

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Egypt: Authorities must end suppression of peaceful protestors

Amnesty International has called on the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release of all those arrested and detained because of their call for, or participation in, Monday's national strike demonstrations. The organization also called on the authorities to end the mass arrests and harassment of peaceful protestors calling for political and economic reforms.

At least 34 people remain in detention after a wave of arrests which took place on Monday and over the weekend, with many reportedly beaten by the police. Charges brought against the protestors include incitement to strike and distributing leaflets calling for a national strike.

Police have detained student activists, members of the 6 April Group, the Kefaya Movements, the Muslim Brotherhood and members of the al-Ghad political party in connection with today's strike. These include Mamdouh al-Nithami, the Kefaya Coordinator in Manufiyya, Islam Nagi of the 6 April Group, Mohamed Abdel Rahman of al-Ghad political party and Ahmed Abdel Foutouh of Muslim Brotherhood. Arrests and harassment have taken place in Alexandria, Kafr Sheikh, Manufiyya, Port Said, Qaylubiyya, Sharqiyya and Fayoum and at Ain Shams University.

Heavy security has been deployed along the main gathering points in Cairo and other cities as well as in a number of universities to prevent strikes or assemblies from taking place. A journalist and photographer of the daily independent newspaper, Al-Masry Al-youm, Hossam Fadl, who was covering the protest at Ain Shams university, was arrested and detained for a couple of hours before being released without charge.

Since 1981 Egypt has lived continuously under emergency laws, forbidding most demonstrations and facilitating other serious human rights violations such as arbitrary arrest, torture and other ill-treatment, secret detention, and unfair trials before emergency and military courts.

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