

URGENT ACTION

BEATEN AND ARRESTED UNDER NEW PROTEST LAW

Egyptian security forces arrested and beat dozens of protesters on 26 November in the capital, Cairo. At least 24 are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of assembly and expression. The arrests came two days after Egypt's President approved a repressive new protest law.

The security forces broke up a peaceful protest by activists including the group No To Military Trials, outside the Shura Council, at around 4.30pm on 26 November, using water cannon, teargas and batons. The protesters had been calling on members of the Constituent Assembly inside the Shura Council not to include provisions in the Constitution being drafted that allow civilians to be tried in military courts. In a message posted on Facebook that night, the Interior Ministry said the security forces had dispersed an unauthorized demonstration after protesters threw "stones and bricks" at them.

Arrested protesters have said they were warned that water cannon would be used to disperse the protest unless they left within four minutes. Riot police and men in civilian clothes, believed to be members of intelligence bodies and the police, proceeded to arrest protesters and at least two passers-by. One protester told Amnesty International that water cannon and teargas were used as arrests took place. Several of those arrested were punched; some were beaten with batons and sticks, as they were arrested and then inside the garden adjacent to the Shura Council complex. Female protesters, lawyers and journalists were released without charge, while 24 men continue to be detained pending investigations.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to release the detainees immediately and unconditionally as they are held solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of assembly and expression;
- Pending their release, urging them to give the detainees access to their legal representatives, families and any medical assistance they may require; and
- Calling on them to conduct independent and impartial investigations into reports that detainees were beaten and sexually harassed upon arrest and while in custody, and to ensure that all detainees are protected from any further torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 JANUARY 2014 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Hesham Mohamed Zaki Barakat
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Supreme Court House, 1 "26 July" Road
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 577 4716
+202 2 575 7165

(switched off after office hours, GMT+2)

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

Interim President

Adly Mahmoud Mansour
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 391 1441

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign
Affairs for Human Rights
Mahy Hassan Abdel Latif
Human Rights and International
Humanitarian and Social Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 2 574 9713

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The security forces released several women protesters, journalists and lawyers without charge hours later. Activists told Amnesty International that the security forces had left the arrested women on the desert road outside Cairo at about 1am, leaving them for their friends and colleagues to find and collect. Female protesters told Amnesty International that security forces in civilian clothes from the First New Cairo Police Station forcibly dragged them on the ground into police vehicles, beat and punched them, and pulled their hair. Some women reported sexual harassment. They plan to lodge a complaint with the Public Prosecution.

Prosecutors from Qasr El-Nil, central Cairo, interrogated the arrested protesters at the First New Cairo Police Station, subsequently ordering the detention of 24 male protesters for four days, pending criminal investigations. Lawyers told Amnesty International that the accused are facing charges of participating in a public gathering without prior authorization, resisting officials on duty, thuggery, destruction of property, and delaying traffic. Two of the detainees are apparently also facing charges of possessing a knife without a license and stealing a police radio. According to lawyers, several protesters complained of beatings. The detainees are believed to have been transferred from the First New Cairo Police Station to the Tora Prison on 27 November without any prior notification to their lawyers or families.

Many of those arrested have a long history of activism and participated in a number of opposition protests since the "25 January Revolution". For instance, Mohamed Hossam El Din, known as Kalousha, was injured on 5 December 2012 during protests in front of the Presidential Palace. On 27 November, the Public Prosecution also ordered the arrests of well-known political activists Alaa Abd El Fattah and Ahmed Maher on accusations of calling for and participating in the unauthorized protest.

A new protest law signed by President Adly Mansour on 24 November gives the Interior Ministry wide discretionary powers over protests. It requires protest organizers to submit complete plans for any gatherings of more than 10 people to the Interior Ministry at least three days in advance. The law also gives the Interior Ministry the authority to cancel a demonstration or change its route; in effect meaning that demonstrations can take place only with the Ministry's prior authorization. The law also gives the security forces a legal framework for the use of excessive force against any protesters deemed to have committed a "crime punishable by law". Protesters convicted of breaking the law face up to five years in prison and fines of 100,000 Egyptian pounds (USD\$14, 513).

Following the arrests, Egypt's Prime Minister announced a committee would "review" the law, though it is unclear what powers it will have to amend the legislation.

Names: 1. Ahmed Hossam El Din Mohamed; 2. Abdul Rahman; 3. Jamal Abdullah Zaki; 4. Yahya Mahmoud Abdul Shafi; 5. Mdug Jamal al-Din Hassan; 6. Mahmoud Yahya Abdal Shafi; 7. Peter Jalal Yousef; 8. Mohamed Hossam El Din Mahmoud; 9. Wael Mahmoud Mohammed; 10. Hossam Ahmed Shawki; 11. Mohammed Hassan Ibrahim; 12. Mustafa Yousri Mustafa; 13. Baz Mohammad Rifai; 14. Ahmed Mohamed Nabil Hassan; 15. Tariq Abdul Rahman; 16. Mohammed Salah al-Din al-Hilali; 17. Mohammed Abdul Rahman; 18. Mahmoud Abdul Hameed; 19. Abdul Rahman Atef Bobo; 20. Hani Mahmoud Jamal; 21. Mohammad Sami Mokhtar; 22. Ahmed Abdulrahman Mohammed; 23. Mahmoud Mohammed Abdulaziz; 24. Muhammad Abdul Hakim

Gender m/f: m