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SOS-Torture Network
The Observatory
for the Protection
of Human Rights Defenders



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
بكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

EGYPT: Human rights defenders under siege

Urgent call to stop repression and to guarantee for their protection

Paris-Geneva-Copenhagen, February 3, 2011. While acts of intimidation and attacks against protesters are on the increase, 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, and the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), deplore acts of intimidation and fear for the safety of human rights defenders.

Today, February 3, 2011, in the early afternoon, several lawyers and members of NGOs, including human rights NGOs, who had gathered at the offices of the Hisham Mubarak Law Center were arrested by the military police and driven to an unknown location. The Hisham Mubarak Law Center was also surrounded by supporters of the current administration bearing weapons who threatened people gathered inside the Center's premises. In addition, some thugs entered the Nadim Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, which provide legal assistance to victims of torture and threatened the personnel of the organisation.

The offices of the Hisham Mubarak Law Center and the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights were searched by the military police and their equipment was confiscated. The mobile phones of several staff were also confiscated.

According to the latest information, approximately 29 people working for Hisham Mubarak Law Center and the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International would have been arrested, including Mr. **Ahmed Seif**, Ms. **Nada Sadek**, Mr. **Mohamed El Taher**, Ms. **Mona El Masry**, Mr. **Khaled Ali** and four others.

These acts of intimidation and harassment are due to the support provided by several lawyers and human rights organisations, including the provision of food and medical equipment, to demonstrators who have gathered on Tahrir Square.

Human rights NGOs have been very vocal denouncing human rights abuses committed by the current administration and are particularly vulnerable and threatened in the current climate of repression operated by police forces and supporters of the current administration which took over Cairo on February 3, 2011. According to our information, several journalists have also been arrested.

Considering the raising tension and the current acts of violence, the Observatory and EMHRN are deeply concerned for the security of members of civil society, particularly journalists and members of human rights NGOs. Our organisations urge the authorities to release all human rights defenders, refrain from any attack, arrest or act of intimidation against them and guarantee their security.

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 competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law.

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