

Press Release

Contributed by Voice of the Copts
Tuesday, 11 March 2008

The association Voice of the Copts states that on March 6, 2008 a meeting was held in Washington, D.C between Mr. Paul Casaca, a member of the European Parliament, and Mr. Ashraf Ramelah, president of Voice of the Copts.

The meeting was a follow up to the letter sent about February 10, 2008 to all members of the European Parliament, in which Mr. Ramelah was reporting the discrimination of the Copts and other religious minorities in Egypt.

Mr. Casaca required this meeting prior to his visit to Egypt. Mr. Casaca was invited by the Islamic affairs secretary with the Egyptian Government to discuss discrimination and other issues related to human rights.

In an over one hour long meeting the parties discussed various arguments related to the discrimination of Copts and disrespect of human rights by the Egyptian government. Mr. Casaca assured Mr. Ramelah that he will be beside the Voice of the Copts in its fight for the respect of human rights in Egypt and the Middle East. Mr. Ramelah provided his guest with various books published by other Coptic organizations, a file made by Voce of the Copts showing some discrimination that occurred in 2007 and 2008 in Egypt. In the same file Mr. Ramelah included the Voice of the Copts's recommendations to the Egyptian government to establish a better life to those non-Muslims living in Egypt.

Herewith, please find Voice of the Copts recommendations:

- 1- The removal of the second Article in the Egyptian Constitution which stipulates that "Islam Is the National Religion" and "Islamic Sharia (law) is the main source of legislation". This article does not render justice or respect to the over fifteen million Copts in Egypt.
- 2- The immediate cancellation of the antiquated 19th century Hamayouni decree, as well as the ten restrictive conditions enforced by the government since February 1934.
- 3- The immediate removal of the Coptic File from the State Security and State Intelligence. We do not understand why Copts who are real Egyptians must have any security file.
- 4- We demand parliamentary representation in every sector according to Coptic numbers. Those parliament seats have to be voted exclusively by Copts. Furthermore, we demand an end to discrimination against Copts in government job appointments and promotions, especially at the level of top ranks. In addition, the removal of all restrictions against Coptic students by allowing them to enroll in all educational institutions publicly funded as Police and Military Academies. We are asking to remove from Al-Azhar University any and all studies that do not belong to Islam or to become a secular University, so that Coptic Students may be admitted with the same conditions applied to non-Copts.
- 5- We demand an educational curriculum that respects all citizens regardless of their faith including the history of the Coptic era prior and during Arab's invasion.
- 6- We demand the immediate removal of all radio and TV shows which present a campaign of hatred against Christians. Furthermore, we request a fair and equal media, if authorities decide air time for religion purposes.
- 7- We demand that religious affiliation be removed from national ID cards, more than ever since the authority does not include the same information in the Egyptian passport.
- 8- We demand justice to be served against murderers, robbers, kidnappers, and rapists. Egyptian authority has to

respect and apply all Human Rights covenant signed since 1981.

9- We demand an end to kidnapping minor Christian girls and forcing them to convert to Islam. Those girls are often raped and tortured using inhuman techniques by Muslim extremists. Their abductors are always given police protection. The Egyptian regime must apply the constitutional laws to capture and bring to a real justice those criminals who murder the Copts. Voice of the Copts is requesting the application of the Penal Law. Its outrage that no killers of Copts have been sentenced.

Voice of the Copts

Dott. Arch.Ashraf Ramelah,

Associate AIA

President