



Statement of the Religious Institutions of Egypt on the Luxor Affair

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ABSTRACT

Egypt was extremely shocked at what happened in Luxor recently. A group of criminals and murderers, seduced by the Devil, opened fire blindly on whomever they laid their evil eyes. They killed tens of innocent men and women who came to Egypt for tourism, to view its sights. Without doubt, this traitorous act, carried out by butchers, cannot be approved of by any religion, nor by anyone of sound mind. Such behavior is not the behavior of true manhood. This is the influence of the Devil and his followers upon these stupid cowards .

* The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

The religious institutions of Egypt: al-Azhar, the Ministry of Endowments (wizarat al-awqaf), the House of Legal Opinion (Dar al- Iftaa') and al-Azhar University, announce the following statement in regard to the criminal affair in Luxor:

Egypt was extremely shocked at what happened in Luxor recently. A group of criminals and murderers, seduced by the Devil, opened fire blindly on whomever they laid their evil eyes. They killed tens of innocent men and women who came to Egypt for tourism, to view its sights. Without doubt, this traitorous act, carried out by butchers, cannot be approved of by any religion, nor by anyone of sound mind. Such behavior is not the behavior of true manhood. This is the influence of the Devil and his followers upon these stupid cowards.

The law of Islam views as a guest anyone who visits Egypt legally. All the Egyptians should watch over him the same as they watch over themselves, because the Egyptian is the host and the guest is under his hospitality. Any harm or violence against the visitor is a violent attack against all Egyptians.

These tourists who came from Europe and other countries to view the sights of Egypt did no harm to anybody, nor any wrong to Egypt. Contrary to all religion, law, custom or logic they were savagely attacked in a traitorous way out of black hatred.

Allah will punish those who kill innocent men, women and children by various means of punishment in this world and hereafter, as he said:

“The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and his messenger and strive after corruption in the land, will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land. Such will be their degradation in this world, and in the hereafter theirs will be an awful doom (33). Save those who repent before ye overpower them. For know that Allah is forgiving and merciful (34). (Surat al-Maidah(

The noble Quran views one who murders one soul as if he kills all humans. Allah said: "Whosoever killed a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind. Whosoever saved the life of one it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind" (Surat al-Maidah, 32.(

The messenger of Allah has warned those criminals who have no mercy in their hearts and no logic in their brains, whose souls are full of blind hatred and their minds of ignorance. He has promised to prevent the mercy of God from them in this world and in the hereafter. He promised them the curse of the Angels and of all human beings. The Imam al-Munziri has cited in his book "al-Tarhib wal-Tarhib" Twenty Six Prophetic traditions against the killing of innocent souls by which Allah has forbidden killing them. In one of these traditions the Prophet said, "The destruction of the whole world is easier for Allah than the blood of one unjust murder". Elsewhere he said, "He who kills someone who made a contract with the Muslims (mu`ahid)

Allah will not let him enter Paradise". He said also: "He who kills a man protected by Islam (Ahl al-dhimah) will not know the smell of Paradise."

These criminal butchers who murdered innocent tourists who came to Egypt to visit its sights, did not lift their hands to these tourists only. Their evil and traitorous hands harmed all the people of Egypt, its men, women and children. They have hurt the peace, the security and the progress of Egypt, and its religion, its virtues, its noble values and its prosperity.

These criminal ignorants, influenced by the Devil are cursed by Allah, his Angels and all human beings, until they repent of their ways. Their crimes are condemned by every human being with a minimum amount of logic.

Anyone who conceals such crimes, or assists the criminals in their crimes in any way, is their partner in guilt and corruption, and will be punished in this world and in the Hereafter.

It is a religious duty upon everyone anywhere, and in Egypt in particular, to oppose these criminals, who fight all Egyptians and every good, peaceful or progressive element coming into Egypt, and who shut their ears before all good advice.

"Those who do wrong will come to know by what a great reverse they will be overturned" (Surat al-Shu`ara', 227.)

Allah, one of whose names is peace, please give our nation peace and security. Keep us away from visible and concealed disputes, and lead us in your right path.

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Commentary

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This statement is unique in its gravity and in that it is signed by all the highest ranks of the Islamic institutions in Egypt. Such unity was previously expressed only after the assassination of the late President Anwar al-Sadat on October 1981, which sent a great shock through Egyptian society, and the attempt to kill President Mubarak in Ethiopia in June 1995.

Under the religious leadership of the former Sheikh al-Azhar, Sheikh Gad al-Haq `Ali Gad al-Haq, who died on March 1996, there were many controversies between the Islamic establishment and the State leadership. The present religious leader, Sheikh Tantawi, seems much more cooperative with the regime, and sees eye-to-eye with it on many important political and social issues requiring such cooperation. The Mubarak regime seeks Islamic legitimacy in several essential matters, such as the fight against the Islamic terrorist elements, birth control, organ transplants, and women's place in the society. In all these matters Sheikh Tantawi is much more moderate and liberal than his predecessors.

An interesting element in the statement is the emphasis put on the attacks against tourists. This is really the most important field in which the Egyptian Islamic terrorists hit the state's economy.

The terrorist attack in Luxor occurred on 17 November 1997, when six militants of the Egyptian al-Gama`a al-Islamiyyah killed 59 tourists. The terrorists were themselves killed by the Egyptian security forces. It was one of the biggest terrorist attacks ever perpetrated in Egypt, and it occurred at one of the most important tourist sights in Egypt