

MENA Solidarity Network

Statement in solidarity with Egyptian protesters attacked by the military at Abbassiya

Once again, Egypt's military rulers have failed to protect peaceful protesters from murderous assaults by plainclothed thugs, and then turned their own brutal violence against demonstrations in response to the attack. On 28 April and 2 May Islamist activists protesting against the military-appointed Electoral Commission's decision to exclude their candidate from the presidential elections were attacked outside the Ministry of Defence, and at least 13 were killed, according to official sources. Then a march by thousands of protestors in solidarity with the sit-in on Friday 4 May was met with tear gas, water cannons, beatings, bullets and mass arrests. By 5 May over 300 people had been detained according to human rights activists. Dozens are already being referred to military courts for trial. According to the Front to Defend Egyptian Protesters, the military also targeted journalists for arrest and randomly seized people passing through the area around the Ministry of Defence. There are also reports of protesters beaten and arrested on solidarity demonstrations in other Egyptian cities.

This assault by the military is no aberration, but the extension of other repressive policies including the criminalisation of strikes and protests and the systematic use of military courts against civilians. Cases brought against protesters by the Mubarak regime have been revived, such as the prosecution of Mohamed Atef, Mostafa Mohie Al-Din, Mostafa Shawky, Mohamed Nagy, Tamer Elsady, Ahmed Refaat, Daa Elden Ahmed and Amr Ahmed on trumped-up charges relating to their participation in a protest against the sectarian attack on the Two Saints Church in Alexandria on New Year's Day 2011.

It comes at a time when Egyptians from across the political spectrum are mobilising to demand that the military respects the authority of their democratically-chosen representatives and returns to the barracks.

We call on the Egyptian military and civilian authorities to:

- Release all those detained during recent events
- End the practice of using military courts to try civilians
- Drop the charges against Mohamed Atef, Mostafa Mohie Al-Din, Mostafa Shawky, Mohamed Nagy and their co-defendants
- Repeal laws criminalising strikes and protests
- Repeal the law allowing the Military Council to veto decisions taken by parliament

We call on the British and other foreign governments to enforce a ban on the sale of arms and so-called 'crowd control' equipment such as tear gas to Egypt.

Name	Organisation	Position (if any)

Email scanned copies of petitions to menasolidarity@gmail.com for forwarding to Egyptian embassy