

Redworld

Thank you Madame Chair. On behalf of Redworld, as a Coptic-Egyptian-American professor, I am here to address intersectional concerns by Copts in Egypt and the diaspora. Copts are the largest ethno-religious minority groups. Making up about 5-20% of the population. Today, the Egyptian state governs the Coptic population through the leadership of the Coptic Orthodox Church. This positions the Church as the primary religious and political representative of all Copts. This dynamic maintains the authority of the Church and the interests of the state, reduces all Coptic affairs to the question of religion, security, and counter-terrorism, and ultimately overshadows the complexity of Coptic lived experiences and concerns. Beyond well-documented violations pertaining to religious freedom, Copts at the intersection of other minoritized communities face compounded violations, sometimes from within the community itself. Queer Copts are subjected to systemic campaigns of hate by the Church and state. The Church also supports a pseudo-scientific practice of conversion therapy. Clergy advise Coptic women suffering from domestic violence to carry the cross rather than seek separation and protection. The Church hierarchy has also mishandled several cases of clergy sexual violence. The Church and state also work together to violate the rights of other minority communities, such as atheists in Egypt. In 2025 alone, the state has arrested 39 individuals who do not belong to officially recognized religions. Since minority rights are individual, not group rights, effective inclusion of Copts entails going beyond Church representation and state tokenization. Rather all Copts should be able to represent their own identities and concerns, including and beyond matters of religion. We therefore recommend that the Egyptian state uphold the values of citizenship and officially recognize minoritized communities in all their diverse forms and intersection; the state ensure the protection of all Copts and their full political inclusion [cut off by Chair].