

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 367

Urging the Government of Egypt to provide a timely and open appeal for Shaiboub William Arsel and to complete an independent investigation of police brutality in Al-Kosheh.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 5 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 22), 2000

Mr. MACK submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Urging the Government of Egypt to provide a timely and open appeal for Shaiboub William Arsel and to complete an independent investigation of police brutality in Al-Kosheh.

Whereas on Friday August 14, 1998, two Coptic Christians, Samir Oweida Hakim and Karam Tamer Arsal, were murdered in Al-Kosheh, Egypt;

Whereas, according to a report from the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights that was translated by the United States Embassy in Cairo, up to 1,200 Coptic Christians, including women and children, were subsequently detained and interrogated without sufficient evidence;

Whereas it is reported that the police tortured the detained Coptic Christians over a period of days and even weeks

and that the detainees suffered abuses that included beatings, administration of electric shock to all parts of the body, including sensitive areas, and being bound in painful positions for hours at a time;

Whereas Egypt is a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

Whereas the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment prohibits torture to obtain information and confessions such as the torture that reportedly took place in Al-Kosheh;

Whereas Egypt is party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

Whereas Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that “(1) Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. (2) No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice.”;

Whereas some of the 1,200 detained Coptic Christians reported that the police chief made derogatory remarks about their religion and stated that the detainees were being targeted because of their religious beliefs;

Whereas the summary report of the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights states that, as a result of the massive roundup and torture of the Coptic Christian community,

a prosecution proceeded using confessions obtained under duress;

Whereas, according to the report, as translated by the United States Embassy in Cairo, one of the confessors “was detained for 18 days, beaten constantly, was not allowed food or water, and prevented from relieving himself” and “confessed only when they threatened to rape his two sisters” who “were brought to the police station, tortured and threatened with rape in front of him”, and the detainee identified Shaiboub William Arsel as the murderer;

Whereas Shaiboub William Arsel, a Coptic Christian, was charged with the murders of Samir Oweida Hakim and Karam Tamer Arsal, was found guilty, and was sentenced on June 5, 2000, to 15 years of hard labor;

Whereas, according to the Associated Press story describing Shaiboub William Arsel’s trial, “[t]he court based its guilty verdict on evidence and testimony provided by police, said the officials on condition of anonymity” and “gave no further details”;

Whereas no known international observers were present at Shaiboub William Arsel’s trial;

Whereas, on January 2, 2000, a mob of nearly 3,000 Muslims killed 21 Christians and destroyed and looted dozens of Christian homes and businesses in the village of Al-Kosheh; and

Whereas local Egyptian security forces failed to stop the massacre of Coptic Christians, and according to Coptic leader Pope Shenouda III, “responsibility falls first on security forces...the problem lies among the authorities in the area where the incident occurred”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved,*

1 **SECTION 1. SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE APPEAL OF**
 2 **SHAIBOUB WILLIAM ARSEL AND THE EGYPTIAN**
 3 **GOVERNMENT'S INVESTIGATION OF POLICE**
 4 **BRUTALITY IN AL-KOSHEH.**

5 The Senate hereby urges the President and the Secretary of State to encourage officials of the Government of Egypt to—

8 (1) allow for a timely and open appeal for
 9 Shaiboub William Arsel that includes international
 10 observers; and

11 (2) complete an independent investigation of
 12 the police brutality in Al-Kosheh.

13 **SEC. 2. TRANSMITTAL OF RESOLUTION.**

14 The Secretary of the Senate shall transmit a copy
 15 of this resolution to the President and the Secretary of
 16 State, with the request that the President or the Secretary
 17 further transmit such copy to the Government of Egypt.

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