

Sectarianism, Dialogue, and Tolerance: Working Together to Reduce Tension and Violence in Egypt

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Over sixty Egyptian Muslim and Christian religious leaders and representatives of all sectors in society will meet from June 13-16 in Alexandria and Cairo to discuss how to detect and lessen sectarian tensions. The talks will be led by Nigerian Imam Mohammed Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye.

The imam and pastor are in Egypt to share their experiences in diffusing crises. The Egyptians pastors, imams, peace activists, and representatives of NGO's will work together to develop a program to avoid escalations of sectarian violence in Egypt. The Nigerian imam and pastor earlier visited Egypt in 2009, lecturing and presenting the first Arabic copy of an award winning film about their work entitled "The Imam and the Pastor," produced by the London-based company FLTfilms.

Egypt has an excellent history of cooperation between Muslims and Christians. During the first weeks of the Egyptian revolution, both groups showed a marvelous cooperation with one another. Unfortunately, much of this has been reduced because of violence in Atfih, Manshiyet Nasr, Imbaba, and elsewhere. By far, the great majority of Egyptians are peace-loving. It is with these Egyptians that we wish to develop tools helping to reduce violence in society.

The Center for Arab-West Understanding is an Egyptian NGO that is dedicated to fostering understanding between peoples of different convictions, as well as providing accurate reporting on sensitive issues. The center will, through the electronic magazine Arab West Report, not hesitate to critique media that provide a distorted image of Muslim-Christian relations in Egypt. The Center for Arab-West Understanding is dependent on voluntary donations for this work.

Sincerely,

Hany Labib,

Executive secretary Center for Arab-West Understanding