



Egypt

27 January 2011

Suspension of telephone communication imposed on several human rights groups - EGY 001 / 0111 / OBS 009

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in Egypt.

Brief description of the situation:

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about the suspension of telephone communication imposed on several human rights groups in Egypt.

According to the information received, on January 26, 2011, several mobile telephone lines of Egyptian human rights groups and their members, who provide legal assistance to victims of violence and arbitrary arrest, including the hotline of the Nadim Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, the Hisham Mubarak Law Center and the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), were closed down upon the order of the authorities.

These measures intervene in the context of the current crackdown against the wide movement of social protest in Egypt, which started on January 25 and led to the arrest of 1,000 people throughout the country and the reported death of six persons as well as allegations of acts of ill-treatment and torture of people seen as organisers, supports or participants in this movement.

The Observatory is also concerned about the blocking of social networks Facebook, Twitter and Bambuser as well as several Egyptian media websites, including Original Dustur and Al-Badeel, which are used by activists, journalists and bloggers, including human rights defenders, to exchange information and provide information on the demonstrations.

The Observatory is deeply concerned by these measures which aim at preventing human rights defenders from carrying out their work, providing assistance and support to victims of human rights violations and clearly impede on their right to freedom of expression. The Observatory therefore calls upon the Egyptian authorities to refrain from ordering to non-State actors to infringe upon the rights of human rights defenders and guarantee that they can carry out their legitimate work. The authorities should also order an immediate, thorough, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned facts, the result of which must be made public, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a civil competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law.

Actions requested:

Please write to the authorities of Egypt asking them to:

- i. Guarantee the freedom of expression of Egyptian human defenders by ensuring that their telephone lines are restored and refrain from ordering to non-State actors to infringe the rights of human rights defenders.
- ii. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of all human rights defenders;
- iii. Order an immediate, thorough, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned facts, the result of which must be made public, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a civil competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law;
- iv. Put an end to all acts of harassment against all human rights defenders in Egypt;
- v. Comply with all the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, , adopted on December 9, 1998 by the United Nations General Assembly, in particular with:
 - its Article 1, which provides that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels";
 - its Article 6 (a) and (b), which provides that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: To know, seek, obtain, receive and hold information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including having access to information as to how those rights and freedoms are given effect in domestic legislative, judicial or administrative systems; and a provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms";
- vi. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Egypt.

Addresses

- President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak, Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt, E-mail: webmaster@presidency.gov.eg, Fax: +202 2390 1998
- Prime Minister Mr. Ahmed Mahmoud Mohamed Nazif, Magles El Shaab Street, Kasr El Aini Street, Cairo, Egypt. Fax: + 202 2735 6449 / 27958016. Email: primemin@idsc.gov.eg
- Minister of the Interior, General Habib Ibrahim Habib El Adly, Ministry of the Interior, El-Sheikh Rihan Street, Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt, E-mail: moi1@idsc.gov.eg, Fax: +202 2579 2031 / 2794 5529
- Minister of Justice, Mr. Mamdoh Mohie E-din Marie, Ministry of Justice, Magles El Saeb Street, Wezaret Al Adl, Cairo, Egypt, E-mail: mojob@idsc.gov.eg, Fax: +202 2795 8103

- Public Prosecutor, Counsellor Maher Abd al-Wahid, Dar al-Qadha al-Ali, Ramses Street, Cairo, Egypt, Fax: +202 2577 4716
- National Council For Human Rights, Fax: + 202 25747497 / 25747670
- Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations in Geneva, 49 avenue Blanc, 1202 Genève, Switzerland, Email: mission.egypt@ties.itu.int, Fax: +41 22 738 44 15
- Embassy of Egypt in Brussels, 19 avenue de l'Uruguay, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, Fax: + 32 2 675.58.88; Email: embassy.egypt@skynet.be

Please also write to the diplomatic missions or embassies of Egypt in your respective country.

<http://www.fidh.org/Suspension-of-telephone-communication-imposed-on>