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## **Egypt: Political leaders fail on human rights**

Amnesty International has accused Egyptian political leaders of acting irresponsibly after they failed to initiate any human rights reforms during key speeches by President Hosni Mubarak and Vice President Omar Suleiman on Thursday.

"The President and Vice President utterly failed to respond to the demands of the protesters. It is irresponsible that neither of the two statements gave a commitment whatsoever to immediate human rights reform," said Salil Shetty, Amnesty International's Secretary General.

"One human rights measure announced by the President was the cancellation of Article 179 of the constitution, a measure we have long called for, as it entrenches violations relating to arrests, detentions and trials. But he failed to give any timeline for when that would happen.

"The language used by Vice President Suleiman to try to discourage protesters from making their voices heard is also unacceptable. It is ironic that a government which has fired on and allowed thugs to attack peaceful protesters is attempting to persuade protesters to go home by warning of "chaos" and "destruction".

"Those now in power should view the activism on the streets of Cairo and other cities not as a threat, but as an opportunity to consign the systematic abuses of the past to history. Human rights reform must begin now."