

AI Index: PRE 01/103/2011  
12 February 2011

## **Thousands rally in solidarity with Egyptian protesters**

Thousands of people rallied in cities across the world today to demand respect for human rights in the Middle East and North Africa as part of a global day of action organized by Amnesty International.

Activists, trade unionists, students and Amnesty International supporters created a sea of red, black and white - the colours of the Egyptian flag - in countries from Switzerland to South Korea in a day of "solidarity and defiance".

"Across the Middle East and North Africa, and around the world, ordinary people who held little hope for a better future just two months ago are realising now that change truly is possible," said Salil Shetty, Amnesty International's Secretary General, who led events in London's Trafalgar Square.

"Today, as we raise our voices and our placards and our fists, we have joined them in solidarity and defiance."

Rallies were held in cities across Australia, Benin, Canada, Germany, France, Mali, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, UK, the USA and many other countries.

The event in London was linked to Egypt's Tahrir Square, the centre of mass protests calling for human rights and political reform.

The rallies were organised by Amnesty International and supported by the International Trade Unions Congress, Human Rights Watch, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network and the Arab Program for Human Rights Activists among others.

"We stand in defiance against all those who try to suppress this growing movement of people standing up for their rights, facing down injustice and offering hope for a better future," said Salil Shetty.

Mass anti-government demonstrations have flared across several countries in the Middle East and North Africa in recent weeks, with many protesters killed, injured or detained. Amnesty International is urging all state authorities in the region to respect human rights.