

Egypt: Aid to Martyrs' Families

After seven Christians were martyred during a three-week period in Egypt's North Sinai Peninsula, nearly 300 families fled the region.

The killings, conducted by Wilayat Sinai – the Egyptian affiliate of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS), have shaken the Christian community there.

A VOM worker recently met with families – including women who were widowed by the attacks. VOM provided food and blankets for 50 families living in the Evangelical church in Ismailia city.

To date, nearly 290 families or about 1,100 people, have fled Arish in Northern Sinai, spreading out to about 10 cities throughout Egypt. The largest group of displaced people – 176 families or 668 people – have fled to Ismailia.

The Egyptian government has promised to provide housing for each of the families. At the government's request, Christians in the region are donating to help cover the housing needs of their brothers and sisters.

Those who fled to Ismailia faced community resistance at first, though the local Evangelical church offered help right away.

"People were excited while they were sharing with me about the love they found in the Evangelical church and told me that the leaders there are doing their best to make these families happy," the VOM worker said.

New families continue to flee the Sinai region every day. VOM continues to meet with Christian leaders in Ismailia and elsewhere to determine how we can further help these families, especially the families of the seven martyrs.

The Seven Martyrs

Wa'el Yousef – martyred Jan. 30

Wa'el, 35, was the owner of a supermarket on a crowded street in Arish. On the day he was killed, Wa'el was at his market with his pregnant wife and one of their two sons. Suddenly, four masked, armed young men attacked his shop. The militants dragged Wa'el's wife out of the shop by her hair and then shot Wa'el in the abdomen, shoulders and chest. Weeks after his death, Wa'el's wife gave birth to their baby girl.

Adel Shawky – martyred Feb. 11

Adel, 57, lived in the El Samran area in Arish. He was shot in the head.

Dr. Bahgat Welliam – martyred Feb. 12

Dr. Bahget, 58, owned a veterinary clinic in Arish. He was in his pharmacy when masked young men entered and pulled him out to the street in front of the pharmacy and shot him in the head. Dr. Bahgat has a son, Marcos, 16, and a daughter, Demiana, 14.

Gamal Tawfik Gergis – martyred Feb. 16

Gamal, 45, was a teacher who also had a small business selling shoes and socks. Gamal, who has six children, was with his wife when he was killed in the market where he ran his business. Two young men met the couple as they walked through the market. After they asked Gamal what his name was and he confirmed his identity, they shot him in the head. The militants took the money out of Gamal's pocket and warned bystanders in the market not to come closer to Gamal or to try help or save him.

Gamal and his wife have six children: Mary, 23; Youssef, 22; Sara, 17; Mena, 16; Ibrahim, 12; and Mariam, 6.

Saad Hakim Hanna and Medhat Saad Hakim – martyred Feb. 21

Saad, 65, and his son, Medhat, 45, were killed on the same day. Saad was shot several times in the head. His body was found in the streets of Arish. Medhat was abducted and burned alive.

Kamel Raouf Kamel – martyred Feb. 24

Kamel, 40, was a plumber. Armed men shot him in front of his wife and their five children. They also burned his house. Kamel's wife and children escaped as the attackers chased Kamel onto the roof of his house, where he attempted to hide.

Posted: April 3, 2017

