

Informal Conciliatory Session is not the solution to injustice inflicted upon minorities.

Ms Chair person and honourable board members:

My name is Ibrahim Habib I am the chairman of the United Copts of Great Britain.

I would like to draw the panel attention that in the past a few years a trend of having Informal Conciliatory Session following transgression or attacks by a Muslim majority person or family on a Christian minority person or family as a way to resolve the problem instead of court.

The transgression could be in the form of seizing of a land belonging to the Christian by force, followed by threats and intimidation, or possibly an attack on a building because of Christian worship is rumoured is conducted in it. In the session justice is never restored and the minority family subjected to punitive and unfair treatment.

Between June 2012 – June 2013, the period during which Muslim Brotherhood government was in power in Egypt, the police encouraged the practise to form the basis of solving disputes if the beleaguered and the belligerent were of different religion, the outcome was as expected, totally unfair submission, humiliation and subordination to the minority family

In 2012 in Alexandria district of Amriah El-Hoti family (Muslim) seized 10 acres from Mekanoti family (Christian) by force and intimidation; the security forces at the time did nothing to restore justice. Thank heaven on the 20th of July this year, under President El-Sissie, citizenship right and equality and justice started to take effects, Police Law Enforcement Section went in to enable the Christian family to have their land back, the criminal family open fire on the police, during exchange of fire one person from the criminal family was killed and the police withdrew. An Informal Conciliatory Session was held judging that a deferment of 4 months till the Christian family receives its land and not to pray in the village church but to go to another church for prayer to calm the atmosphere then the Muslim family will give the 10 acres back. We are not sure this will ever happen.

Thank goodness the deeds and intension of our new president El-Sissie government towards all citizens are excellent. The government would like to treat all citizens equally from here we send a message of gratitude to Mr El-Sissi the Egyptian president, but the culture in Egypt changed to tribal over the past 3 decades especially in the villages, the minorities frequently find their rights are encroached upon.

I would recommend the only arbiter between people in disputes should be the law and the law alone. The government should make Informal Conciliatory Session illegal in criminal justice and the practice of it in the criminal justice should lead to custodial sentence thus the supremacy of the civil law can prevail.