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Two dead as Egyptian army forces protesters out of Tahrir Square

Amnesty International today condemned the excessive use of force used by the Egyptian army when at least two protesters were reportedly killed when soldiers attempted to disperse those gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square.

Protesters told Amnesty International the army used sticks, electric batons, shot in the air and drove armored vehicles into the protest causing a number of injuries.

Some 15 people were also reportedly detained, as well as six army officers who joined the protest.

"The Egyptian authorities have once again failed to respect the right to peaceful protest by using the same tactics of repression as those of the former government," said Amnesty International.

"All those arrested for merely exercising their right to protest peacefully must be released immediately and an independent investigation begun into these disturbing events."

Thousands of protesters had gathered in Tahrir Square following Friday prayers to demand the trial of former president Hosni Mubarak and other officials suspected of corruption and human rights violations. Witnesses told Amnesty International that about a thousand protesters remained in the square at about 2:30 am when army soldiers, military police and Egypt's Central Security Forces began to disperse them by force with no prior warning.

Rubber bullets and tear gas were also used by the security forces, witnesses say.

Protesters are believed to be held in at the S-28 Egyptian military camp. The army officers' whereabouts remain unknown.

"The image the Egyptian army is trying to project greatly contradicts with reports of it torturing and otherwise ill-treating those it detains, including carrying out 'virginity tests' on women detainees," said Amnesty International.

"They must ensure that no such treatment is no longer meted out to anyone detained by them."