

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: MDE 12/039/2005 (Public)
News Service No: 338
9 December 2005

Egypt: Police killings of voters requires urgent, independent investigation

Amnesty International is calling on the Egyptian government to launch an urgent, independent investigation into police shootings outside polling stations on 7 December which left at least eight people dead and tens more injured. The organization said the investigation should focus on the circumstances in which police used lethal fire and ensure that any officers or other officials responsible for using or ordering excessive force should be brought to justice.

The killings occurred when police fired into crowds of people who wished to gain access to polling stations in al-Daqahlia, al-Sharqia and other areas in order to cast their votes in run-offs to the third and last phase of Egypt's parliamentary elections. The polling stations concerned had been closed or cordoned off by the police. As well as live fire, police used tear gas and rubber bullets in their efforts to disperse the crowds. Those killed were named as Sa'eed al-Deghidi, Sha'aban Abu Rabaa' and 'Atif Ahmed from Damietta, Tamir al-Qamash and Mohammed al-Bahrawy from al-Daqahlia and Mostafa 'Abd al-Salam, Mohammed 'Aliwa and Mohammed Gazzar from al-Sharqia. Those injured included 15-year-old 'Izzat Ra'fat Seddiq from al-Duqahlia, who was one of a number of people who received gunshot injuries or were wounded by being struck by tear gas bombs.

Police also arrested scores of relatives, delegates and supporters of opposition candidates or prevented them from entering polling stations, and closed more than one hundred polling stations in areas known to be opposition strongholds. For example, police reportedly prevented any voting at polling stations at Kum al-Nur village, al-Daqahlia, where government opponent Shafiq al-Deeb was standing as an independent candidate.