

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

**Research Response Number:** EGY35721  
**Country:** Egypt  
**Date:** 18 November 2009

**Keywords:** Egypt – EGY35721 – Jehovah's Witnesses – discrimination – treatment by authorities – state protection

This response was prepared by the Research & Information Services Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. This research response may not, under any circumstance, be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information may only cite the primary source material contained herein.

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**Questions**

- 1) What restrictions or forms of discrimination do Jehovah's Witnesses face in practising their religion in Egypt? To what extent are they forced to practice underground, and what are the likely consequences if they do not?**
- 2) How are Jehovah's Witnesses treated by members of the community (both Muslims and Copts) in Egypt? Have they been subject to incidences of violence or harassment?**
- 3) How are Jehovah's Witnesses treated by the Egyptian authorities? Is state protection available to them?**

**RESPONSE**

- 1) What restrictions or forms of discrimination do Jehovah's Witnesses face in practising their religion in Egypt? To what extent are they forced to practice underground, and what are the likely consequences if they do not?**
- 2) How are Jehovah's Witnesses treated by members of the community (both Muslims and Copts) in Egypt? Have they been subject to incidences of violence or harassment?**
- 3) How are Jehovah's Witnesses treated by the Egyptian authorities? Is state protection available to them?**

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia provided a detailed written response to these questions on 18 November 2009; this response is provided in full as Attachment 1. The response addresses the founding and early history of the sect in Egypt; its banning in 1960 and subsequent governmental directives prohibiting registration of the sect; restrictions on religious freedom; abuses of religious freedom, including recent examples of state security surveillance, arrests and interrogations of sect members; and recent positive developments in relations between the sect and the Egyptian National Council of Human Rights (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia 2009, Letter to RRT: 'Jehovah's Witnesses – Egypt', 17 November – Attachment 1; for the originating fax to the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society

of Australia, see: RRT Research & Information 2009, Fax to Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia: 'RRT Country Information Request EGY35721', 9 November – Attachment 2).

### **List of Sources Consulted**

Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia

### **List of Attachments**

1. Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia 2009, Letter to RRT: 'Jehovah's Witnesses – Egypt', 17 November.
2. RRT Research & Information 2009, Fax to Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia: 'RRT Country Information Request EGY35721', 9 November.