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Egypt: Human rights reform essential as Hosni Mubarak steps aside

In response to dramatic developments in Egypt, Salil Shetty, Amnesty International's Secretary General, said:

"I congratulate the protesters for their extraordinary courage and commitment to achieve fundamental change".

"Persistent attempts to put down peaceful protests have not only failed but redoubled the determination of those demanding change.

"The way Egyptians have taken to the streets in unprecedented numbers to demand dignity, human rights and social justice has been an inspiration to oppressed peoples everywhere.

"The departure of one man is not the end. The repressive system that Egyptians have suffered under for three decades has not gone away and the State of Emergency remains in place.

" Those in power must grasp this opportunity to consign the systematic abuses of the past to history. Human rights reform must begin now."