

Prayer Diary: Egypt

1-7 January 2023



In July's prayer diary, we asked you to pray over Egypt's national dialogue – an initiative in which every Egyptian can participate and speak freely, to define the country's new priorities.

In July and August, the national dialogue's General Secretariat decided on the parameters for discussions on its Political, Social, and Economic Tracks. They agreed on the participation of all political and social forces, except for those linked to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood organisation.

While some people express enthusiasm for the dialogue, others remain sceptical. Pray that the national dialogue will start a genuine process of reform and reconciliation, and that it will definitively address restrictions to freedom of religion or belief.

Find out more at csw.org.uk/egypt

Sunday 1 January

Give thanks that a further 239 churches and places of worship were legalised in April 2022 by the government committee chaired by Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly. A further 125 were legalised in November. This means that over 2,500 churches and places of worship have been granted legal status since the committee began its mandate in 2017.

Monday 2 January

While we give thanks for the improvements we have seen for Egypt's Christian community, the same is not true across wider society. Pray that the national dialogue would result in these improvements being extended to religious and belief groups that are currently unrecognised, and in equal rights for all Egypt's citizens.

Tuesday 3 January

In Upper Egypt, church construction continues to be a source of tension which can lead to sectarian violence. In many cases when Christians have received permission to renovate or build new churches, local Muslims have blocked their attempts to do so. Pray for an end to religious discrimination and tension between religious groups in these communities.

Wednesday 4 January

So-called 'reconciliation' sessions (which take place outside of the legal system) are often used to settle disputes about new churches, as well as many other disagreements. Pray for an end to these sessions, which deprive victims of the justice they deserve by coercing them to accept a settlement, and by allowing the perpetrators to get away with their offence.

Thursday 5 January

In July last year a Christian man and his son were injured in a knife attack, believed to have been triggered by hate speech from controversial Islamist preachers. Thankfully, in this case, the family's Muslim neighbours intervened to stop the assailant. Pray for decisive efforts to be made by the Egyptian government to counteract the hate speech which fuels sectarianism and encourages incidents of violence like these.

Friday 6 January

Today is Christmas Eve in the Coptic calendar. President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi made history in 2015 when he became the first serving president to attend a Christmas Mass on Christmas Eve. Give thanks for the commitments President Sisi has made towards combatting sectarianism and religious discrimination, and pray that these policies and sentiments would permeate throughout wider society.

Saturday 7 January

Lord, we give thanks for the advances in freedom of religion or belief in Egypt and pray that positive change would spread throughout the country. We pray that all those in positions of leadership would work for justice, freedom and equal rights for all Egypt's citizens, and we ask, that the national dialogue would bring peace, reconciliation and healing. Amen.