



The Observatory
for the Protection
of Human Rights Defenders



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

PRESS RELEASE – THE OBSERVATORY

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 fears 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 Hicham Mubarak Law Center were arrested by the military police and driven to an unknown location. They were also soon surrounded by supporters of the current administration bearing weapons and were seriously threatened. 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. Several the mobile phones of their staff were also confiscated and switched off.

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 to demonstrators who have gathered on Tahrir Square, including the provision of food and medical equipment.

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 the EMHRN are deeply concerned for the security of members of civil society, particularly journalists and members of human rights NGOs and urges the authorities to refrain from any attack, arrest or act of intimidation against them and immediately 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 civil competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law.

For further information, please contact:

- FIDH: Karine Appy / Arthur Manet: + 33 1 43 55 25 18
- OMCT: Seynabou Benga : + 41 22 809 49 39

EMHRN: Marc Schade-Poulsen: +45 5120 5515