

**ITEM B.103  
FOR ACTION**

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>			
	A. Finance		E. Corporate Property, Legal, Finance
X	B. Justice		F. PC(USA), A Corporation
	C. Leadership		G. Audit
	D. Worshipping Communities		H. Executive Committee
			J. Board Nominating & Governance Subcommittee
			P. Plenary

**Subject: Comment to the 221<sup>st</sup> GA (2014) - Overture 040 “On Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in Egypt and Other Parts of the World—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh”**

**Recommendation:**

**That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve the following comment on Overture 040 “On Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in Egypt and Other Parts of the World—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh.”**

**Comment:**

The suffering of the church in Egypt and other parts of the world is not only “due to sectarian violence and persecution.” There are many factors involved, including geopolitical and economic factors. The General Assembly should consider all the factors that result in and contribute to sectarian violence. For example, our mission partners in the Middle East have clearly pointed out that U.S. government policies (and Western attempts to dominate in general) affect them adversely by fueling sectarian tension. Therefore, the role of the US government (often seeking national or special interests rather than principles the US purports to support) should be addressed by the overture.

The overture names only the church in Egypt, and fails to mention the suffering of other Christian populations in the region. For example, following the 2003 American-led invasion of Iraq, more than half of the country’s Christian population became refugees. Likewise, the plight of Syrian Christians, Palestinian Christians, and others in the Middle East should not be neglected. Additionally, while the overture mentions “Other Parts of the World,” it does not consider countries outside of the Middle East, such as North Korea, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Sudan, where Christians suffer from maltreatment no less than in the Middle East.

Use of the word “persecution” mischaracterizes the nature of the maltreatment of Christians in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East, and in many cases would be an unhelpful exaggeration. At the same time, the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly maintain ecumenical and interfaith relationships and humanitarian programs that can enable efforts such as those requested by the presbyteries submitting this overture.