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## **Egypt security forces' failure to stop protest deaths 'suspicious'**

Egyptian police and security forces are failing to protect protesters and bystanders from violence amid the country's political strife, Amnesty International said today, on the brink of the army's threatened intervention to resolve the crisis.

According to evidence gathered by Amnesty International researchers in Egypt, security forces have not been intervening or have been despatched too late to stop violence during the clashes. Violence between opponents and supporters of President Morsi erupted across the country on 28 June.

"The security forces should have been more than ready to prevent and stop the kinds of deadly clashes that we've seen in the past three days," said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Amnesty International.

"It is difficult to imagine that they could not have predicted the violence. This suspicious failure to prevent loss of life is a callous failure of their duty to protect lives and uphold human rights. Our evidence raises questions as to whether the failure to protect all protesters, regardless of their political affiliation, is the result of a deliberate policy by the security apparatus."

Since 30 June, more than 30 people have been killed in the protests and ensuing political violence, which has come amid mass protests by supporters and opponents of President Morsi.

Ahead of the protests, the Interior Ministry, which holds key responsibility for the security forces, made contradictory statements. According to media reports it announced that it would not protect buildings belonging to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood movement, and would only intervene where public buildings or prisons were threatened. While the Ministry announced that it will remain impartial and protect all citizens, it expressed its support of the army ultimatum calling on political parties to resolve the crisis, widely seen as a snub to President Morsi.

Yesterday's violence in several locations in Greater Cairo, which left 18 people dead according to official statistics, continued for hours before the army was deployed.

According to eyewitnesses, intermittent clashes around Cairo University between supporters of the President, holding a protest nearby, and unidentified attackers took place throughout the day. They intensified following the President's speech in the late evening. Evidence points to the use of live ammunition, leading to over 600 injured, including a police officer.

On 3 July, the Minister of Interior removed the head of security of Giza for his inadequate response to the clashes.

"In light of the recent deaths this is too little too late," said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui.

“It’s imperative that the security forces act now act professionally and take seriously their responsibility to ensure the safety of all Egyptians.”