

Events escalated last year. The situation was charged on the other side among the Islamic groups and the Muslim Brotherhood. You heard me explain the situation to the two parliament councils -- the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council -- and to the advisers. All of you and the people heard the resolutions which I adopted to stop this sedition -- the religious sedition -- which would have harmed this country more than anything in the past, had it been destined to take its course.

The most perilous thing for us to do is to be divided, and the most perilous thing that can happen to us is for some -- Muslims or Copts -- to exploit religious feelings for political ends. This is the most dangerous thing that could happen to this country, and we should know, for we have experienced this. We experienced it in the forties when the Muslim Brotherhood established their secret organization and conducted their dealings with the An-Nuqrashi government, then, later on, with Ibrahim 'Abd al-Hadi. Our second experience with this came after the 23 July Revolution -- in 1953 and 1954. Then in 1965 as well. You also heard me saying this in the sixties as well when I spoke with my friend, the late Pope (Kirillos). In the sixties, when he was in Ethiopia, he felt that something was brewing. He was asked to participate in this something. So, he terminated his trip and returned to Egypt, because the plot was intended to take place here in Egypt. He returned to Egypt and, as I told you, no one knows about this. The man, God have mercy on his soul, was a dear friend. He did not discuss this with anybody but went to 'Abd an-Nasir's house and requested that [new] churches be built. 'Abd an-Nasir gave his permission for the construction of 50 churches. The sedition being planned at that time in Ethiopia was not discussed at all. Therefore, it must be said that we lived this kind of struggle before -- whether this refers to the Muslims or the Copts. The aim was, without the shadow of a doubt, to strike against the people of Egypt. Because of this, when you adopted the slogan of national unity, democracy and discipline, this was the issue of the hour indeed: national unity. Our God, praise his name, tell us in the Koran to say: "We believe in God, and in what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in (the books) given to Moses, Jesus and the prophets, from their Lord; we make no distinction between one another among them, and to God do we bow our will (in Islam)."

This is the order of our God to us: He orders us to believe in God when he says: "We believe in God, and in what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in (the books) given to Moses, Jesus and the prophets, from their lord; we make no distinction between one another among them, and to God do we bow our will (in Islam)." [repeated verse as heard] This is our Islamic creed. So how can some try to portray or imagine a sedition based on religious grounds? This is divine to us. This perversity! This attempt to exploit religious sensitivities to attain political goals! This is what I said and announced and made the latest referendum about.

Our people have said their word. Some 11 million said "yes," and only 60,000 said "no." This is indeed our people. Perhaps this result will touch senseless hearts and reach blind eyes, and thus they will be deterred. "The blind and the seeing are not alike; nor are the depths of darkness and the light, nor are (chilly) shade and the (genial) heat of the sun; nor are alike those that are living and those that are dead. God can make any that he wills to hear; but thou canst not make those to hear who are (buried) in graves." [Koranic verse] [applause, cheers and shouts of "God is greater."]

They wanted it to be an overpowering sedition. They wanted to use it to strike at the Egyptian people's unity. However, and as they have been throughout history and for thousands of years, the Egyptian people will remain as they were -- one people and one will, absorbing all the invaders and colonialists but never assimilating with anybody.