



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Egypt

Egypt – EGY37971 – Luxor – Al Qousieh
– Evangelical Church – Evangelical
Christians
24 December 2010

1. What is the distance between Luxor and Al Qousieh?

The direct distance from Luxor to Al Qousieh is approximately 264km. The distance by road is approximately 330 km.¹

2. Please provide as much information as possible on the Evangelical Church in Al Qousieh, including exact location, history, size, activities and the presiding priest.

No information was located regarding activities of the Evangelical Church in Al Qousieh.

3. Please provide more information on the Evangelical Church in Luxor, particularly in relation to its size, activities and history (date of establishment).

No detailed information regarding the Evangelical Church in Luxor was located; however, evangelical church activities in Luxor may be affiliated with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile. The only information specifically referencing the Evangelical Church operations in Luxor were located in the March 2010 *Assyrian International News Agency* report on the Evangelical Church property demolition,² cited in EGY37914.

General information about the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile is provided. Several references to Christian evangelical churches with missions or congregations operating in Egypt were located, including a particular Christian social services organisation operating throughout Egypt, and social network references to evangelical activities in Luxor. In all cases, specific information about locations, activities, congregations, and leadership were scant. Each entity is separately described below:

Luxor Evangelical Church's Praise Team

A search of the internet produced three Facebook results referencing 'Luxor Evangelical Church's Praise Team'. Cached versions of the Facebook pages, containing comments and

¹ 'Distance from Luxor to Al Qousieh' 2000, Encarta - Accessed 23 December 2010 – Attachment 1.

² Abdelmassih, M 2010, "Egyptian State Security Demolishes Evangelical Church, Assaults Pastor", *Assyrian International News Agency*, 24 March, <http://www.aina.org/news/20100323193843.htm> – Accessed 23 November 2010 – Attachment 3

pictures, indicate that Christian youth do gather in groups for religious purposes and social activities and that an evangelical community exists there. From the title of the Facebook entries it appears that these activities take place in Luxor, i.e. 'Luxor Evangelical Church's Praise TEAM'. No information, however, could be obtained about specific locations, size, or activities, or affiliation with any of the below named organisations and church groups.³

Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile (EPCE) is sometimes referred to as 'the Evangelical Church of Egypt'⁴ and also as the 'Synod of the Nile' Church. An unreferenced Wikipedia entry states that the EPCE is variously known in Arabic as the 'Kanisah El-Injiliyah', and also as the Coptic Evangelical Church of Egypt.⁵

The World Council of Churches⁶ reports that the EPCE was founded in 1854 by American Presbyterian missionaries. According to the WCC, this church became autonomous in 1926 and serves local communities through social, educational, medical, and evangelistic and mission programs. Frequently referred to as the Synod of the Nile Church, this church claims a membership of 250,000. The WCC reports that there are 234 pastors and 314 congregations, which operate 23 mission schools and 37 mixed age schools. This church is credited with co-founding two leading universities; the American University in Cairo and Cairo University. It also operates the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, which trains pastors from Africa and the Middle East and trains congregation members to work in hospitals, youth centres, nursing homes, and orphanages. Church activities are located in Alexandria, Port Said, and '...several others in different places in Egypt.'⁷ A 2009 news report referred to Safwat el-Bayadi as the president of the 'Evangelical Organisation' and reported that he speaks on behalf of the Evangelical Church.⁸ Ekram

³'Luxor Evangelical Church's Praise TEAM' 2010, Facebook, 26 October <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:xYnHEedJgrMJ:www.facebook.com/posted.php%3Fid%3D110316001379+the+evangelical+church+in+luxor&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au> - Accessed 24 December 2010 – Attachment 4; & Luxor Evangelical Church's Praise TEAM' 2010, Facebook 14 November <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:cmbA9RX7zMIJ:www.facebook.com/group.php%3Fgid%3D110316001379+the+evangelical+church+in+luxor&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au> - Accessed 24 December 2010 – Attachment 5.

⁴'Coptic and Evangelical Churches trade barbs' 2009, Almasryalyoum 4 October <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/coptic-and-evangelical-churches-trade-barbs> - Accessed 23 December 2010 – Attachment 6.

⁵'Evangelical Church of Egypt (Synod of the Nile)' 2010, Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Church_of_Egypt_\(Synod_of_the_Nile\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Church_of_Egypt_(Synod_of_the_Nile)) - Accessed 23 December 2010 – Attachment 7.

⁶'Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt Synod of the Nile' 2006, Website of the World Council of Churches, 1 January, <http://www.oikoumene.org/member-churches/regions/middle-east/egypt/evangelical-presbyterian-church-of-egypt-synod-of-the-nile.html> – Accessed 16 December 2010 – Attachment 8.

⁷'Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt Synod of the Nile' 2006, Website of the World Council of Churches, 1 January, <http://www.oikoumene.org/member-churches/regions/middle-east/egypt/evangelical-presbyterian-church-of-egypt-synod-of-the-nile.html> – Accessed 16 December 2010 – Attachment 8.

⁸'Coptic and Evangelical Churches trade barbs' 2009, Almasryalyoum 4 October <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/coptic-and-evangelical-churches-trade-barbs> - Accessed 23 December 2010 – Attachment 6; and Bayoumi, A. 2010, 'Evangelical Church sets conditions for personal status law', Almasryalyoum, 20 June <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/evangelical-church-sets-conditions-personal-status-law> - Accessed 23 December 2010 – Attachment 9.

Lamee was identified in a June 2010 news report as the Head of the Media Committee of the Evangelical Church.⁹

A 24 March 2010 news report carried by the Assyrian International News Agency describes how authorities forcibly removed the pastor of the Evangelical Church in Luxor from his residence and bulldozed church property under orders from the Governor of Luxor. This action was in accordance with Luxor City Council plans to redevelop areas around Luxor's archaeological sites. The pastor's name was reported as Mahrous Karam and his wife was named as Sabah. The article reports that Evangelical Church property included a church, a two-story residence building, a community centre, guest quarters and club, located near the Ram Road project in Luxor.¹⁰

A picture labelled 'Luxor Evangelical Presbyterian church', dated 2 October 2008, was located on Flickr (social photo-sharing website) and it is provided as an attachment.¹¹ There was no accompanying information about the church.

Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS)

The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) is an Egyptian Christian development organization headquartered in Cairo, Egypt. A map on their webpage indicates an organisational presence in Luxor with an asterisk, however, no details were located about specific activities in that location.¹² According to the CEOSS website, this organisation operates extensive Christian-based development programs throughout Egypt, stating:

'It is dedicated to social and cultural development, individual well-being, social justice, and inter-cultural harmony. It delivers its services regardless of gender, race, religion, or beliefs. As a Christian voice promoting pluralism and mutual respect in an Egyptian context, CEOSS encourages the participation of Egyptians from all segments of society—Muslim and Christian, rich and poor...'

CEOSS is registered with the Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs and claims to provide services to more than 2 million Egyptians annually in more than 100 rural and urban communities.

Kasr El Dobara Evangelical Church

Kasr El Dobara Evangelical Church (KDEC) is a Presbyterian church headquartered in Cairo and it has been described as the largest protestant evangelical church in the Middle East. Information obtained from a website operated by the First Presbyterian Church located in Louisiana, USA, which is hosting a conference with KDEC in 2011. The

⁹ Bayoumi, A. 2010, 'Evangelical Church sets conditions for personal status law', *Almasryalyoum*, 20 June <http://www.almasyalyoum.com/en/news/evangelical-church-sets-conditions-personal-status-law> - Accessed 23 December 2010 – Attachment 9.

¹⁰ Abdelmassih, M 2010, "Egyptian State Security Demolishes Evangelical Church, Assaults Pastor", *Assyrian International News Agency*, 24 March, <http://www.aina.org/news/20100323193843.htm> – Accessed 23 November 2010 – Attachment 3.

¹¹ 'Luxor Evangelical Presbyterian Church' 2008, Flickr website <http://www.flickr.com/photos/31128891@N08/3046779997/> - Accessed 23 December 2010 – Attachment 11.

¹² 'Egypt - ELCA Companions in Egypt' undated, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America website <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Global-Mission/Where-We-Work/Europe-Middle-East/Egypt.aspx> - Accessed 24 December 2010 – Attachment 12.

website reports that 6,000 Egyptians attend church services with KDEC weekly. It also reports that this church has active ministries devoted to drug rehabilitation, sports, 'recovery' and 'mercy'.¹³ The business resource website Ameinfo.com provides an address for the KDEC in Cairo as: 7 El Shikh Rihany St, Cairo, Egypt, Telephone: +20 7946161.¹⁴

An April 2009 blog entry by Reverend Jack Peebles, Senior Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Yakima, Washington, USA describes his visit to the KDEC in Cairo and the relationship it has with his church. Reverend Peebles related that the Delta Presbytery of the Synod of the Nile (possibly the same EPCE church described above) 'planted' the Kasr El Dohara Church in 1940 and that Reverend Ibrahim Said was the church's first pastor. Two pictures of the church, constructed around 1944 with the King of Egypt's approval, are included on the blog and are provided as an attachment.¹⁵

4. Please provide any further details that may be available, regarding the reported detention and release of twelve evangelical students in Alexandria mentioned in EGY37914 and sourced to the US Department of State.

No additional information was located regarding the circumstances of the arrest of a group of young evangelical Christians in Alexandria in May 2010. The contents of the *Almasryalyoum* news report,¹⁶ cited in Response EGY37914¹⁷, were repeated on other news websites without alteration and without providing any further details.

Attachments

1. 'Distance from Luxor to Al Qousieh' 2000, Encarta - Accessed 23 December 2010.
2. Deleted.
3. Abdelmassih, M 2010, "Egyptian State Security Demolishes Evangelical Church, Assaults Pastor", *Assyrian International News Agency*, 24 March, <http://www.aina.org/news/20100323193843.htm> – Accessed 23 November 2010
4. 'Luxor Evangelical Church's Praise TEAM' 2010, Facebook, 26 October <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:xYnHEedJgrMJ:www.facebook.com/posted.php%3Fid%3D110316001379+the+evangelical+church+in+luxor&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au> - Accessed 24 December 2010.

¹³ 'First Presbyterian Church is pleased to host the 5th annual KDEC Partnership Conference, January 12-14, 2011' 2010, First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge <http://www.fpcbr.org/fpc/furtherintotheworld/globalmissions/kdeconference.aspx> - Accessed 24 December 2010 – Attachment 13.

¹⁴ 'Kasr El Dohara Evangelical Church' 2010, Ameinfo.com website <http://www.ameinfo.com/db-3302135.html> - Accessed 24 December 2010 – Attachment 14.

¹⁵ 'Kasr El Dohara Evangelical Church... Reflections on Egypt Part 3', 2009, The Sent Church Blog of the First Presbyterian Church of Yakima, Washington <http://thesentchurch.blogspot.com/2009/04/kasr-el-dohara-evangelical-church.html> - Accessed 24 December 2010 – Attachment 15.

¹⁶ Bayoumi, A 2010, "[Thirteen] evangelicals arrested in Alexandria", *Almasryalyoum*, 24 May, <http://www.almasyalyoum.com/en/news/13-evangelicals-arrested-alexandria> – Accessed 13 December 2010 – Attachment 16.

¹⁷ RRT Country Advice Service 2010, *Research Response EGY37914*, 17 December – Attachment 17.

5. Luxor Evangelical Church's Praise TEAM' 2010, Facebook 14 November
<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:cmbA9RX7zMIJ:www.facebook.com/group.php%3Fgid%3D110316001379+the+evangelical+church+in+luxor&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au> - Accessed 24 December 2010.
6. 'Coptic and Evangelical Churches trade barbs' 2009, *Almasryalyoum* 4 October
<http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/coptic-and-evangelical-churches-trade-barbs> - Accessed 23 December 2010.
7. 'Evangelical Church of Egypt (Synod of the Nile)' 2010, Wikipedia
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Church_of_Egypt_\(Synod_of_the_Nile\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Church_of_Egypt_(Synod_of_the_Nile)) - Accessed 23 December 2010
8. 'Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt Synod of the Nile' 2006, Website of the World Council of Churches, 1 January, <http://www.oikoumene.org/member-churches/regions/middle-east/egypt/evangelical-presbyterian-church-of-egypt-synod-of-the-nile.html> – Accessed 16 December 2010.
9. Bayoumi, A. 2010, 'Evangelical Church sets conditions for personal status law', *Almasryalyoum*, 20 June <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/evangelical-church-sets-conditions-personal-status-law> - Accessed 23 December 2010.
10. Deleted.
11. 'Luxor Evangelical Presbyterian Church' 2008, Flickr website
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/31128891@N08/3046779997/> - Accessed 23 December 2010.
12. 'Egypt - ELCA Companions in Egypt' undated, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America website <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Global-Mission/Where-We-Work/Europe-Middle-East/Egypt.aspx> - Accessed 24 December 2010.
13. 'First Presbyterian Church is pleased to host the 5th annual KDEC Partnership Conference, January 12-14, 2011' 2010, First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge
<http://www.fpcbr.org/fpc/furtherintotheworld/globalmissions/kdeconference.aspx> - Accessed 24 December 2010.
14. 'Kasr El Dohara Evangelical Church' 2010, Ameinfo.com website
<http://www.ameinfo.com/db-3302135.html> - Accessed 24 December 2010.
15. 'Kasr El Dohara Evangelical Church... Reflections on Egypt Part 3', 2009, The Sent Church Blog of the First Presbyterian Church of Yakima, Washington
<http://thesentchurch.blogspot.com/2009/04/kasr-el-dohara-evangelical-church.html> - Accessed 24 December 2010.
16. Bayoumi, A 2010, "[Thirteen] evangelicals arrested in Alexandria", *Almasryalyoum*, 24 May, <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/13-evangelicals-arrested-alexandria> – Accessed 13 December 2010.
17. RRT Country Advice Service 2010, *Research Response EGY37914*, 17 December.