

Austrian Coptic Association
9th Session of the Forum on Minority Issues

Mr president, Madam Special Rapporteur, ladies and gentlemen,
My name is [Hasni Bipauyi] and I represent the Coptic Organisation in Europe and Austria. Today I would like to speak of the Azhari religious education in Egypt, which allows to persecute the Coptic and Shia minority in Egypt. Facing terrorism is a matter that we are getting used to, but we are not yet used to facing terrorist thinking. The religious thinking in Egypt is propagating fanaticism, extremism. The Azhari student looks down at the other. We have seen students that have committed crimes of burning churches and kidnapping minors. As an example, in a book that is being taught Azhar, which is a book of teaching, there is text in this book that allows the governor when taking over a new city to kill and even burn prisoners of war. This was the reason Jordanian pilot was burned by ISIS. In another book that allows a Muslim to eat the flesh of another Muslim if he leaves the religion. Another reference book propagates this kind of thinking, the state, the Egyptian state and this is the danger abides by providing the necessary financial resources to al-Azhar and the United Nations is the first and biggest peacekeeping organisation in the world therefore we had to inform you of this dangerous thinking in Egypt. We call on you to prohibit the teaching of such books or to at least amend these books and to stop providing any grants to Azhari students around the world. And we call on you to urge the Egyptian government to accept and protect all international conventions and we call on listing al-Azhar as a terrorist organisation. Thank you.