demonstration has since been muted
- It is clear that the ultimate goal by the Egyptian government and SCAF was to suppress and forever silence the political voice of the Copts

A Day of Remembrance

- We propose to declare October 9th a day of remembrance, to commemorate those who lost their lives during the Maspero Massacre and to raise awareness about the targeting of innocent Christian Copts by Egyptian security forces
- We also propose to use this occasion to commemorate the lives of modern Coptic martyrs who have lost their lives over the past four decades which witnessed the rise of religious bigotry and fanaticism
- We call on the Egyptian government to recognize the crimes committed against Copts and to bring the perpetrators to justice and end the climate of religious bigotry
- Coptic Solidarity will host a commemoration event at the National Press Club in Washington, DC on Oct. 5th, 2016 at Noon.

How You Can Help

- Host a prayer service at church, or a remembrance event in your home or community
- Share the Maspero story in your church bulletin – print bulletin from the online resource center
- Share about the Remembrance Day on social media using the hashtag #SeekMasperoJustice
- Visit Coptic Solidarity's online resource center to plan your commemoration event www.copticsolidarity.org
- Support Coptic Solidarity's mission financially by donating. Coptic Solidarity is an independent non-governmental organization that relies exclusively on the financial support of its members.