The Christians of Egypt face difficult times after the election to the People's Assembly of Egypt from 28 November, 2011 to 11 January, 2012, when 70% of the seats went to Islamist Parties.

Yasser Burhami, head of the influential El-Dawa El-Salafiya (Salafist Call) group, has given some idea of where the country is heading. He has declared that Copts do not have the right to run for political office in Egypt. We will not permit an infidel [kafir] to be appointed to a post where he assumes authority over Muslims. This is forbidden. Allah said: “Never will Allah grant to infidels a way [to triumph] over the believers [Koran 4:141].”

Furthermore, he says that "Muslims must not let Christians take part in their religious celebrations because they are polytheists." Al Burhamy accused the Sufi movement - a tolerant mystical sect within Islam - of heresy and of being sponsored by the United States. He also said Salafists would not allow Egypt’s Baha’i community to hold religious festivals or mark their religion on National ID cards if they took power.

Following are excerpts from a statement by Yassir Al-Burhami aired on Egyptian TV on December 3, 2012.

"Can the Christians of Egypt be compared to the Jews of Al-Medina? The case of the Jews of

Al-Medina is one example of the relations between the Muslims and the infidels. The Muslims can implement any form of conduct used by the Prophet Muhammad. When the Prophet Muhammad was still in Mecca, he dealt with the infidels in a certain way, and when the Muslims are weak, they should deal with the infidels this way. 'Refrain from action, pray, and pay the zakkat.'

"In many infidel countries, such as occupied Palestine, we instruct Muslims to do just that. We are not telling the Muslims in Gaza to launch rockets every day, which would lead to the destruction of the entire country. We tell them to adhere to the truce.

"When the Prophet Muhammad first arrived in Al-Medina, he signed a treaty with the Jews without forcing them to pay the jizya poll tax. This was necessary at the time, but when they breached the treaty, he fought them, and eventually, he imposed the jizya upon the People of the Book. […] [Under Islamic law, jizya or jizyah is a per capita tax levied on an Islamic state's non-Muslim citizens.] "The Christians [of Egypt] can be dealt with like the Jews of Al-Medina. This is possible." […]

So what happened to the **Jews of Al-Medina** ? Judaism was already well established in Medina two centuries before Muhammad's birth. There were many Jewish clans-some records indicate more than twenty - of which three were prominent-the Banu Nadir, the Banu Qaynuqa, and the Banu Qurayza.

In 624, a quarrel in the marketplace provided the justification for Muhammad to banish the tribe of Banu Qaynuqa from Medina, with their belongings divided among the army, and Muhammed receiving his royal fifth. A year later, Muhammad did the same thing to the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir, whose land was divided between the Muslims with Muhammad’s share making him financially independent. The tribe went to Khaybar, where they were massacred two years later.

In 627, after an attack by the forces of Mecca on Medina, Muhammad besieged the Banu Qarayza, the last important Jewish tribe in Medina. The Jews sent a messenger to Muhammad and expressed their willingness to surrender and leave the city. Muhammad said if they agreed to surrender, he would appoint a negotiator who would settle the issue. The negotiator Muhammad appointed passionately hated the Jews and he decided that the Jewish men would be executed, and that their women and children would be distributed among the Muslims. About 750 Jews were then murdered in the marketplace in Medina, and heaped into a common grave.

Al-Burhami is calling for a two stage process for the Islamization of Egypt. While they are still weak, they should accept compromise. But when they are strong, then they should institute the full Islamic State.

This Islamization process is integral to Al-Burhami's reference to the jizya poll tax. This tribute is doctrinally demanded and historically collected from conquered infidels. It puts the Christians into the status of second-class dhimmis.

Dhimmi status is based on two important concepts: First that Muslims are superior to any other religious group, and secondly, that Christians and Jews who had not accepted Islam should be subjected to the payment of the tribute poll tax, the jizya, not payable by Muslims. Dhimmis were barred from sharing in the government and from service in the army, but were granted protection of life and property by the Muslim state in return for paying the jizya but they enjoyed no political rights.

In the words of Koran 9:29: Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor forbid that which Allah and his Messenger have forbidden, nor follow the religion of truth [Islam], from the People of the Book [Christians and Jews], until they pay the jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves utterly subdued.

For decades Christian Copts suffered attacks by Islamists who view them as "kafir"—Arabic for

nonbelievers. But there is now a sense among Middle East experts that the nation's roughly eight million Copts have become more vulnerable since the revolution. After Hosni Mubarak's regime collapsed, 100,000 Christians fled Egypt in what the Egyptian Union of Human Rights called a "mass exodus."

During the year 2011, mobs looted and attacked Coptic churches, homes and shops throughout Egypt. Churches have been burned down, and one Copt had his ear cut off by a Muslim cleric invoking Islamic law.

A particularly disturbing incident that has been called the **Maspero Massacre** occurred on Oct. 9, 2011 when Coptics gathered in Cairo to protest the destruction of a church near Aswan in Upper Egypt. Salafists had pronounced threats and made demands for Aswan's Christian congregation not to have any loudspeakers in the church and to limit the visibility of any Christian symbols such as crosses on the church structure. The Copts refused the demand of eliminating crosses and steeples. The threats eventually escalated to actual destruction of the church by the extremists.

Peaceful protesters intended to stage a sit-in in front of the Maspiro television building on the bank of the Nile River in Cairo. About 10,000 Christians proceeded past hostile Muslim crowds toward Maspero. They were attacked by security forces and the army. In all, 27 Christians were killed and 212 injured: fourteen of them crushed by military armored vehicles.

Furthermore, Salafi men have recently created their version of the morality police . They have

been harassing shop owners and female customers in rural towns around Egypt for “indecent behavior.”

Modeling themselves after Saudi Arabia’s morality police as a **“Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice,”**
they declare their intention to enforce Islamic law. The “morality police” smashed Christmas trees and decorations in front of stores and malls, declaring the celebration of Christmas “haram” or forbidden. Salafi sheiks have banned the sending of Christmas greetings. Coptic Christians saw two of their churches torched by Salafis last spring fear further persecution.

The young members of the morality police held their first meeting at the beginning of January 2012, according to a report in the Al Masry Al Youm newspaper, “to determine the tasks and geographical jurisdictions of the first volunteers, who would monitor people’s behavior in the street and assess whether they contradicted God’s laws. Volunteers would wear white cloaks and hold bamboo canes to beat violators and later would be provided with electric tasers.”

As a consequence, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service reports that asylum claims by Egyptian nationals more than doubled—to 835 in the fiscal year 2011 ended in September, up from 403 in 2010. Many more enter the U.S. on tourist visas and never make a formal appeal to stay.

Sherien Mehany El Gawly, 39, and her family arrived in Brooklyn, NY in July, 2011. Her two daughters, aged 11 and 12, had "a very nice life in Egypt" thanks to her husband's textile business, she says. But after the revolution, their affluent station didn't seem to matter much.

One day, while shopping at an Egyptian grocery, a man singled her out and hurled curse words at her. "I am not veiled and he told me, 'We want to clean our country of you,' " recalls Mrs. El Gawly. Christian women are easily identifiable because they don't cover their hair. The family's regular house of worship no longer felt safe. Her daughters were frightened when the church appeared on an online list of bombing targets.

The final blow came last summer, soon after a doctor examining her 12-year-old daughter for a fever asked if she had been "chitan"—the Arabic term for removal of the clitoris and other female sexual organs. "He said, 'I can do it for them now—it is very easy and it is free,' " Mrs. El

Gawly said. "I said, 'No, no, no, no.' Then, I ran out of the hospital."

Female genital mutilation was banned under the Mubarak regime and declared illegal. But as Islamists gained sway in 2011, it was one of the Mubarak era reforms they derided and wanted to strike down. The practice is in danger of making a comeback, says an expert at the World Health Organization.

So who is **Yasser Hussein Borhami** who was cited above? He is a prominent Salafist preacher, hailed as a prominent scholar of puritan Islam, and deputy leader of Al-Daawa Movement (Al-Da'waa Al-Salafiyyai). He is considered the godfather of the Al-Nour Party founded in 2011, a political party commonly viewed as Al-Daawa's political arm.

Borhami was born in 1958, and his father, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), was imprisoned under Nasser in 1965. Borhami graduated from Alexandria University with a degree in medicine in 1982 and earned a master's degree in pediatrics in 1992. He went on to obtain a degree in shari'a from Al-Azhar University in 1999.

As a university student, Borhami was active in Salafist circles, and wasaffiliated with al-Gamaa al-Islamiya (the Islamic Group). While on pilgrimage in Mecca during his second year of college, Borhami met the late Abdel Aziz bin Baz, a prominent Saudi Islamic scholar, who greatly influenced Borhami's thinking about religion.

Sheikh Yasir Burhami rejected participation in politics and government before Mubarak's ouster because it conflicted with his religious principles. But he reconciled participation in the current election process by rejecting democracy—the rule of the people—while embracing democracy's methodology (elections), which "seems to be the best option available, or the lesser evil."

Burhami advocates this "lesser evil" (elections) in order to change the basis for Egyptian law. In a March interview on Al-Khaleejiah television, Burhami explained that under Islamic rule, laws are based on the Koran and the Sunnah, the practice of Muhammad. Under democracy, he explained, it is the will of the people that he rejects. But then he implied Salafis joined this election as a means to leverage their popularity in order to change the basis for Egyptian law.

Burhami's **Al Nour party** , is the largest of Egypt's three licensed Salafist parties and perhaps the most dogmatic. It calls for laws mandating a shift to the complete application of Sharia, including Islamic banking (no interest or fees for loans), "just and equal distribution" of income to the poor, restricting the sale of alcohol, providing special curricula for schoolchildren, and censoring the arts and entertainment.

"We believe that Islam is the decisive [authority] in all domains of life, including politics," Burhami said. He argues that Islam is "both religion and state," and cannot be separated from politics. He believes secularism amounts to atheism.

The Al-Nour party has stated it is committed to the 1979 Egypt–Israel Peace Treaty as a binding international agreement and would be willing to hold negotiations with Israel. At the same time, Al-Nour said it seeks amendments to the agreement and opposes normalization or dialogue with Israel. Specifically, an Al-Nour spokesman stated, "We call for full Sinai rights for Egypt and for our brothers in Palestine and occupied lands, and we see this as directly related to the agreement."

In the Nov. 28, 2011–Jan. 22, 2012 Egypt parliamentary elections , the Democratic Alliance dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party won 235 or 47% of the 498 parliamentary seats contested The Islamist Bloc led by the Al-Nour party was in second-place with 127 seats, with the Al-Nour party itself winning 111 seats or 22% of the total. Together these two Islamist groupings won 72.7% of the total parliamentary seats.

Al-Burhami has made other comments that are critical of the US and its Christian heritage. In May of 2011, he spoke on the **death of bin Laden** as a "martyr" who "was killed with his head held high, and God did not hand him over to his enemies"

In excerpts from his words:

The entire world is congratulating Obama and the US…As for myself, then I congratulate Usama – if what they say is true about his death – for indeed, you have obtained what you desired!

I also congratulate all the Mujahideen for indeed your companion was killed with his head held high, not submitting to the enemies of Allah. He died honorably in a time of change and revolution…I ask Allah to accept him from amongst the martyrs.

Bush explicitly declared his war of crusades and as a result occupied Afghanistan and Iraq for the expensive price of the blood of our martyrs and injured, but despite that the unequivocal reality is that the spirit of Jihad is still alive in the Ummah and that it will not surrender to its enemy…

The Muslim nation will not stop due to the death of a person - who had such distinguishing leadership skills in the field of Jihad – their path to realize their freedom and their desire to live by their faith.

Not restricting himself to strong negative views about Christians, in May of 2011 at a Salafi movement organized conference at Al-Azhar University, Sheikh Yasser Burhamy took on the **S ufi Islamic movement**
in Egypt by accusing them of heresy and of being sponsored by the United States. For the Islamists, the Sufis are deadly enemies, who draw on practices they consider alien to the Quran. The Sufis are particularly strong in Egypt where, according to one estimate, at least a third of the adult male Muslim population in Egypt is influenced by the Sufi order.

[redacted]