

Muslim Brotherhood Leaders: We Will Implement Sharia Law in Egypt

Monday 2 May 2011, by Almasry Alyoum.com (Date first published: 17 April 2011).

Mahmoud Ezzat, the Muslim Brotherhood's deputy Supreme Guide, said in a forum held in the Cairo district of Imbaba on Thursday that the group wants to establish an Islamic state after it achieves widespread popularity through its Freedom and Justice Party. Meanwhile, Brotherhood leader Saad al-Husseiny, said at the forum that the group aims to apply Islamic legislation and establish Islamic rule. His remarks rattled the leaders of several political parties, who said the statements, which were at odds with the concept of a civil state, would worry liberals.

The Coptic Orthodox Church decided to suspend its dialogue with the group after additional Brotherhood leaders said it was seeking to implement Islamic Sharia and declare Egypt an Islamic state, church sources said. The sources said the Brotherhood is trampling over the principles of equality and citizenship, and that its rhetoric changed after the 25 January revolution to adopt the language of the toppled regime.

Al-Masry Al-Youm has learned that as a result of the controversy, the church abandoned its intention to invite the group's leaders to attend Easter celebrations.

Anba Bassanti, bishop of Helwan and Maasara, gave church head Pope Shenouda III the prerogative to respond and declined to comment on the Brotherhood leaders' remarks.

Meanwhile, Abdel Maseeh Baseet, the pastor of the Church of Saint Marie in Mostorod, said he was unsurprised to hear the statements, which he believes represents the Brotherhood's true intentions. "This way of thinking is rejected both locally and internationally. The world is not ready for a Taliban-style state," he said.

The Coalition of Revolution Youth described the remarks as a step backward, saying it belies the group's previous statements that it will establish a civil state, while Khaled al-Sayyed, a member of the coalition, called on the group to apologize to the nation for the statements.

Mostafa al-Tawil, acting president of the Wafd Party, said the statements are intended to prepare the people for religious rule. He added that Egyptians will respond when they vote in the upcoming elections.

The Nasserist and Democratic Front parties expressed similar positions.

The statements also elicited angry responses from within the group itself. Mohamed Habib, former deputy Supreme Guide, said the timing is wrong for a discussion of these matters.

Brotherhood leader Hamdi Hassan defended the statements, saying they are not new, but that the controversy arises from the inaccuracy of press reports and the improper understanding of Islamic law.

Ezzat, meanwhile, filed a report with the attorney general, accusing the media of twisting his

statements.

Following the 25 January revolution, the Brotherhood worked to counter fears about its political ambitions after establishing the Freedom and Justice Party. It announced that the party would welcome Christian members, and that it would not oppose female and Coptic nominations for presidency.

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P.S.

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