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EGYPT | Coptic Community Attacked Following Facebook Post

Several houses belonging to Coptic Christians in Minbal village in the Mattay region of Minya governorate in Upper Egypt were attacked by a mob July 9, following the publication of a Facebook post which was deemed to be offensive to Islam.

The mob threw stones, shouting “Allah Akbar” (God is Greater) after Abdou Adel, a 35-year-old Coptic man, shared a post on his Facebook page comparing different religions. Adel was arrested July 13, but extremists continued to incite the local Muslim community, resulting in damage to several houses. The Coptic community in the village is reportedly fearful and the situation remains tense. Sources close to CSW report that the police have increased their presence in the village and efforts are underway to hold an enforced reconciliation meeting.

The police deployed armored vehicles to protect the Church of Prince Tadros Al-Mashreqi in the village in anticipation of more protests. The vicar, Father Makarious Antoun, called for peace and mutual respect, and criticized any attempts to defame religion and instigate violence and social division.

Reconciliation meetings are extra-judicial procedures commonly used to resolve sectarian disputes. They generally impose ad-hoc and often unconstitutional conditions on the victims of the violence, with the authorities often accepting the outcome in lieu of investigating and prosecuting perpetrators sectarian violence.

CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, “We are deeply concerned by the recent attacks on the Coptic community in Minbal village. We urge the authorities to uphold the rule of law by ensuring that reconciliation meetings are not used in place of judicial remedies, as they perpetuate impunity for perpetrators, who generally face no consequences for their crimes. We also call on the Egyptian government to uphold the rule of law by ensuring the victims of this violence are adequately compensated, and Mr. Adel receives a fair hearing. Finally, we urge the government to invest in civic education to promote a more inclusive and tolerant society.”