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## The Collective Punishment of Egypt's Christian Copts



by Raymond Ibrahim

[Coptic Solidarity](#)

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Last month saw Egypt's latest large-scale "collective punishment" of Christian Copts. It started when a Christian launderer accidentally burned the shirt of a Muslim customer, which led to a brawl between the two Egyptians ([first reported here](#)). The next day "the Muslim, with approximately 20 of his followers, went to the Christian's home to attack him. Expecting this, the Christian was prepared and climbed to the highest point of his roof, hurling Molotov cocktails at the Muslims." One Muslim man was injured and later died in a hospital. Before he died, between 2,000-3,000 Muslims attacked the Christians of the village, leading to an exodus of approximately 120 Coptic families. [AINA](#) has details of the aftermath:

The sectarian crisis in the village of Dahshur escalated on August 1 after the burial of the Muslim man who died yesterday in hospital. Hundreds of Muslims torched and looted Coptic businesses and homes despite hundreds of security forces being deployed in the village. Eyewitnesses reported that security forces did not protect most Coptic property... "As 120 families had already fled the village the day before after being terrorized, the businesses and homes were an easy game for the mob to make a complete clean-up of everything that could be looted," said Coptic activist Wagih Jacob. "The security forces were at the scene of the crime while it was taking place and did nothing at all." After the violence, the family of the deceased Moaz Hasab-Allah said that destroying Coptic property is not enough and that Copts have to "pay for their son's death" with lives.

Collectively punishing *dhimmis*—the barely tolerated non-Muslim infidels indigenous to the lands conquered by Islam—for the crimes of the individual is standard under Islam, and a regular occurrence among Egypt's native Christians. Other examples include:

- Jan, 2012: A mob of over [3,000 Muslims attacked Christians](#) in an Alexandrian village because a Muslim accused a Christian of having "intimate photos" of a Muslim woman on his phone. Terrified, the Christian, who denied having such photos, turned himself in to the police. Regardless, Coptic homes and shops were looted and set ablaze. Three Christians were injured, while "terrorized" Christian women and children, rendered homeless, stood in the streets with no place to go. As usual, it took the army an hour to drive 2 kilometers to the village: "This happens every time. They [security] wait outside the village until the Muslims have had enough violence, then they appear." None of the perpetrators were arrested. Later, in an effort to empty the village of its 62 Christian families, [Muslims attacked them again](#), burning more Coptic property. According to police, the Muslim woman concerned has denied the whole story, and no photos were found.
- Nov, 2011: Similar to the above story in Dahshur, the inadvertent killing of a Muslim by a Christian in a fight started by the Muslim when he torched the Christian's home resulting in the "[collective punishment of all Copts in the majority Christian village](#)." Two Christians not party to the altercation were killed; others were stabbed and critically wounded. As usual, "after killing the Copts, Muslims went on a rampage, looting and burning Christian owned homes and businesses." Again as in Dahshur, despite all this "Muslims insist they have not yet avenged" the death of their slain co-religionist; there were fears of "a wholesale massacre of Copts." Once again, many Christians had fled their homes and were in hiding.
- Apr, 2011: When Muslims falsely blamed the deaths of two Muslims on a Christian, [one Christian was killed, ten hospitalized, an old woman thrown out of her second floor balcony](#), and Christian homes and properties plundered and torched.
- Nov, 2010: When a teenage Christian youth was accused of dating a teenage Muslim girl, 22 Christian homes [were set ablaze](#) to Islam's war cry of "Allahu Akbar." During the attack the Muslim mob threw fireballs, gasoline, and stones at Coptic homes and detonated Butane Gas cylinders.

It is telling that in all the above examples, Christians were attacked either because 1) they fought back against Muslims or because 2) they were rumored to have relationships with Muslim women. In fact, both of these are banned. Among the many stipulations Christians had to agree to when they capitulated to the invading armies of Islam in the 7th century, and as captured in the Pact of Omar, was never to raise their hands against a Muslim—even if the latter was the aggressor—and never to have relations with Muslim women. If they failed to follow these rules as well as many others, their lives—and the lives of their surrounding coreligionists—became forfeit.

As Mark Durie points out in his book on *dhimmitude*, [The Third Choice](#): "Even a breach by a single individual *dhimmi* could result in jihad being enacted against the whole community. Muslim jurists have made this principle explicit, for example, the Yemeni jurist al-Murtada wrote that 'The agreement will be canceled if all *or some of them* break it' and the Moroccan al-Maghili taught 'The fact that *one individual* (or one group) among them has broken the statute is enough to invalidate it for all of them.'"

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