



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Egypt

Egypt – EGY39180 – Social Security –
Kuwaiti Residency – Coptic Women

15 September 2011

1. Would an Egyptian couple, now retired, who had lived and worked in Kuwait for several decades, be able to renew their residency permits for Kuwait?

Information suggests that a retired couple's ability to renew their residency permits for Kuwait without employment would be dependent on their ability to demonstrate they possess substantial financial means.

All residency permits in Kuwait require a sponsor which in the case of a work visa would be the applicant's employer. There is, however, provision for an expatriate to sponsor themselves, 'provided he has lived in Kuwait for many years and has substantial financial means'.¹ No information was found defining the term 'substantial financial means'.

The wife's employment status should not affect the residency status of the husband, except to the extent it affects their overall financial status, as information indicates that a working woman cannot sponsor her husband as a dependant for residency purposes.²

2. Is there any evidence of particular risks for a female member of the Coptic Church in Egypt?

No credible information was found indicating that female members of the Coptic Church in Egypt face particular risks. There are reports from Christian sources of Coptic women being kidnapped, raped and forced to convert to Islam. However, these reports could not be verified by independent sources.

The US Department of State (USDOS) reports the following on the issue of forced conversion of Coptic women:

As in previous years, there were occasional claims of Muslim men forcing Coptic women and girls to convert to Islam. Reports of such cases were disputed and often included inflammatory allegations and categorical denials of kidnapping and rape. In November 2009 an international Christian advocacy group published a report regarding alleged cases of forced conversion; however, well-respected local human rights groups were unable to verify such cases and found it extremely difficult to determine whether compulsion was used, as most cases involved a female Copt who

¹ 'Residency Procedure: Obtaining Residence' (undated), Embassy of the State of Kuwait (Australia) <http://www.kuwaitemb-australia.com/Residencyprocedure.html> – Accessed 14 September 2011; 'Visa Information Service' (undated), Kuwait Business website, <http://www.kuwaitbusiness.net/Pages/visa.htm> – Accessed 15 September 2011

² 'Visa Information Service' (undated), Kuwait Business website, <http://www.kuwaitbusiness.net/Pages/visa.htm> – Accessed 15 September 2011

converted to Islam when she married a male Muslim. Reports of such cases almost never appear in the local media.³

A copy of the 2009 report mentioned in the above USDOS advice can be accessed at the following link: [Attachment](#)⁴

Some more recent reports of abduction and forced conversion are provided below:

- ‘Disappearance of a Coptic Woman in Egypt’ 2011, Australian Coptic Movement website, 11 April <http://www.auscma.com/2011/04/11/disappearance-of-a-coptic-woman-in-egypt/> – Accessed 15 September 2011
- ‘Alleged abductions of young Coptic women fuel Christian-Muslim conflict’ 2011, Pontifical Institute for *Asia News*, 7 September <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Alleged-abductions-of-young-Coptic-women-fuel-Christian-Muslim-conflict-22056.html> – Accessed 15 September 2011
- Shanahan, Angela 2011, ‘No going back for Egypt’s converted Copts’, *The Australian*, 21 May <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/no-going-back-for-egypts-converted-copts/story-e6frg6so-1226059884457> – Accessed 15 September 2011 – While this story from *The Australian* presents alleged incidences of forced conversion as fact, it appears to rely heavily upon the 2009 Christian Solidarity International report provided above.
- Dingle, Sarah 2011, ‘Egypt violence stokes fear in Coptic Christian community’, *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, 10 May <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2011/s3213038.htm> – Accessed 15 September 2011
- Abdelmassih, Mary 2011, ‘Muslims Abduct Coptic Christian Woman in Egypt’, *Assyrian International News Agency*, 19 February <http://www.aina.org/news/20110218224244.htm> – Accessed 15 September 2011

3. Would an Egyptian couple who have worked in Kuwait for 40 years be eligible for social security in Egypt or Kuwait?

Information suggests such a couple may be eligible for at least a basic state pension in Egypt, but would not be eligible for a state pension in Kuwait. It is not possible with available information to assess whether or not the couple would be eligible for any employment based pension or social security in Egypt or Kuwait.

A 2011 report by the International Organisation of Pension Supervisors (IOPS) states that ‘the minimum pension of 100 EGP a month is paid to all citizens, including the unemployed’.⁵ The IOPS report also states that there are publicly administered social insurance schemes for Egyptians working abroad; however, no information was found explaining eligibility requirements pertaining to these schemes.

³ US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report 2010 – Egypt*, 17 November

⁴ ‘The Disappearance, Forced Conversions, and Forced Marriages of Coptic Christian Women in Egypt’ 2009, Christian Solidarity International, November http://www.auscma.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/csi_coptic_report1.pdf – Accessed 15 September 2011

⁵ ‘IOPS Country Profile: Egypt’ 2011, International Organisation of Pension Supervisors, <http://www.iopsweb.org/dataoecd/32/11/42952582.pdf> – Accessed 15 September 2011, p.4

As non-citizens, a couple would not be eligible for a state provided pension in Kuwait⁶, however, one source suggests that some Kuwaiti companies have corporate pension schemes open to foreign workers.⁷

4. Is there evidence that reprisal from one related family to another has occurred when a family member has converted to Christianity?

No information was found regarding reprisals from one family to another as a result of a family member's conversion to Christianity. Two news reports were located involving one family making reprisals upon another as a result of a relationship between a Christian man and Muslim woman. Under Islamic law in Egypt Muslim women are prohibited from marrying Christian men, and risk arrest and conviction for apostasy for doing so.⁸

On 5 March 2011 a Coptic church in Sol, Helwan province, was torched by local Muslims after clashes between Christians and Muslims left two dead. The clashes were reportedly a result of a feud between the families of a Christian man and a Muslim woman who were allegedly having a romantic relationship.⁹

On 19 October 2009 assailants in the Upper Egyptian town of Deyrout shot and killed a 61-year-old Christian, purportedly because they believed his son had engaged in an illicit sexual relationship and produced pornographic videos of a relative of theirs, a Muslim girl. Police arrested and charged four Muslims with murder. The arrests incited days of anti-Christian rioting in Deyrout and resulted in extensive damage to Christian property. On February 22, 2010, a court in the city of Assuit acquitted the four. The government did not appeal the acquittal.¹⁰

⁶'Social Security Guide in Kuwait' 2009, The Public Institution for Social Security Kuwait, http://www.pifss.gov.kw/upload/pifss_E_guide_eng_212.pdf – Accessed 14 September 2011; US Department of State 2011, 'Social Benefits', *Background Note – Kuwait*, 7 March <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm> – Accessed 14 September 2011; 'Social Security – Kuwait's social security system' (undated), Just Landed website, <http://www.justlanded.com/english/Kuwait/Kuwait-Guide/Jobs/Social-Security> – Accessed 15 September 2011

⁷'Social Security – Kuwait's social security system' (undated), Just Landed website, <http://www.justlanded.com/english/Kuwait/Kuwait-Guide/Jobs/Social-Security> – Accessed 15 September 2011

⁸ US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report 2010 – Egypt*, 17 November <Attachment>

⁹ 'Egyptian village rebuilds after religious violence' 2011, *BBC News*, 15 March <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12746105> – Accessed 7 April 2011

¹⁰ US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report 2010 – Egypt*, 17 November

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- ‘Social Security Guide in Kuwait’ 2009, The Public Institution for Social Security Kuwait, http://www.pifss.gov.kw/upload/pifss_E_guide_eng_212.pdf – Accessed 14 September 2011.
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US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report 2010 – Egypt*, 17 November.