

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Press Release

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### **Pressure on Egyptian political parties to deliver on “25 January” expectations**

Egyptian political parties must deliver 10 key human rights reforms to deliver the new Egypt promised by the “25 January Revolution”, Amnesty International said today.

A month ahead of parliamentary elections, the organization is asking all candidates in Egypt’s elections to sign a “manifesto” to signal that they are serious about meaningful human rights reform.

“The political parties competing in next month’s elections have a big responsibility – the Egyptian people have a right to expect that they will finally see the changes which, almost a year since 25 January, still seem so far away,” said Amnesty International.

“Justice and the end of repression were among the key demands of Egypt’s demonstrators. Political parties now need to set out their programmes to address a legacy of abuse and make concrete human rights pledges”.

“Under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, Egyptians fear that one repressive rule is being replaced with another. They are now looking to political leaders to take decisive action to end the injustice and abuses which have marred Egypt for the last 30 years.”

Since the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces assumed power in February, the end of the state of emergency has been promised, but the Emergency Law has been expanded. And despite the apparent abolition of the State Security Investigations Service, arbitrary detention has gone unabated and thousands of civilians have unfairly been tried by military courts.

Amnesty International also called for an end to the marginalisation of women in Egyptian political life, releasing a new briefing paper on the barriers to women’s participation in the public life of the country.

Only nine of the 454 seats in parliament were held by women after the 2005 elections, with five of the nine appointed by President Mubarak. The number increased in the 2010 elections because a quota system was introduced, although all the seats were eventually won by women from the ruling National Democratic Party, now disbanded.

In *Women Demand Equality in Shaping New Egypt* Amnesty International calls on the Egyptian authorities to take concrete steps to ensure that women are central in shaping the future of the country.

“The optimism of earlier this year, when women played a crucial role in protests against former President Mubarak, has been dampened by the reality that women are still largely being excluded from political participation,” said Amnesty International.

“Now is the moment for the Government and political parties to match their stated commitment to women’s rights with real action to support their aspirations.”

**The 10 pledges in Amnesty International’s *Human Rights Manifesto for Egypt* are:**

## **1. End the state of emergency and reform the security forces**

Repeal the Emergency Law. Fundamentally reform the security forces in line with international law and standards. Their structure and chain of command must be made public, and an oversight body established to independently and impartially investigate reports of abuse.

## **2. End incommunicado detention and combat torture**

Detainees must have access in law and practice to the outside world, regularly and without delay, including to their families, lawyers of their own choosing and independent medical care. Torture and other ill-treatment must not be tolerated, and must be criminalized in line with international law. Reports of torture and other ill-treatment must be investigated. Places of detention must be publicly listed and subject to regular, unannounced, unrestricted and independent inspection.

## **3. Ensure fair trials**

Everyone charged with an offence must have a fair trial by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law. Military trials of civilians and trials before emergency courts must end; those convicted must be retried before civilian courts or released.

## **4. Uphold the rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression**

Laws criminalizing the peaceful exercise of these rights must be repealed or brought in line with international law and standards. These include several articles of the Penal Code, the Law on Associations and Law No. 34 of 2011, which criminalizes demonstrations and strikes.

## **5. Investigate past abuses**

There must be an independent, thorough and impartial inquiry into human rights violations under the rule of President Hosni Mubarak. It must make recommendations to prevent future abuses and to provide truth, justice and reparation to the victims.

## **6. Realize economic, social and cultural rights for all**

People must have access to essential public services, including water, sanitation and health care, regardless of their place of residence or income. Workers' rights, including the right to strike and the right to a fair minimum wage, must be upheld.

## **7. Uphold the rights of people living in slums**

People living in informal settlements must be meaningfully consulted and able to actively participate in decisions affecting their future. They must have legal security of tenure. Forced evictions, which are dangerous, humiliating and illegal under international law, must end. There must be a comprehensive plan to address inadequate housing conditions that threaten lives and health.

## **8. End discrimination**

Legal provisions discriminating against individuals on the basis of race, colour, religion, ethnicity, birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, or other status, must be brought in line with international law and standards or abolished. This includes Presidential Decree 291/2005 on Christian places of worship. Sectarian attacks must be prevented and fully investigated and perpetrators brought to trial.

## **9. Protect women's rights**

Women must be full partners in the process of political and human rights reform. Women and men must be accorded equal rights in law to marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance. Women must have legal protection from domestic violence, including marital rape, and sexual harassment. Penal Code articles 260-263 must be amended to allow abortion for women and girl survivors of rape and incest – or when a pregnancy poses a grave risk to health. Law No.126 of 2008 must be amended to prohibit female genital mutilation in all cases.

**10. Abolish the death penalty**

A moratorium on executions must be imposed pending abolition of the death penalty.

Public Document

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