News 18 November 2026 | English article

Today: Egyptian Christian Convert Said Abdelrazek Faces Death Penalty as US Monitors Trial

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"A defining test for the future of religious freedom in Egypt"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Said Mansour Rezk Abdelrazek, an Egyptian who converted from Islam to Christianity in 2016, faces the death penalty or 25 years in prison. He was arrested at his home in Cairo's Matariya neighbourhood on 15 July 2025 after asking for his official identity papers to record his Christian faith. He has now spent more than a year in custody, and the US State Department says it is monitoring his trial closely.

Think about what he actually did. He did not organise a protest. He did not publish a book attacking anyone's beliefs. He asked the Egyptian state to write one true word on his identity card - Christian. For that request, he now stands before the Terrorism Circuit of the First Criminal Court in Badr, charged with offences that carry the ultimate punishment.

Abdelrazek spent nine months in arbitrary pretrial detention before his case was referred to the terrorism court. He is now held in 10th of Ramadan Prison. His first hearing was in April 2026, and a hearing on 3 November drew concern over reported religious remarks attributed to the judge. In early November, the Public Prosecution presented its closing arguments and asked for the maximum penalty prescribed by law. The defence will present its closing arguments on 8 December 2026.

The charges against him are prosecution allegations - not findings of guilt, and they must be reported as such. He is accused of joining a banned terrorist organisation, contempt for Islam, inciting unrest, and spreading false information. His lawyer, Said Fayez, says the terrorism charge is fabricated: the real issue is a man who converted to Christianity in 2016 and will not pretend otherwise. No court has found him guilty of any of these charges.

That sentence, from a US State Department spokesperson, is the most important one in this story so far. The United States has intensified its pressure on Egypt to respect religious liberty. Egypt receives $1.3 Billion in annual US funding, according to Coptic Solidarity and Fox News Digital - and that money gives Washington leverage it is now being asked to use.

His fiancée Sophia - her surname withheld, an Australian-Egyptian dual citizen - has become the public voice of the campaign to save him. She has appealed to the Netherlands and the United States, including asking the Dutch government to consider trading him for Ahmed Nasser, a man Egypt has pressed to free. She has urged the US to make its roughly $1.5 Billion in annual aid conditional on his release and on better treatment of religious minorities. More than 35,000 people have signed Coptic Solidarity's petition for his release.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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