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Egypt: Victims of protest violence deserve justice

The Egyptian authorities must provide justice to all of the victims of violent repression that took place during mass anti-government protests earlier this year, Amnesty International said in a comprehensive report into abuses that led to at least 840 deaths.

The release of [*Egypt rises: killings, detentions and torture in the '25 January Revolution'*](#) comes two days before former Interior Minister Habib El Adly goes on trial on charges arising from the killings of protesters.

The organization said that while the Egyptian authorities have begun holding accountable some of those accused of responsibility for serious human rights violations, many victims of security forces' brutality are at risk of being excluded from efforts to deal with the legacy of the violence.

"The trial of the senior figures suspected of being responsible for the outrageous use of excessive force against peaceful protesters is an essential first step," said Amnesty International. "But the authorities' response to victims must go much further than this."

"Families of those who were killed, as well as all those who were seriously injured or subjected to arbitrary detention or torture, including at the hands of the military, should expect that the authorities will prioritize their needs."

"That means giving them the truth about what happened, providing them with appropriate reparation, and making sure that all those responsible are brought to justice."

Amnesty International's report provides damning evidence of excessive force by security forces to try to disperse and suppress protests against former President Hosni Mubarak, showing flagrant disregard for life. Many protesters died as a result of shots to the upper body, including the head or chest, pointing to deliberate targeting of protesters posing no threat, or at the very least to reckless use of firearms.

Over 6,000 people were also injured in protests, some of them permanently. The co-ordinator of the field hospital in Tahrir Square told Amnesty International delegates he dealt with around 300 cases of shotgun wounds to the eyes, leading to loss of vision.

On 16 February, former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik stated that relatives of those killed during protests would be awarded a monthly pension of 1,500 Egyptian pounds (US\$250) or a one-off payment of 50,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$8,400) if the victim had no dependants.

But Amnesty International said more must be done for victims of serious injury, including payment of their medical costs. Government officials have said they are looking at how to help injured protesters, but to Amnesty International's knowledge no action has yet been taken.

The organization also said that the level of financial compensation to victims should take account of the

circumstances of each case, including the gravity of the violation and the harm suffered.

The Egyptian government's fact-finding commission into the protests made a summary of its report public on 14 April, holding the former Minister of Interior responsible for the killings of protesters.

Whilst Amnesty International welcomed the Commission's overall findings as well as its co-operation with the Public Prosecutor, it said the Commission's remit was too limited.

The Commission did not publish a full list of those killed during the demonstrations, including the circumstances of their deaths, which Amnesty International said was essential for the families of victims and society at large to be able to deal with the trauma of what had happened.

Nor did the Commission extensively investigate individual cases of arbitrary detention, torture or other ill-treatment, including by the military.

Amnesty International documented numerous cases of torture in detention during the protests, including beatings with sticks or whips, electric shocks, including to sensitive parts of the body, the contortion of the body in stress positions for long periods, verbal abuse and threats of rape.

Many victims told Amnesty International they were tortured by soldiers. Thirty six-year-old "Fouad" was arrested on 29 January and transferred to the Military Prison in Heikstep:

"As we entered our block we had to lie face down in the court yard and were beaten ... by soldiers. They beat us again with cables and canes and used electric prods."

Amnesty International said that victims of torture must receive adequate reparation. The organization also called on the authorities to make a clear commitment to eradicate torture.

Many detained in connection with the unrest were tried by military courts, despite being civilians.

Amnesty International said that trials of civilians before military courts violate fundamental requirements of due process and fair trials, and that their continued use raises questions about the Egyptian military's commitment to establish the rule of law in Egypt.

The organization also called for further investigations into the circumstances of the deaths of at least 189 prisoners during prison unrest.

"Many hundreds of people who suffered grievous abuses during this period are still waiting to receive justice for what happened to them," said Amnesty International.

"That includes families of prisoners unlawfully killed, those who were seriously injured during protests, detainees subjected to torture, and victims of excessive force by security forces in areas not investigated by the government's Commission."

"The Egyptian authorities have much to do to rebuild trust in public institutions, which have been seen as tools of repression and obstacles to justice. They must start by overhauling laws that allowed violations to happen and take steps to guarantee that such abuses will not be repeated."

Amnesty International has passed its findings to the Public Prosecutor to support investigations into those responsible for human rights violations.

- [Read the full report](#)
- [Read the full list of recommendations in the report](#)

Notes to editors

- Amnesty International spokespeople on this report are available in Cairo (in English, French and Arabic) and London.
- This report is largely based on Amnesty International's fact-finding visit to Egypt between 30 January and 3 March 2011, when it visited Greater Cairo, Alexandria, Beni Suef Governorate, Suez, Port Said and El Mahalla.
- Amnesty International can provide on request contact details for some of the individuals featured in the report. [Read their stories.](#)