



Coptic Orthodox Church declaration regarding violence against women



"Giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered"
(1 Peter 3:7)

The Coptic Orthodox Church(COC)supports women's right to have a life free of all forms of violence. COC believes that all human beings are God's creation and they are all equal in dignity, as the Bible's teachings equate men and women with reference to God's saying, **"And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."** (Gen 2: 18), and the word of a help meet for him total equality, **"Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord."**(I Cor 11: 11).

Christianity stands against all forms of violence against women, either physical, verbal or psychological. The church rejects any harmful practices that is degrading to women and might cause them injustice or suffering. This includes female genital mutilation (FGM), early and forced marriage, deprivation of education, discrimination and/or deprivation of inheritance rights, all forms of sexual harassment in public spaces and in the workplaces and in educational facilities, sexual assault, rape and sexual exploitation (including trafficking of women and girls) and all forms of domestic violence and abuse. Consequently, no man shall be entitled to inflict or engage in violence against women in any form **"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."** (Col 3:19)

Given the spread of misconceptions, cultural harmful misinterpretations and habits, especially among marginalized and underprivileged communities, which are the root cause of violence. Since clerics, religious preachers and scholars have strong credibility and significant influence on Egyptian society, the church is therefore keen to develop their capacities and expand their knowledge to educate and sensitize communities to stand against all forms of violence against women. The Church also provides comprehensive community awareness raising programs touching on religious, legal, psychological and social aspects and offers as well socio-economic empowerment programs tailored for women, as an asset that enables them to enjoy their full societal rights and provide a decent living for them and their families.

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