

ISIS Claims Responsibility for Coptic Palm Sunday Church Blasts

This is from the [New York Times](#):



CAIRO – Two explosions at Coptic churches in [Egypt](#) on Palm Sunday left at least 31 people dead and injured dozens of others as a day of worship in the besieged Christian community turned to destruction and carnage.

The first blast ripped through [St. George's Church](#) in northern Egypt in the Nile Delta city of Tanta, 50 miles north of Cairo, during a Mass about 9:30 a.m., according to an official from the Health Ministry.

The deputy minister of health put the preliminary death toll at 25.

Hours later, a suicide bomber set off an explosion outside the

main Coptic church in Alexandria, St. Mark's Cathedral, killing at least six – including three police officers – and injuring 21 others, the Health Ministry said.

The bombings happened weeks before Pope Francis was to visit Egypt, and a week before Easter. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the explosions followed a number of attacks by Islamic State militants targeting Egypt's minority Christians.

The second attack took place while worshipers at St. Mark's were leaving at the end of Palm Sunday Mass. The service had been led by the Coptic pope, Tawadros II. The pope had already left when the explosion happened.

Photos from St. George's [circulating on social media](#) showed scenes of blood and devastation inside. Initial reports said that the explosion occurred in the pews near the front of the church, and that many of the dead were children....