



47, High Town Road, Luton LU2 0BW Beds UK
Tel. No. 01582 416946 / Email jgrassroots@btconnect.com

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The Coptic Orthodox Church Centre UK
Broadhall Way
Stevenage
SG2 8NP

To our friends and associates at The Coptic Orthodox Church Centre UK,

As a Christian ecumenical programme, working with Churches and different faith communities in Luton, GRASSROOTS are deeply saddened at the news of the vicious attacks on innocent worshippers in St George (Mar Girgis) Coptic church in Tanta and in front of St Mark's church in Alexandria, Egypt. We wish to express our deepest condolences with you and all Coptic Christians, and send a clear message that such attacks and any other forms of ongoing persecution and discrimination against Christians is unacceptable and worrying.

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, has expressed his profound sorrow and offered condolences and prayers for the families of the victims, for the wounded and for all the people of Egypt. He encourages Egyptians to stand firm and united through the many trials and tribulations that continue to threaten. We echo the sentiments expressed by Dr Tveit on behalf of all Christians in the world, and join our voices with him in saying that "In the face of this brutality, the human family, all people of faith and of good will, must stand together to recommit to respecting and caring for one another, to protecting one another, and to preventing such violence."

As a local programme working in Luton to promote, peace, harmony and understanding, across Luton's diverse faiths and cultures, we call upon Egyptian and other regional religious leaders and governments to act swiftly and boldly to safeguard the fundamental religious rights of worshippers of all faiths, to ensure security in the face of violence and to guarantee justice for all people. Places of worship representing many different faith traditions have been targets of violence by extremists and it is unacceptable.

We stand prayerfully, in solidarity with the people in Egypt as they mourn this unfortunate and tragic incident. May we all continue to seek to affirm life and engage in countering such mindless violence through peaceful means, through dialogue and partnership, locally as well as globally.

In Solidarity,

David Jonathan (Johny)
Director, GRASSROOTS

Sr Maire Hayes
Inter Faith Coordinator
Catholic Diocese of Northampton

Bonnie Evans-Hill
CofE St Albans
Diocesan Interfaith Advisor

Cc: Peter Adams (Churches Together in Luton), Anita Nancollas (Churches Together in Bedfordshire), Ryad Khodabocus (Luton Council of Faiths), Ashraf Farahat (The Bridge, Luton)