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## **Egypt: Mubarak verdict fails to deliver full justice**

News that ex-president Hosni Mubarak has been sentenced to life imprisonment for the killing of protesters during the "25 January revolution" last year is a significant step towards combating long-standing impunity in Egypt, Amnesty International said.

Mubarak's then Minister of Interior Habib Adly was also sentenced to life imprisonment on the same charges.

However, the acquittal of all the other defendants, including senior security officials, leaves many still waiting for full justice.

"We have from the start welcomed the trial of Mubarak and others for their role in the killing of protesters which began in January 2011. However, the trial and verdict have today left the families of those killed, as well as those injured in the protests, in the dark about the full truth of what happened to their loved ones and it failed to deliver full justice," said Ann Harrison, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

"The Egyptian authorities must now establish an independent and impartial commission of inquiry to fill the gap that the court left open."

Six senior security officials, including former head of the now-disbanded State Security Investigations service (SSI), were acquitted.

Some 840 protesters were killed and more than 6,000 injured during the uprising that forced Mubarak to step down on 11 February 2011.

Corruption charges against two of Mubarak's sons, Gamal and Alaa, and his business associate Hussein Salem, who was tried in absentia, were dropped.

Upon hearing the verdict, many in the court room started shouting "the people want to clean up the judiciary", unsatisfied that all the other defendants were acquitted.

The prosecution has said in its pleadings that it received too little co-operation from the General Intelligence's national security unit and the Ministry of Interior for it to gather more evidence.

Throughout the various sessions of the trials, many family members were not allowed into the court room and on some occasions they were subjected to police beatings and intimidation. At other times, they clashed with pro-Mubarak supporters.

"We regret that the lack of co-operation by the authorities with the prosecution has led to a missed opportunity to establish the full truth about what happened during the 18-day uprising and afterwards," said Ann Harrison.

“This lack of co-operation no doubt had implications for the verdict, but more importantly undermines the rule of law and prevents the families of the victims and those injured from knowing all the facts as far as they are concerned.”

The verdict had to demonstrate that the rule of law has been strengthened so as to send a strong signal that human rights violations will not be tolerated in the future and that no one is above the law.

At the same time the judgment shows that serious human rights violations in the past can and must be addressed without recourse to the death penalty, contrary to requests by the prosecution.

In the Egyptian legal criminal system, Mubarak and others have a right to appeal before Egypt’s highest court, the Court of Cassation, which will review the application of the law and the procedures but will not re-examine the factual evidence presented. The prosecution is also entitled to file appeals.

Over the 30 years during which Mubarak was in power human rights violations were committed with impunity, especially by the officers of the now dissolved State Security Investigations agency. Many see the acquittal of all the senior security officials as a sign that those responsible for human rights violations can still escape justice.

Over the last year many police officers directly accused of killing protesters during the uprising were acquitted, triggering anger and frustrations amongst relatives of the victims and complaints that the justice system after the 25 January Revolution is continuing to fail them.

Such trials must be an opportunity for the injured and the families of those killed not only to get justice, but also to learn the truth about what happened. They should ensure victims receive full and effective reparation, including rehabilitation, for the violations they have suffered.

“Today’s verdicts must be seized as an opportunity to start urgently needed institutional and legal reforms with a view to ending Egypt’s entrenched culture of impunity for human rights violations,” said Ann Harrison.

“Until such reforms are introduced, security officers and others will continue to see they are still able to escape punishment for the violations and abuses they commit.”