



Written by [James Heiser](#) on January 3, 2011

Muslim Terrorists Attack Church in Egypt

Now the terrorists have struck again, detonating a bomb at a Coptic Church in Alexandria, Egypt, killing over 20 people and injuring over 70 others.

[Last year's observance of Christmas](#) was also marked by anti-Christian violence in Egypt when seven people were murdered following the midnight Mass on January 7 (the Coptic Church follows the old Julian and Coptic calendars). Now, Jihadists have repeated that tactic, setting off a bomb outside the al-Qiddissin Church in Alexandria as the midnight service drew to a close.



[BBC News reported shortly after the attack:](#)

About 1,000 worshippers were attending the Mass at the al-Qiddissin (Saints) Church in the Sidi Bechr district of the Mediterranean port city.

As the service drew to a close after midnight, a bomb went off in the street outside.

"The last thing I heard was a powerful explosion and then my ears went deaf," 17-year-old Marco Boutros told the Associated Press from his hospital bed. "All I could see were body parts scattered all over."

Another witness told the private On-TV channel that he had seen two men park a car outside the church and get out just before the blast.

Officials initially thought the cause was a car bomb, but the interior ministry later ruled it out, saying the attack was instead "carried out by a suicide bomber who died among the crowd."

A nearby mosque was also damaged by the explosion and the casualties included eight injured Muslims, the health ministry said.

Soon after the attack, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak appealed for calm, and blamed foreign terrorists — not Egyptian Muslims — for the attack. The BBC quotes President Mubarak as saying, "This act of terrorism shook the country's conscience, shocked our feelings and hurt the hearts of Muslim and Coptic Egyptians.... The blood of their martyrs in Alexandria mixed to tell us all that all Egypt is the target and that blind terrorism does not differentiate between a Copt and a Muslim."

However, despite such efforts to "spin" the tragedy, it was Al-Qiddissin Church which was the target of the bombing; incidental Muslim victims are nothing new to the terrorist tactics of Jihadists, who apparently believe the murder of their fellow Muslims to be "acceptable losses."

Within Egypt's Coptic community, Mubarak's comments appear to have fueled the suspicions and disgust of Christians who have come to expect the government to downplay the persecution which is often a part of their daily life in their native land. Jihadists are clearly targeting the Copts for violence throughout the region — and throughout the West. The recent news of [an al-Qaeda "death list" of 200 Copts](#) living in the West has drawn little attention from the press, but was reported previously by *The*



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New American.

It has been clear for some time that Islamic terrorists are targeting the Coptic Church. For example, a broadcast by Qatar-owned Al-Jezirah was threatening anti-Coptic violence in September. [As reported at AdvocatesforthePersecuted.org](#):

On September 15, Qatar-owned Al-Jezirah TV broadcast a program called Without Limits, presented by moderator Ahmad Mansour, who hosted the Islamist Dr. Selim el-Awah, former Secretary-General of the World Council of Muslim Scholars, which has stunned and enraged Copts inside and outside of Egypt. "El-Awah is simply threatening Copts that the forthcoming chaos after Mubarak dies will see mass violence against the Copts," says Magdy Khalil, Coptic activist and head of Middle East Freedom Forum.

The program alleged the Church has its own militia and hides weapons and ammunition in monasteries and churches, preparing for a war "against the Muslims." el-Awah said that "Israel is in the heart of the Coptic Cause," and the Church gets weapons from Israel. He cited as evidence an incident in mid-August, in which the son of a priest in Port Said, Mr. Joseph El-Gabalawy, was falsely accused of importing weapons from Israel. Although he was cleared of charges and released, as the imported goods were children's fireworks from China and did not belong to him, he is still detained by State Security.

Given the history of the Church within Egypt, and its presence as a small, persecuted minority within an overwhelmingly Muslim society, such charges would seem absurd to most observers. In fact, it seems clear that the Christian community in Egypt is resigned to the idea that the Mubarak government will do little to actually investigate the latest attack. In the words of one [article from the Associated Press](#) following the bombing:

In a reflection of the deepening mistrust between Egypt's communities, many in the crowd believed police would not fully investigate the bombing, reflecting Christians' suspicions that authorities overlook attacks on their community.

Archbishop Arweis, the top Coptic cleric in Alexandria, said police want to blame a suicide bomber instead of a car bomb so they can write it off as a lone attacker. He denounced what he called a lack of protection.

"There were only three soldiers and an officer in front of the church. Why did they have so little security at such a sensitive time when there's so many threats coming from al-Qaida?" he said, speaking to the AP.

Archbishop Arweis' comments strike at the heart of the matter: Why did the Egyptian government manifest so little concern for their own citizens, when they knew that Jihadists were targeting Copts around the world? With al-Qaeda murdering Christians in Baghdad ostensibly as a protest against the Coptic Church, should not the Egyptian government assume that the same butchers would strike at the heart of that Christian community? Alexandria is one of the ancient patriarchates of Christendom, the place where one of the greatest teachers of the early church, St. Athanasius (†373 A.D.), served as bishop, and is revered to this day by Coptic Christians. That the Christians of Alexandria once again suffer for the cross of Christ would probably be no surprise to Athanasius, who was driven into exile five times. Because of the persecution that he endured, that great saint is remembered as *Athanasius contra mundum* — Athanasius against the world. The modern Christian Church has much to learn from that great confessor of the fourth century.



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Photo of picture of Jesus, placed in respect by rescue workers, inside Coptic Christian Church in Alexandria, Egypt: AP Images



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