

Sunday, 7 April 2013

## Cathedral attack is like 'attack against me:' Egypt President Mursi



One person was killed and more than 80 wounded in clashes around the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in central Cairo after Sunday's funeral service for four Egyptian Christians killed in sectarian violence with Muslims, state media said. "I consider any attack on the cathedral an attack against myself," Egyptian President Mohamed Mursi said in a statement published by the official MENA news agency. Mursi ordered "an immediate investigation" into the clashes.

Christian-Muslim confrontations have increased in Muslim-majority Egypt since the overthrow of president Hosni Mubarak in 2011 gave freer rein to hardline Islamists repressed under his autocratic rule. The state news agency MENA said 84 people had been injured in several hours of fighting after a ceremony at the cathedral, headquarters of the Coptic church, which was showered with stones, petrol bombs and bird-shot. Following the ceremony, Christians started hurling rocks at police officers, a witness said. The protesters smashed six private cars and set two on fire, prompting an angry reaction from Muslims living in the neighborhood, who threw stones at them, a witness said. Mursi, a Muslim Brotherhood leader elected in June, has promised to protect the rights of Copts, who makeup about 10 percent of Egypt's 84 million people. The president's office and top Muslim leaders were quick to condemn Friday's clashes, which happened after Christian children scrawled on the wall of a Muslim religious institute, according to witnesses. Still, many Christians at the funeral called for Mursi and his Islamist allies to go, some of them chanting "The blood of Christians is not cheap, Mursi."