

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Egypt: Hold army accountable for abuses**

President Mohamed Morsi should release the findings of an official investigation he instigated into abuses against protesters without delay and ensure the armed forces are not above the law and are held accountable for abuses, Amnesty International said today.

Amnesty International is alarmed that statements by the authorities in response to part of the report being leaked effectively signal that impunity will continue for human rights violations by the army.

The organization has also expressed its dismay over apparent claims by Egypt's Public Prosecutor that the full report contained no evidence of army abuse – despite the fact that leaked excerpts of the report clearly detail human rights violations by Egypt's military.

Amnesty International and other groups have documented abuses by the Egyptian army since the beginning of the “25 January Revolution”.

President Morsi appointed a fact-finding committee in July 2012 and charged it with investigating abuses against protesters committed between the start of the uprising on 25 January 2011 and the end of military rule on 30 June 2012.

Amnesty International delegates met with members of the Committee on a number of occasions, who described to the organization its working methods to investigate abuses, including the first-hand testimonies they had gathered.

While the authorities have yet to make the report's findings and recommendations public, newspapers and news agencies have published leaked excerpts on a number of occasions.

Last week, the *Guardian* newspaper published parts of the report, which implicated the Egyptian army in abuses in the early days of the “25 January Revolution”.

The report extracts stated the army had taken part in killings and enforced disappearances, as well as torture and other ill-treatment.

However, on Monday Public Prosecutor Talaat Abdallah stated that the report's information on army abuses “could not be interpreted as evidence”. He added that any such allegations were for the military judiciary to investigate. The Prosecutor's statement mirrors similar statements by President Morsi, who last week stated he rejected any “insults” against the army's reputation.

Such statements by the authorities effectively signal that impunity will continue for human rights violations by the army.

Under Egyptian law, the military judiciary is able to investigate abuses by army personnel. However, past investigations have failed to hold army officials to account for human rights violations – particularly for abuses committed while the army was in power.

While Egypt was under army rule, Amnesty International documented [set-backs for human rights across the board](#). In a series of bloody crackdowns on demonstrations, the [army and security](#)

[forces](#) killed over 120 protesters and subjected others to torture and other ill-treatment. However, investigations by the military prosecution, including into the Maspero killings in October 2011, led to whitewashes. To date, only three low-ranking soldiers have been convicted of abuses against protesters.

The authorities' delay in publishing the Fact-finding Committee's report is also delaying the truth to the families of those killed in the "25 January Revolution". During the crackdown on the 2011 uprising, the security forces killed more than 840 people and injured at least 6,600 others. Amnesty International fact-finding teams in Egypt during the uprising uncovered human rights violations committed by both the security forces and the army.

A [report](#) published by the organization in May 2011 found that the security forces and the army had used excessive and unnecessary force against protesters during the uprising, as well as carrying out other human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and torture and other ill-treatment. It also documented the unlawful killings of detainees in a number of prisons.

A [follow-up report](#) published by Amnesty International in January 2013 documented continuing impunity for human rights violations committed during the uprising. Courts have routinely acquitted senior and other security officials for their role in suppressing the uprising.

In some cases, acquittals were based on the lack of evidence or because the courts found the defendants were exercising their right to self-defence, despite well-documented evidence that police used excessive and lethal force when not strictly necessary.

In January 2013, the Court of Cassation also overturned the conviction of former President Hosni Mubarak for his role in protester deaths during the uprising. He is currently being re-tried, along with the former Interior Minister and several other security officials. However, it remains unclear whether the re-trial will consider new evidence uncovered by the Fact-finding Commission or other investigations. The trial has also been thrown into disarray following the recusal of the judge hearing the case.

Impunity for the abuses of the uprising has continued despite promises by the Public Prosecutor to conduct fresh investigations and retrials for those acquitted of killing protestors if new evidence emerged.

The establishment of the Fact-finding Committee was a positive step by President Morsi to address the legacy of the "25 January Revolution." However, by holding back its findings and recommendations the authorities are effectively delaying truth and justice to the hundreds of families still waiting for answers about what happened to their loved ones. Amnesty International is urging the authorities to make the report public without delay.

#### **Read more**

- [Egypt rises: Killings, detentions and torture in the '25 January Revolution'](#), January 2012.
- [Broken promises: Egypt's military rulers erode human rights](#), November 2011.
- [Brutality unpunished and unchecked: Egypt's military kill and torture protesters with impunity](#), October 2012.
- [Agents of repression: Egypt's police and the case for reform](#), October 2012.
- [Rampant impunity: Still no justice for protesters killed in the '25 January Revolution'](#), January 2013.

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