



## **Egypt: Statement at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council (27 May – 14 June 2013)**

AI Index: MDE 12/028/2013  
5 June 2013

Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

General debate

Mr. President,

Amnesty International supports the statement given by Human Rights Watch on Guantanamo Bay and Bagram.

Mr. President,

In this statement we call for urgent action by the Human Rights Council to help reverse Egypt's return to the repression of the Hosni Mubarak era.

Egyptian authorities have yet to meet demands for justice and human rights reform. They have allowed human rights violations to continue with impunity. They have taken no steps to reform the security forces, or hold them accountable for violations, including excessive force against protesters, torture and other ill-treatment. Since January, over 60 people have been killed in protests and political violence.

Women protesters acted with men in January 2011, but today women face continuing discrimination in law and practice, and a new wave of sexual violence in the streets.

Minorities, including Coptic Christians, face discrimination and receive inadequate protection against violence.

Instead of protecting human rights, the authorities restrict them. They are enacting new laws to restrict freedoms of association and assembly and have cracked down on freedom of expression. Government critics and opposition activists are being silenced by trumped-up or politically-motivated criminal charges, excessive use of preventive detention, and interrogation for "insulting the President or public officials". Egyptian courts continue to pass imprisonment sentences against those convicted of "defamation of religion", in a clear violation to freedom of expression and belief. We are also concerned over how a proposed law on judges will impact on the independence of the judiciary.

We urge Egypt to scrap its draft NGO law, which will be a death blow for independent civil society. The law would empower the authorities to obstruct NGO registration, interfere with their activities,

and control their sources of funding. It would stifle the human rights organizations whose work is essential to expose violations and support victims.

We urge Egypt to break with the legacy of the Mubarak era of ignoring and obstructing UN human rights mechanisms. Nine Special Procedures are waiting to visit Egypt – the request of the Special Rapporteur on torture was made 17 years ago.<sup>1</sup> We urge Egypt to facilitate Special Procedure visits immediately.

Egypt's human rights organizations look to the Human Rights Council for a clear sign that they will not be forsaken. We urge this Council, its members and observers to actively support Egypt's independent civil society.

Thank you Mr. President.

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<sup>1</sup> They are: (R in 1999, reminder in 2000) SR on independence of judges and lawyers; R in 2003, reminder in 08, 10, and 12) SR on human rights defenders; R in 2005, reminder in April 2008 SR on freedom of religion; R in 1996, 2007 SR torture; R in 2008 WG on arbitrary detention; R in 2008 SR on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; R for follow-up visit in 2011 and reminder in 2012 SR on human rights and counter-terrorism; R in 30 June 2011, reminder on 08.11.12 WG on enforced or involuntary disappearances; R in 6 September 2011 SR on freedom of association and assembly. See:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/countryvisitsa-e.aspx>