

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  
PRESS RELEASE**

AI Index: PRE 01/127/2011  
09 March 2011

## **Egyptian army condemned over Tahrir Square protest breakup**

Amnesty International has today condemned the Egyptian army's heavy-handed actions to clear Cairo's Tahrir Square of protesters, after soldiers beat demonstrators and made scores of arrests.

"It is absolutely unacceptable that the army should participate in violently breaking up the peaceful protests", said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa. "The Supreme Military Council has the duty to uphold the right to peaceful protest."

"We have spoken to eye-witnesses who have told us that the army allowed thugs to attack protesters with sticks and swords, the same practice that was used under former President Mubarak. It appears that the Armed Forces are simply continuing the same old tactics of repression."

According to witnesses testimonies gathered by Amnesty International, the army entered Tahrir Square on the afternoon of 9 March and violently dispersed a gathering of around 1000 people, beating demonstrators, dismantling tents and breaking up an informal medical clinic. Journalists attempting to record events had their memory cards wiped. Soldiers made arrests and took protesters to the Egyptian Museum near to Tahrir Square.

"One protester who told us he was arrested with over 100 other protesters witnessed people being beaten in detention. All those arrested for peacefully protesting must be released immediately and unconditionally," said Hassiba Hadj-Sahraoui.

### **Background**

In February 2011 [Amnesty International urged the Egyptian military](#) to take action to stop the use of torture and other ill treatment against detainees, amid evidence of the abuse of detainees in their custody.