



‘JIHAD OF THE WOMB’: TRAFFICKING OF COPTIC WOMEN & GIRLS IN EGYPT

By Coptic Solidarity
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I. Introduction

Coptic Solidarity was established in 2010 and is dedicated to achieving equal citizenship rights for the Copts in Egypt. Coptic Solidarity has reported and advocated for trafficked Coptic women and minor girls for the past decade. On July 22, 2011, Coptic Solidarity's Vice president, (now president) [testified](#) at a Congressional hearing titled "Minority at Risk: Coptic Christians in Egypt," which was [broadcast by C-SPAN](#).

This report is a continuation of Coptic Solidarity's work and addresses the widespread practice of abduction and trafficking of Coptic women and girls in Egypt and how they are a particularly vulnerable group to exploitation in Egypt.

There are numerous variations of the way in which these kidnappings and disappearances occur, as well as confusion regarding terminology. In this briefing, Coptic Solidarity demonstrates that these crimes fall within United Nations' conventions and protocol for trafficking as well as the Arab, Egyptian, and US definitions. Furthermore, the forced disappearance of minor girls in Egypt (below 18 years of age), also constitutes crimes in contravention of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. As such, the Egyptian government and international entities must address these heinous crimes that have been conducted with near impunity. The report also addresses the Egyptian government's lack of action and counters the government's blanket excuse not to scrutinize, for example by claiming that the women left their families voluntarily as a reason not to investigate their cases further.

II. Methodology

This report is based on information from Egyptian media, the Coptic community and clergy in Egypt, and from family members of the women affected. Sources for each case are included at the end of this report. Some sources cannot be included due to the sensitive nature of the issue as well as the great risk to family and friends as the Egyptian government is currently amid one of its most severe crackdowns on civil rights and has imprisoned many thousands for "crimes" as simple as reporting on abuse.

The [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime](#) was added specifically to assist women and children whose situations were not covered in the original UN document, and to ensure they receive protection.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (TVPA), defines " (a) Trafficking in persons shall mean the, *recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.*"

Not only are all of the typical scenarios of kidnapping and disappearance of Coptic women and girls covered under this definition; additional clarification is provided in point b:

“The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;”

While the Egyptian government continues to victim blame in situations of elopement, the above protocol delineating trafficking in persons clearly includes cases in which the victim may have originally acquiesced, based on fraud, deception, threat, or use of force, or any other type of coercion, but then realizes they have been trapped.

The [Arab Charter on Human Rights](#) states in Article 10:

- 1) ***All forms of slavery and trafficking in human beings are prohibited and are punishable by law. No one shall be held in slavery and servitude under any circumstances.***
- 2) ***Forced labor, trafficking in human beings for the purposes of prostitution or sexual exploitation, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or any other form of exploitation or the exploitation of children in armed conflict are prohibited.***

Furthermore, the [Egyptian Law Number 64 of 2010 on Human Trafficking](#) clearly states in Chapter 1, Article 3, that:

“The consent of the victim to exploitation in any of the forms of human trafficking shall be irrelevant as long as any of the means stipulated in [Article\(2\)](#) of this law have been used. To establish trafficking in a child or in the incapacitated, use of any of the means referred to is not required, and in all cases his consent or the consent of the person responsible for him or his guardian shall be irrelevant.”

The Special Rapporteur and his predecessors have repeatedly [called on States](#) to eliminate in law and practice, including in plural legal systems, all forms of marriage that restrict and/or deny women’s and girls’ rights, well-being, and dignity, including early and forced marriage.

Definitions and terminology regarding the trafficking of persons and rights of children utilized in the report are derived from the following sources:

- [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime](#)
- [The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime League of Arab States, Arab Charter on Human Rights, 2004](#)
- [Egyptian Law No. \(64\) of 2010 regarding Combating Human Trafficking](#)
- [US Trafficking in Persons Report, Egypt Section](#)- June 2019 - US State Department

- [UN Convention on Rights of the Child](#)
- [Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief](#) (Focus: The rights of the child and his or her parents in the area of freedom of religion or belief)

III. Context

The capture and disappearance of Coptic women and minor girls is a bane of the Coptic community in Egypt, yet little has been done to address this scourge by the Egyptian or foreign governments, NGOs, or international bodies.

[According to a priest](#) in the Minya Governorate, at least 15 girls go missing every year in his area alone. His own daughter was nearly kidnapped had he not been able to intervene in time. The rampant trafficking of Coptic women and girls is a direct violation of their most basic rights to safety, freedom of movement, and freedom of conscience and belief. The crimes committed against these women must be urgently addressed by the Egyptian government, ending impunity for kidnapers, their accomplices, and police who refuse to perform their duties. Women who disappear and are never recovered must live an unimaginable nightmare. The large majority of these women are never reunited with their families or friends because [police response in Egypt is dismissive and corrupt](#). There are countless families who report that police have either been complicit in the kidnapping or at the very least bribed into silence. If there is any hope for Coptic women in Egypt to have a merely “primitive” level of equality, these incidents of trafficking must cease, and the perpetrators must be held accountable by the judiciary.

IV. Human Rights Violations of Coptic women and children

A. Marriage of women and girls as a form of trafficking

One reason for the lack of action and international attention to the issue of trafficking Coptic women is the difficulty in documenting all the cases, and secondly the excuse used by Egyptian government officials that the girls and women have gone willingly. While few cases are genuine marriages, Coptic Solidarity estimates about 500 cases within the last decade, where elements of coercion were used that amount to trafficking. The kidnappings come in the backdrop of a Coptic minority population that is already marginalized as Coptic Solidarity has [reported](#) to UN bodies.

Some of the most common scenarios in the enforced kidnapping and disappearance of Coptic women and girls include:

1. Overpowering and kidnapping women, identified as Coptic by not wearing hijab, or wearing a necklace with a cross; this can occur while alone in public such as on the way back from schools or workplaces, while traveling in public transportation such as tuk-tuks, and while walking alone on public roads.
2. Luring minor Coptic girls into romantic relationships by Muslim men; the typical scenario includes promises of eloping to start a new life together after which the girl discovers

she has been tricked but is then at the mercy of her captors; these girls are the most likely to be forcibly converted to Islam and married. Often, the captors take videos of the girls being sexually abused and threaten to share the videos with their families and communities as a means of enforcing the shame culture and deterring the girls from trying to return to their families.

- [According](#) to a former Egyptian trafficker, “one of the strategies they used to gain the girls’ trust was for the kidnapper, a Muslim man, to tell the Christian girl he loved her and wanted to convert to Christianity for her. He explained that “They start a romantic relationship until, one day, they decide to ‘escape’ together. What the girls don’t know is that they are actually being kidnapped. Most of the time they will not marry their kidnapper, but someone else.”
 - The same trafficker [shared](#) another story. “I remember a Coptic Christian girl from a rich, well-known family in Minya. She was kidnapped by five Muslim men. They held her in a house, stripped her and filmed her naked. In the video, one of them also undressed. They threatened to make the video public if the girl wouldn’t marry him.”
3. Engaging in superficial theological debates, by those ignorant and disparaging of Christianity’s basic tenets, targeting the youngsters and relatively uneducated. Given the overwhelming propaganda, through education and media, constantly hammering a message claiming the superiority of Islam, this can be effective, in particular in the countryside where the majority of villages are denied permits to have churches and hence some Copts may be inadequately prepared to counter-debate.

B. Additional vulnerabilities of trafficked Coptic women and children due to religious freedom violations

There is ample [evidence](#) pointing to organized networks, related to Salafist groups, which are actively engaging in the phenomenon that we call ‘Jihad of the Womb.’ As explained by [Raymond Ibrahim](#), “Because numbers always mean strength, Muslim clerics present this ‘procreation’ jihad as a way of killing two birds with one stone: seize and seed non-Muslim women with Muslim babies. Doing so depletes the infidels’ ranks of women and the non-Muslim babies they might have birthed, while simultaneously increasing both for Islam.”

[According](#) to a former member of one of these kidnapping rings, the abduction of such girls is now at an all-time high. “Salafist networks began in the seventies and it’s reached its highest levels now, in the era of President Sisi... A group of kidnappers meets in a mosque to discuss potential victims. They keep a close eye on Christians’ houses and monitor everything that’s going on. On that basis, they weave a spider’s web around [the girls].”

The tactics include utilizing or planting Muslim female neighbors, colleagues, coworkers or friends to invite Coptic women to their home or travel across town during which time they are kidnapped by the groups who organized with the known female.

The former kidnapper stated that his group “rented apartments in different areas of Egypt to hide kidnapped Coptic girls. There, they put them under pressure and threaten them to convert to Islam. And once they reach the legal age, a specially arranged Islamic representative comes in to make the conversion official, issue a certificate and accordingly they change their ID”.

These networks are often supported by like-minded members (including high-ranking officials) of the police, national security and local administrations. Their roles include refusal to lodge official complaints by the victims’ families, falsifying police investigations, organizing the formal sessions of conversion to Islam at Al-Azhar, or harassing families into silence and acceptance of the de facto trafficking of their loved ones.

The variety of scenarios—some in which women are obviously kidnapped contrary to their will, and others in which a Coptic girl initially agrees to an elopement (or similar arrangement)—has made it difficult to hold the Egyptian government to account for these crimes. To date, the Egyptian government claims that the vast majority of these cases include Coptic girls who willingly converted and left their homes and families with Muslim men.

In December 2015, Laila Baha’ Eldin, Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights of Egypt, [presented Egypt’s report](#) to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Her response to questions raised by experts regarding the abduction of Coptic women was that, “All reported cases of abduction had been investigated; the latest one had been three years earlier.” She said that “In most cases, it was about young women falling in love with someone from a different denomination.”

The problem with this defense is that the Egyptian government does not acknowledge or protect the ongoing rights of Coptic females. Regardless if a women is kidnapped from her home or in public, or if she agrees to elope and then discovers she has been tricked and wishes to leave, the elements of trafficking in persons and crimes against children are all still applicable. A woman in Egypt should have the right at any time to seek safety, have the right of movement, right of freedom of conscience and belief, and the right to change her views during her lifetime.

Ironically, an Egyptian advocate, [Reda Shoukr](#), was highlighted as a hero in the US State Department’s annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report 2020 (pg 48), and purportedly provided legal service to 800 victims of human trafficking each year, since she founded Al-Shehab Institute for Promotion and Comprehensive Development, in 2002. Laila Baha’ Eldin’s report and testimony to the UN are in direct contradiction to reports on Ms. Shoukr’s work.

“...Al-Shehab’s legal aid services maintain relationships with police stations in greater Cairo and throughout Egypt in order to identify and to release wrongfully charged victims of human trafficking. **Through this close partnership with local police, Al-Shehab has provided legal services to 800 victims each year and secured the release of 400 victims due to lack of evidence.**”

Clearly, the Egyptian government's tactic is to deny the extent of trafficking in persons currently occurring within their borders.

The primary reason the Egyptian government refuses to intervene in any of these cases of trafficked Coptic women can be traced back to the second article of the Egyptian Constitution, which states that "Islam is the religion of the state and the principles of Islamic shari'a are the main sources of legislation." There is no apostasy law, per se, in the Egyptian judiciary system, but, as a matter of fact, it is prohibited for anyone wishing to convert away from Islam. Conversion to Islam is always accepted and encouraged. Based in shari'a law, the court considers that a person choosing to convert to Islam has accepted all its tenets (including giving up their right to convert away from it, because they know it is prohibited in Islam.) The obvious problem for kidnapped Coptic women and girls who are forcibly converted is that they are nearly always denied the autonomy to choose their faith or to return to their faith once forcibly converted.

There are other human rights violating shari'a-related legalities, such as:

1. Age of majority is 21, and a minor (aged 18 or above) cannot get married without the consent of the legal custodian. However, a minor is allowed to formally convert to Islam, after which another (Muslim) custodian is assigned to approve a marriage. This effectively allows Muslim men to strip Copts of their parental rights and Coptic girls of their constitutional protections such as not to be forcibly married as a minor.
2. If an adult married woman converts to Islam, courts immediately annul her existing marriage (unless the husband agrees to convert likewise) and the woman becomes free to marry a Muslim man. (Needless to say, a vice versa scenario—a married Muslim woman trying to convert and marry a Coptic man—in no way invalidates her Muslim marriage.)
3. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, [stated](#) that 'seasonal' and 'temporary' marriages amount to trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of exploitation, following her country visit to Egypt. (Such marriages have grounding in Islamic law (sharia); under certain circumstances, they allow men—for example while traveling and with no access to their current wives—to "temporarily" marry other women, often in exchange for money. In the West this is known as prostitution.)

C. Exemplifying/Highlighted cases

Coptic Solidarity has included an appendix to this report which includes thirteen cases of trafficking of Coptic women, including minor girls and both single and married adults.

One case that exemplifies police collusion with the trafficking of a Coptic girl, Muslim religious leaders' involvement, and complete impunity for the traffickers is that of [Hanan Adly Girgis](#). She was 18 years old when she was kidnapped on January 26, 2017. Hanan was taken from her home in Esna, a village in the Qena Governorate. As described by her brother, Hanan was in her room alone, despite other women present in the house. She was found missing at 3 am when her brothers returned from the fields. [Hanan's family accused](#) their neighbor, Mohamed

Soliman, of kidnapping her. Police questioned Mohamed and he admitted that he had a connection to the kidnapping, but he was released due to minimal physical evidence.

A few days later it was discovered that Hanan was issued a new ID card which can only be done by the Egyptian government. Hanan's new ID card listed her religion as Muslim instead of Christian, forcibly converting her to Islam. Hanan's family and other villagers protested at the police station peacefully, but they were [attacked and injured by police officers](#). There have been no updates about Hanan and there have been no attempts to recover her or trace her new identity.

Hanan was also reportedly engaged at the time of kidnapping and incredibly happy. She was in the process of planning her wedding and had not given any hint of dissatisfaction causing her to run away willingly. [Hanan's family](#) has said that the situation is not being resolved because the police are complicit and apathetic to the cases of Coptic women.

Hanan's case clearly demonstrates:

- 1) Police Collusion in Trafficking of a Coptic woman
- 2) Despite receiving a confession of involvement by Mohamed Soliman, police released him and did not press any charges. Allowing complete impunity for Soliman enables him to continue in trafficking women, and also sends a clear message to other traffickers that they will not be held accountable for abducting Coptic women.
- 3) Police and government officials do not treat Copts as equal to Muslims under Egyptian law. Not only did they change Hanan's religious affiliation and give her a new identity, but they withheld information about her whereabouts from her family.
- 4) Police misused their position of power by attacking Hanan's family and friends for peacefully protesting her abduction and their complicity.

Despite ample recording and reporting of these cases, the Egyptian government continues its determined stance to deny the issue, much less to seriously address the trafficking of Coptic women and girls.

V. Emerging Trends and Recommendations

The cases included in the Appendix are just a fraction of the number of trafficking cases that occur in Egypt. Based on the available information, Coptic Solidarity notes emerging trends that must be urgently addressed to end this crime of human trafficking and forced conversion.

A. Emerging Trends

- 1) In each of these cases, no investigative report has been completed, and none of the known perpetrators have been brought to trial—meaning there is complete impunity for those who traffic Coptic women and girls.
- 2) In all of these cases, the police refuse to use words such as “kidnapped” or “disappeared” when writing the initial police report. They will only use the word *absent*, even when there is evidence of trafficking.

- 3) When families know the name of abductors and/or individuals involved with the crime, police refuse to include the suspects' names in their initial police reports.
- 4) In most cases where the Coptic woman or girl is returned to her family, it only happens for families who were threatened by police to stop speaking publicly about the kidnapping, and then complied. This reveals that:
 - a. Police often know details of the trafficking and where the women are being held, if they can suddenly recover them without any new leads in the case.
 - b. Police regularly lie and mislead family members about the case details of their missing family members in hopes of causing them to give up on the search.
 - c. Public pressure and accountability are effective tools in returning missing girls so the US government, NGOs, family members, and Coptic communities need to publicize cases to have any hope of the women being recovered.

B. Recommendations to the Egyptian Government

Coptic Solidarity fully supports freedom of conscience and belief for all. But, in the absence of equality under Egyptian law, Coptic Solidarity recommends that president el-Sisi intervene to establish a new policy whereby minors are not permitted to convert and that adults may not be allowed to formally convert unless:

- 1) The intended convert has the opportunity to meet privately with their family and confirm their conversion as sincere—away from external threats and pressure
- 2) The intended convert can be interviewed by an independent panel composed of members of the national Human Rights Council or other such bodies to ensure no coercion is causing the individual to convert.

C. Recommendations to the UN, states, and NGO's

Given the apparent continued nature of violations towards women from the Coptic population, UN bodies and states should work to identify and promote avenues for accountability. Coptic Solidarity here includes recommendations:

- 1) Projects conducted in Egypt and funded by the UK ("Strengthening Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in Egypt") and the European Union ("Global action Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling in Egypt") should ensure that a priority is placed on the trafficking of Coptic women and girls, and assure that the programs are assisting this most vulnerable minority group.
- 2) The Egypt chapter of the US State Department's Annual Trafficking in Persons report did not include any information on the targetting of Coptic women and girls based on their faith. The 2021 report should include this information and consult with the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom to ensure accurate information and making this a priority in diplomatic meetings with Egyptian officials.
- 3) The Coptic Church to maintain a registry documenting disappearances, abductions, forced marriages and conversions among Coptic women, as well as to educate its members about these threats.

- 4) Creation of a legal defense fund to help Coptic families in need of an attorney.
- 5) Assist the Egyptian government with building and staffing shelters for trafficking victims. There is a severe lack of services to serve and help rehabilitate trafficking victims and lack of qualified staff.
- 6) Assist the Egyptian government in education of security, judicial, and relevant government officials, many of whom continue to arrest and charge trafficking victims with debauchery or prostitution.

VI. Appendix of Cases



CASE 1: Ranya Abd al-Masih

is a 39-year-old Coptic woman who was kidnapped on April 22, 2020 in the Menoufia Governorate. Ranya was a high school teacher and a mother to three daughters at the time of her kidnapping. A few days later, Ranya appeared in a video wearing the Islamic niqab saying that she was not

kidnapped, that she left the house of her own accord taking her things, and that she had converted to Islam. At the end of the video, she recited the Islamic creed and asked her husband to stop looking for her. There are several inconsistencies in the video since Ranya did not take her personal belongings with her from her home and during the video she appears to be in tears as she recites what she is being told to say. Ranya's family pleaded with authorities and the President to rescue her. Bishop Binjiman was extremely vocal in calling for her release. On July 15, 2020, Ranya was suddenly returned to her family. Bishop Binjiman gave an interview confirming that Ranya had been kidnapped by two women who pushed her into a car. She was sexually, psychologically, and spiritually abused during her nearly 3 months of captivity. During the interview, Bishop Binjiman noted that he is aware of 15 similar cases of kidnapped Coptic women and girls. Of note, Ranya's family was directed by the police to stop talking publicly about her case.



CASE 2:

[Yustina Magdy Attia](#) is a 15-year-old Coptic minor who was kidnapped on April 28, 2020 in the village of Bayad El Arab in Beni Suef. [Her mother is handicapped](#) and relied on the help of Yustina at home. Her father [filed police reports](#) with the Beni Suef police station and appealed to several authorities about the disappearance of his daughter. About 20 days after her kidnapping, Yustina was returned to her family.



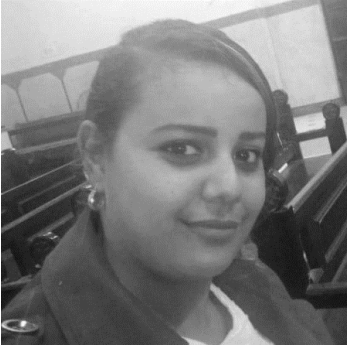
CASE 3:

[Lisa Romani Mansi](#) is a 17-year-old Coptic girl who was kidnapped on November 19, 2019 in the Papillary Olive Field District of the greater Cairo area. Lisa was on her way to a lesson when she disappeared, and nothing has been heard about her since. Her cellphone was turned off and none of her friends know where she has gone. Lisa's father, Romani Mansi, filed a police report, but there has been a largely inadequate response to find Lisa.



CASE 4:

[Marina Sami Sahi](#), a 20-year-old married woman, was kidnapped on October 18, 2019. Marina was a resident of Gesr Al Suez of the Cairo Governorate. She was recently married, was 5 months pregnant, and going to her doctor's office at the time of her kidnapping. After her disappearance and notifying the police station, Marina's father and husband went through all her letters and calls to search for any leads. They found that a young man, Ali Trukuller, had sent her threatening messages and reported their findings to the authorities. There have been no updates on the whereabouts of Marina.



CASE 5:

[Nerges Adel Ibrahim](#) was an 18-year-old engaged Coptic girl who was kidnapped on July 12, 2019. She was on her way to a lesson (confirmed by video surveillance), but she did not appear on the cameras ever again. A few hours later, the instructor called her parents and informed them that Nerges never arrived. Nerges's parents immediately filed a police report including the name of her kidnapper, Mohammed Mahmood Edrisi. Edrisi is cousin to Fatima Edrisi who was a friend of Nerges. Despite providing this credible evidence of the kidnapper, the police refused to include his name in their report. Many Egyptians have been posting on social media about her in hopes of finding leads.



CASE 6:

[Sarah Atef](#) was a 23-year-old Coptic woman who was attending university and had just finished taking an exam at the time of her kidnapping. She was kidnapped on June 27, 2019 in front of the University in Beni Suef. Sarah is reported to have taken a taxi from her university after her exam and she never returned home. Her cellphone was turned off and her family does not know her whereabouts. When her family contacted the authorities, it was revealed that Sarah had been kidnapped for rape and to forcibly convert to Islam. A few days later, Sarah made a phone call to her family saying that she was not missing but rather had fallen in love with a Muslim man and run away with him and converted to Islam. Sarah's friends have said that this it is extremely unlikely because Sarah loved her faith and was a very devout Christian.



CASE 7:

[Vivian Adel Youssef](#) was an 18-year-old married Coptic woman at the time of her kidnapping on May 2, 2018. This came just two weeks after she had married Hanna Emad on April 19, 2018. Vivian's husband drove her to school to obtain some paperwork for an upcoming exam and was to be picked up by him when she finished. Emad said that he called Vivian to ask her to wait in front of the school as he was coming to pick her up. By the time Emad arrived at the school, she was missing, and her phone was switched off. He proceeded to file a police report the next day since she had been missing for more than 24 hours. [There were no disputes](#) between the couple and Vivian had told everyone how happy she was as a newlywed. No updates have been available on the status of Vivian or her whereabouts.



CASE 8:

[Meray Girgis Sobhi](#) was 20 years old when she was kidnapped on April 10, 2018. She took a motorized rickshaw, (tuk-tuk) from her house to Sohag University and was supposed to attend a private tutoring lesson afterwards. As the day continued, Meray never returned home and upon calling the tutor, it was discovered that Meray never arrived for her lesson. After confirming Meray's disappearance by asking Meray's friends and searching through the local hospital records, Meray was reported missing by her family. Her father's frustration over the lack of police investigation was clear as he stated that the police made "no effort to investigate the matter and search for her." Her father called Coptic Solidarity seeking assistance and was advised to publicize her case. The phone call was apparently recorded by Egyptian national security, because the father was contacted by them telling him to stop talking publicly about Meray's kidnapping. According to her father, Meray was then returned, but he was forced to write a letter denouncing Coptic Solidarity and saying that he would not give interviews to international media.



CASE 9:

[Hoda Atef Ghali Girgis](#) was a 16-year-old minor when she was kidnapped on April 8, 2018. Just like Meray, Hoda traveled in a tuk-tuk from her church at St. Mary and St. Michael in Imbaba, Giza Governorate. She had been attending an Easter party at the church and was on her way home. However, Hoda never arrived home and her parents filed a report with the police. There has been no concerted action to recover her and no updates are available regarding her disappearance.



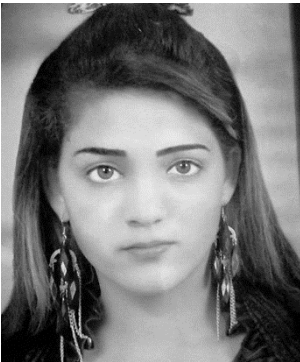
CASE 10:

[Rasha Khalaf Thabet Aziz](#) was an 18-year-old Coptic girl enrolled in secondary school at the time of her kidnapping on April 8, 2018. Rasha was kidnapped in the Ezbet Hafez village of the Beni Suef Governorate. Just like Hoda, she was kidnapped on her way back from her grandmother's house on Orthodox Coptic Easter. Fortunately, there was a witness at the scene who said that three masked men forcefully pushed Rasha into a car as she was walking and fled with her. Rasha's family filed a police report to recover her, but there have been no updates on her whereabouts.



CASE 11:

[Christine Lamie](#) was a married 26-year-old Coptic woman with two children when she was kidnapped on April 7, 2018. She disappeared in the Qalyubia Governorate of North-Eastern Egypt where her husband, Bahaa Girgis, filed a police report. In this report, Bahaa mentioned that Christine received a threatening message from someone on Facebook. The message read, “I will not leave you, Christine, I will take you even on the last day of my life.” Christine promptly told her husband and then blocked the person on Facebook. On April 12, Bahaa went to check at the police station for any updates and was informed that Christine had walked into the police station declaring that she converted to Islam of her own accord and was not kidnapped. Bahaa, Christine’s friends, and her priest all expressed disbelief that Christine would even consider converting to Islam as she was an active member of her church and deeply religious. Christine also expressed how much she loved her husband and children and would miss them greatly even when she was away at work during the day.



CASE 12:

[Hanan Adly Girgis](#) was an 18-year-old girl who was kidnapped on January 26, 2017. She was taken from her home in Esna, a village in the Qena Governorate. As described by her brother, Hanan was in her room alone, despite other women present in the house. She was found missing at 3 am when her brothers returned from the fields. [Hanan’s family accused](#) their neighbor, Mohamed Soliman, of kidnapping her. Police questioned Mohamed and he admitted that he had a connection to the kidnapping, but he was released due to minimal physical evidence. However, a few days later it was discovered that Hanan was issued a new ID card. On this ID card, her religion was changed from Christian to Muslim and she was given a new identity. Hanan’s family and other villagers protested at the police station peacefully, but they were [attacked and injured by police officers](#). There have been no updates about Hanan and there have been no attempts to recover her or trace her new identity. Hanan was also reportedly engaged at the time of kidnapping and incredibly happy. She was in the process of planning her wedding and had not given any hint of dissatisfaction causing her to run away willingly. [Hanan’s family](#) has said that the situation is not being resolved because the police are complicit and apathetic to the cases of Coptic women.



Marilyn with her parents, after her return home. (World Watch Monitor)

CASE 13:

[Marilyn was kidnapped](#) on June 28, 2017 in Balansora of the Minya Governorate. She was targeted by a young Muslim man named, Taha, and formed a romantic relationship with him. After her disappearance, her community provided Taha's name to the police, but they refused to arrest him or his accomplice and brother, Gaber. Her mother, Hanaa Aziz Shukralla Farag, shared about seeing a video online of Marilyn veiled, holding a Quran, and claiming to have converted to Islam, despite her obvious looks of discomfort and pressure to make the recitation. Marilyn was finally recovered 92 days later, after her family and many from her village pleaded with local police and provided them with her location in 10th of Ramadan City. Marilyn is one of the few minors to have been recovered, although her priest confirmed that Taha and his friends "had not treated her well."

COPTIC
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