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## **Egypt: Security forces continue to get away with murder two years on from start of uprising**

Egypt must ensure the deaths of hundreds of protesters since early 2011 are independently and effectively investigated, if the country is to move away from the abuses that defined the Mubarak-era, said Amnesty International in a briefing published to coincide with the second anniversary of the start of the “25 January Revolution”.

The briefing, [\*Rampant impunity: Still no justice for protesters killed in the “25 January Revolution”\*](#), details shortcomings in investigations and prosecutions of those responsible for the deaths of some 840 individuals during the demonstrations that ended over 30 years of Hosni Mubarak’s repressive rule and led to the first elected civilian President in Egypt. At least 6,600 people also sustained injuries during the protests, which were brutally suppressed by the security forces.

At least 12 people have died during protest violence since President Mohamed Morsi took office.

According to information gathered by Amnesty International in Egypt, during the uprising security forces used tear gas, water cannon, shotguns, rubber bullets and live ammunition against protesters, in many cases when they were posing no threat to them.

No senior official or security officer has been convicted or justly punished for killing or injuring protesters.

“President Morsi has repeatedly paid tribute to those who died during the ‘25 January Revolution’, yet little effective action has been taken to ensure those responsible face justice. In reality two years after the uprising the security forces appear to be getting away with murder” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme.

“By not ensuring the perpetrators are punished, President Morsi is doing little to distance himself from decade of abuses”.

Courts in Egypt continue to acquit senior and other security officials. In some cases, acquittals were based on the lack of evidence or because the courts found the defendants were exercising their right to self-defence, despite well-documented evidence that police used excessive and lethal force when not strictly necessary.

Furthermore, the guilty verdict against President Hosni Mubarak and his Minister of Interior, Habib El Adly, for complicity in killing protesters was overturned by the Court of Cassation on 13 January; opening the door for their retrial.

According to relatives and lawyers interviewed by Amnesty International, many acquittals and the failure of some cases to even reach court is due to shortcomings in the evidence-gathering process -- including

video material; medical and forensic reports; and ballistic evidence which in many cases were not examined or even presented to the courts.

Other essential information like records of telephone communications between security officials, registries of deployed security forces and records of weapons and munitions provided to security forces was not obtained from the Ministry of Interior.

Complaints also included the fact that police officers were involved in the investigations, prompting fears that they might tamper with evidence or withhold information in order to absolve their colleagues and institutions from liability.

Shortly after assuming power in June 2012, President Morsi established a fact-finding committee to look into the killing and wounding of protesters which took place before he took office. He also appointed a new Public Prosecutor who promised to conduct fresh investigations and retrials for those acquitted of killing protestors if new evidence emerges.

Relatives of those killed told Amnesty International they had been asked to present new evidence and that several witnesses had faced intimidation.

“The creation of the Fact-Finding Committee was a good initial step forward but for it to be a truly positive development, the report needs to be made public and gaps and shortcoming in investigations must be addressed. Victims and society as a whole have the right to full truth,” said Hassiba Hadj Saharaoui.

Ten people died in clashes between supporters and opponents of President Morsi on the night of 5-6 December 2012, while security forces failed to intervene and protect protesters from violence and assault.

“President Morsi needs to turn his promises into reality and demonstrate strong political will to deliver justice for human rights abuses committed against protesters, ensuring that all those responsible up and down the chain of command and regardless of rank or political affiliation are held accountable. Only then will he be able to break with the legacy of past abuses, and avoid further killings of protestors.”