

# Egypt

The year 2011 was saw a severe increase in grave human rights violations in Egypt in response to the popular uprising early in the year that succeeded after only 18 days in toppling dictator Hosni Mubarak along with several prominent members of the ruling party and thwarted plans for the passage of the presidency to Mubarak's son. Ongoing pressure from the revolution prompted the dissolution of both houses of the rigged parliament and led to the prosecution of the former president, interior minister, and a few politicians and businessmen on charges related to the murder of demonstrators and the rampant corruption under Mubarak's tenure.<sup>1</sup> Court orders were also issued dissolving the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) and the municipal councils formed through fraudulent elections in 2008.<sup>2</sup>

Mubarak had refused to leave office until he had accumulated further political and criminal liability for the deaths of hundreds of demonstrators and the injury of thousands more, as well as the death of 200 prison inmates and the escape of many dangerous convicts and several thousand criminal prisoners during the sudden, suspicious disappearance of security forces on the evening of January 28, 2011. The Mubarak regime began its collective punishment of the Egyptian people with the beginning of the revolution on January 25, cutting off communications networks in a desperate attempt to

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<sup>1</sup> al-Masry al-Youm, "al-Idariya al-'ulya taqdi niha'iyān bi-hall al-hizb al-watani wa tasfiyat amwalih wa i'adat mumtalakatih li-l-dawla," Apr. 16, 2011, <<http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/402720>>.

<sup>2</sup> al-Masry al-Youm, "Hall al-majalis al-mahaliya li-ikhlatiha al-jasim bi-masalih al-watan," June 29, 2011, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=302073&IssueID=2181>>.

sever contact via social media networks between those involved in the uprising, with the additional goal of blocking the spread of information about the far-reaching popular protests and suppressive actions taken against them. In tandem with this, satellite broadcasting was interrupted, and the state and private media were deployed to discredit the revolution and those taking part in it.

Ten months after Mubarak's ouster, the failure to achieve the goals of the revolution was clear. The pillars and policies of the autocratic Mubarak regime had not been removed; the major state institutions, starting with the security establishment, had not been purged and reformed; victims of human rights abuses and the suppression of the uprising had not been given justice; and a constitution establishing a civil, democratic state and setting the rules for the institutions of governance and delineating their prerogatives had not been drafted.

As a result of these failures, a crisis mounted in the transitional period pitting the forces aspiring to achieve the goals of the revolution against the ruling authority, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), to whom Mubarak had delegated the administration of the country without constitutional justification.

The management of the transitional period has shown the SCAF's propensity to reduce the revolution to the sacrifice of certain figures in order to maintain the same regime with some cosmetic reforms. This is seen clearly in the perpetuation of the state of emergency and the expansion of its application beyond the pre-revolution status quo,<sup>3</sup> thereby allowing it to be used broadly to suppress liberties on the pretext that such liberties are used to undermine national security or the public order, infringe on the freedom to work and obstruct transport, or disseminate false news or statements. One of the first pieces of legislation issued in the name of the revolution was a law criminalizing strikes and sit-ins<sup>4</sup>; the law mandates penalties of one year imprisonment and fines up to LE500,000 for offenders. The use of exceptional military courts to try civilians also increased, snaring numerous political activists, bloggers, and peaceful demonstrators and protestors. Torture and cruel or degrading treatment continued to be practiced inside prisons and police stations, with the new development that the military

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<sup>3</sup> CIHRS, "The Mubarak Regime Persists," Oct. 19, 2011, <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=256&lang=en>>.

<sup>4</sup> al-Shorouk, "al-A'la li-l-quwat al-musallaha yusdir marsum bi-qanun li-taghliz 'uqubat al-baltaja," Mar. 12, 2011, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/contentdata.aspx?id=406754>>; State Information Service, "al-Majlis al-a'la li-l-quwat al-musallaha yusdir marsum bi-qanun li-ta'dil ba'd ahkam qanun al-'uqubat," Mar. 11, 2011, <<http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/Story.aspx?sid=44766>>.

police became involved in torturing civilians as well. In this context, detained women were forced to undergo virginity tests, a practice previously unknown within the Egyptian security apparatus.

With growing criticism of their transitional policies, the authorities resorted to the Mubarak regime's old tactic of besmirching and intimidating its critics, launching an unprecedented campaign to defame political youth groups and human rights organizations.

Instead of striving to build a national consensus for the administration of the transitional phase, those in charge of the country's affairs intentionally exacerbated political divisions, attempting, like the Mubarak regime before them, to exploit and intensify the fear of Islamists to prompt other political forces to seek refuge with the military, which may help the military establishment preserve the privileges it has enjoyed since the 1952 revolution. Before the end of the year, this tactic had led the country into a serious political crisis, manifested in the so-called second wave of the revolution in November, which demanded the end of military rule and the return of the army to its barracks. Police and army forces met these demands with a brutal crackdown. At the same time, a clash between the SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood, the strongest Islamist force, may not be far off.

### **Major missteps in the democratic transition:**

Since the SCAF first assumed the reins of power after Mubarak's ouster, it has pursued the same course by which Mubarak attempted to appease protestors on the eve of his ouster. SCAF has allowed for only limited amendments to the constitution in order to pave the way for parliamentary and presidential elections. Moreover, it was the SCAF which formed the committee to draft these amendments, and the committee lacked political independence and only extended representation to members of political Islam. The resulting amendments called for parliamentary elections to be held within months, which played a crucial role in determining the outcome of those elections,<sup>5</sup> as revolutionary forces had not yet established parties capable of competing with the more organized Islamist groups.

The constitutional amendments themselves deepened political divisions in society, which facilitated the SCAF's attempts to fragment the united

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<sup>5</sup> "Bayan bi-khusus tashkil lajnat ta'dil al-dustur min ajl dustur madani hurr," Feb. 16, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/sA88Q>>.

front of the revolution.<sup>6</sup> As a result, a substantial portion of liberals, secularists, and Copts were profoundly uneasy with the course pursued, which gave Islamist groups the upper hand in the drafting of the new constitution. In contrast, the Islamists broadly supported the chosen course, as it prepared the way for their victory in the parliamentary elections and, in turn, their control over the writing of the new constitution.

The SCAF attempted to use the growing split between the two camps to carve out greater privileges for the military establishment. One of its strategies was the creation of a document of supra-constitutional principles, which was rejected by Islamist groups along with some other political forces and advocacy groups, as it attempted to exploit legitimate fears of the institutionalization of a theocracy in the new constitution to grant the military establishment prerogatives over the constitutionally established authorities, thus allowing it to intervene in the political process in the name of protecting the civil state and constitutional legitimacy. The document also granted the SCAF and its government an influential role in choosing the majority of members of the constituent assembly and gave the SCAF the right to veto sections of the text drafted by the constituent assembly.<sup>7</sup>

This is not to deny positive, post-revolution developments, although they do not embody the revolution's principal goal of wholesale change of the regime and its foundations. Steps were made taken to end the single-party system, although the SCAF introduced only limited changes to Law 40/1977 on political parties. Most importantly, it abolished the Political Parties Committee, which had been dominated by the former ruling party, transferring its authorities to a commission comprised of judicial figures. The advances seen in the landscape of political parties over the year can be attributed to political accords and the flexibility shown by the commission in considering new party applications. At the same time, however, the commission approved the establishment of religious parties, although the law prohibits this.<sup>8</sup>

The parliamentary elections, whose first round was conducted as this report was being prepared, saw high voter turnout, but also witnessed chaos and confusion for which the SCAF bears primary responsibility. The

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<sup>6</sup> To read the constitutional amendments and the constitutional declaration, see State Information Service, <[http://www.sis.gov.eg/ar/LastPage.aspx?Category\\_ID=1638](http://www.sis.gov.eg/ar/LastPage.aspx?Category_ID=1638)> and <[http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/LastPage.aspx?Category\\_ID=1685](http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/LastPage.aspx?Category_ID=1685)>.

<sup>7</sup> CIHRS, "La li-l-fashiya al-diniya la li-l-haymana al-'askariya: markaz al-Qahira yaqtarih hallan wasatan li-talafi al-suqut fi barathin ahad al-khiyarayn," Nov. 4, 2011, <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=188>>.

<sup>8</sup> To read the amended political parties law, see State Information Service, <[http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/LastPage.aspx?Category\\_ID=1739](http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/LastPage.aspx?Category_ID=1739)>.

elections were conducted in the midst of heightened political tension and the eruption of the second wave of the revolution, which expressed a deep sense of frustration on the part of revolutionary forces and growing doubts about the SCAF's willingness to relinquish power.

The Supreme Elections Commission (SEC) did not respond to violations to the legal ban on the use of religious slogans nor to the use of a violent sectarian discourse by some parties, particularly Salafis, who charged their enemies with blasphemy, despite the fact that such action falls within the commission's limited prerogatives. Meanwhile, the SCAF and Interior Ministry took it upon themselves to exercise a significant number of the powers delegated to the SEC, and it was the Interior Ministry which practically assumed the responsibility for the primary electoral tasks such as vetting voter rolls, district apportionment, and determining the final composition of the general elections committee, polling station committees, and ballot-counting committees. The SCAF, for its part, intervened more than once to extend the candidacy application period and to schedule the voting periods over two days rather than one, without even consulting the SEC.

The confusion surrounding the elections was exacerbated by the fact that the amendments to the law on the exercise of political rights did not respect the right of Egyptians living abroad to political participation. Only days before the vote, the SCAF was compelled to include expatriates, pursuant to an Administrative Court ruling that required the authorities to guarantee the right of Egyptians abroad to vote.<sup>9</sup>

### **Suppression of peaceful protests:**

Although Mubarak was removed from the political landscape and revolutionary forces were able to affirm the right of Egyptians to peaceful demonstration and protest on numerous occasions through several million-person demonstrations, this did not end the brutal assault on protestors even after Mubarak's ouster. Indeed, as of late November some 100 people died as a result of the excessive use of force by army forces and Central Security Forces, including live ammunition and asphyxiating tear gas.

According to official reports, during the first wave of the revolution from January 25 to February 11, when Mubarak stepped down, 6,467 people were

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<sup>9</sup> For problems with the electoral system and an overview of the first round of parliamentary elections see the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement, "Taqrir al-marhala al-ula li-intikhabat majlis al-sha'b," Dec. 1, 2011, <<http://www.mosharka.org/index.php?newsid=417>>.

injured<sup>10</sup> and more than 846 people were killed, most during clashes with security forces, which opened fire on demonstrators in several governorates. Several cases were also reported in which demonstrators were pursued and intentionally run over by police vehicles and armored personnel carriers.

February 2 saw a desperate attempt to crush the will of those occupying Tahrir Square, as demonstrators were brutally assaulted in what became known as the Battle of the Camel. Police fired live ammunition, rubber bullets, birdshot, and tear gas at demonstrators, while snipers were seen firing from the rooftops of buildings overlooking the square. At the same time, the square, whose entrances were ostensibly secured by the armed forces, was attacked by groups of thugs riding horses and camels and carrying clubs, iron bars, and knives, having been mobilized by supporters of the president. During the battle, demonstrators were able to capture some of the assailants, and their identity cards revealed them to be police or members of the NDP.<sup>11</sup>

Attempts to break the will of Egyptians were not limited to the use of excessive force. Indeed, the Egyptian population was subjected to collective punishment following the security vacuum which arose from the sudden withdrawal of police from the streets and police stations. Egyptians were thus left vulnerable to criminal acts by gangs of thugs and other criminals, particularly after several prisons were attacked and inmates released.

Although the January 25 revolution was overwhelmingly peaceful, it did involve some acts of violence, such as attempts to storm security headquarters and torch several police stations. Official reports state that 26 policemen and officers died, and it is likely that a number of them killed while performing their professional duty of protecting security headquarters.<sup>12</sup>

During the peaceful occupation of Tahrir Square until Mubarak's departure, complaints were regularly heard regarding the abduction of political activists, some of whom were tortured by military police. According to reports, 74 people were kidnapped and detained before Mubarak's ouster.<sup>13</sup>

Although the armed forces dealt prudently with some of the million-person demonstrations seen after Mubarak's ouster to demand the

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<sup>10</sup> Abstract on the final report of the fact-finding commission on the events of the January 25 revolution, <[http://www.ffnc-eg.org/assets/ffnc-eg\\_final.pdf](http://www.ffnc-eg.org/assets/ffnc-eg_final.pdf)>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See the list of detainees and abductees from the Front for the Defense of Egyptian Demonstrators, <<http://www.box.com/shared/9140s4pje2>>.

achievement of the goals of the revolution, it became clear that increasing criticisms of the SCAF for its administration of the transitional period gradually led to escalating acts of repression against demonstrators.

The first post-revolution clash with demonstrators took place on March 9, 2011, when the armed forces dispersed a sit-in in Tahrir Square of about 3,000 people, following a million-person demonstration calling for speedy trials for Mubarak regime figures and the purging of state institutions of Mubarak loyalists. Army forces and military police fired intensively into the air to break up the occupation and used tear gas and electric batons. According to reports from rights groups, several demonstrators were dragged and some were tortured in the Egyptian Museum, adjacent to the square. As was true in subsequent clashes, this began with the deployment of groups of thugs to harass the protestors, showing that the institutional use of thugs did not end after Mubarak's ouster.<sup>14</sup>

On April 9, army forces opened fire on demonstrators in Tahrir Square. While the Ministry of Health announced that one person died and 71 were injured, other medical sources indicated that as many as six people were killed, among them a seven-year-old child. Some 42 demonstrators were arrested and referred to the military prosecution for questioning on charges of breaking curfew and violating the military ruler's ban on assemblies.<sup>15</sup>

In late June, and for the first time since the revolution, the Central Security Forces launched a bloody attack on families of those killed in the revolution and hundreds of solidarity protestors in Tahrir Square, using rubber bullets, birdshot, and tear gas. The clashes, which lasted for two days, injured more than 1,100 people on both sides. Central Security Forces willfully provoked the demonstrators and martyrs' families, cursing them over megaphones, making obscene gestures toward them, and brandishing swords to threaten and provoke them.<sup>16</sup>

On July 23, army forces and Central Security Forces surrounded a peaceful march in Abbasiya Square headed toward the Defense Ministry,

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<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: End Torture, Military Trials of Civilians," Mar. 11, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/03/11/egypt-end-torture-military-trials-civilians>>

<sup>15</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "Army Shootings against Civilians a Dangerous Precedent for Which There Must Be Accountability," Apr. 10, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/04/10/1146>>.

<sup>16</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights Announces the Results of Its Field Investigation into the Clashes between Police and Demonstrators on the 28th and 29th of June," July 4, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/07/04/1191>>.

and demonstrators were attacked by persons in civilian clothing thought to be hired thugs.<sup>17</sup>

The events of October 9 constituted the beginning of a dangerous shift in the suppression of peaceful protests. The area of Maspero, in central Cairo, saw acts of violence and extrajudicial killings - for which military forces bear responsibility - during a confrontation with a legally licensed, peaceful demonstration, organized by Muslims and Copts to condemn the demolition of a church by extremists. No less than 28 people were killed and hundreds injured. Video footage shows armored military vehicles running over demonstrators while live ammunition was fired on them as well; in turn, demonstrators threw rocks and torched a military vehicle. The massacre witnessed another dangerous development when civilians joined the assault on demonstrators in response to incitement from the official media, which claimed that Coptic demonstrators were shooting at army soldiers. The media also issued an inflammatory appeal to citizens, calling on them to come out to protect the army from assaults by Coptic demonstrators. In attempting to shirk their responsibility for these serious crimes, the authorities described the events as a clash between groups of Muslims and Christians and said that unknown persons had opened fire on both demonstrators and the armed forces. Tellingly, during the massacre military police stormed the offices of the Hurra and January 25 satellite channels, forcing them to suspend their broadcasts.<sup>18</sup>

On November 19, a new round of lethal violence erupted against demonstrators and continued for six days. During this time, Central Security Forces, supported by military police, suddenly used force to disperse a small, peaceful sit-in in Tahrir Square involving families of those killed or injured during the revolution. Security burned the protestors' tents and used birdshot and live ammunition, prompting thousands of sympathizers to head to the square, determined to continue the sit-in. Similar attacks took place in several governorates following solidarity demonstrations with Tahrir. In the end, some 40 people were killed and nearly 4,000 wounded, some with serious injuries as a result of being shot in the upper body, including the face, which resulted in full or partial blindness in some cases.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "From a Detailed Testimony from the Sidelines of the Events in Abbassiya: EIPR Lodges Complaint for Activist Gharbeia's Unlawful Detention," July 28, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/07/28/1217>>.

<sup>18</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "Maspero: State Incitement of Sectarian Violence and Policy of Extrajudicial Killings," Oct. 16, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/10/16/1268>>.

<sup>19</sup> CIHRS, "Egyptian Rights Organizations Demand Indictment of Leading Security Officers," Nov. 23, 2011, <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=302&lang=en>>.



## **Torture and status of prisoners and detainees:**

The year 2011 was one of the most lethal in Egyptian prisons: according to a statement from the Prison Authority in April 2011, 189 inmates were killed and 263 injured after the police disappeared on January 28. The government fact-finding commission stated that several prison breaks had occurred after security personnel opened the doors and ordered prisoners to leave (as in the Fayoum prison) or after prisoners were pushed to rebel by being subjected to live ammunition or having the water and electricity interrupted for several days, as was the case, for example, in two prisons in the Wadi Natroun region. The report did not rule out the possibility that armed groups had targeted particular prisons for planned assaults, aided by the general security vacuum, in order to secure the release of certain prisoners.<sup>20</sup>

According to field reports by rights groups, more than 100 prisoners were killed in five prisons that did not see escape attempts. According to these reports, on January 30 and 31 the Appeals Prison was the scene of a massacre during which 14 inmates were killed after being restrained with ropes and shot. The shooting in some prisons continued randomly for 10-15 days, resulting in more deaths. In some cases, the victims' bodies were left to rot in the prison blocs in the midst of living inmates. The reports added that despite the relative improvement of conditions in prisons in the few weeks after the revolution, the attacks nevertheless continued, some of which were accompanied by the unlawful shooting of prisoners, which left at least 9 inmates dead in five prisons.<sup>21</sup>

Since the army descended to the streets on January 28, 2011, there have been unceasing complaints of torture of detained political activists and protestors by the military police. This includes not only beating, dragging, electroshocks, and insults, but also compulsory virginity tests for detained female activists, conducted under the supervision of military physicians. Some detainees in military prisons were given injections after torture with what was purported to be a painkiller, but which in fact induced additional stomach pains and vomiting.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Abstract on the final report of the fact-finding commission on the events of the January 25 revolution.

<sup>21</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "Martyr Behind Bars: Killings and Torture of Prisoners during Egypt's Revolution," <<http://eipr.org/en/report/2011/08/24/1300>>.

<sup>22</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "Risala ila wazir al-sihha li-l-tahqiq al-'ajil fi intihak zubbah wa atibba' min al-jaysh al-Misri li-hurmat al-nafs wa-l-jasad li-man jara

On October 27, Essam Atta died in the maximum security Tora Prison, where he was serving a two-year sentence issued by a military court. Rights groups said that it was strongly suspected that he was tortured before his death. His family reported that Atta had told them two days before his death that an officer had inserted hoses in his mouth and anus and forced him to drink water mixed with detergent, based on suspicions that he had ingested drugs.<sup>23</sup>

### **Crisis over the search for justice:**

As of the writing of this report, only one member of the police had been convicted of crimes involving the death of demonstrators during the January 25 Revolution. Indeed, a great many police officers have been acquitted, while only one junior policeman was convicted in absentia and sentenced to death.

In another matter, two judges were assigned to investigate the foreign funding of civil society. The two judges had previously worked with the infamous State Security Prosecution, which was deployed to retaliate against political opponents and cover up the torture of defendants referred to it. After the appointment of the two judges, the sensationalist state press received a steady stream of reckless leaks about the ongoing investigations as part of a government campaign against human rights organizations.

Last year also saw an unprecedented erosion of due process standards, especially through the referral of civilians to military courts and the denial of their right to appear before their regular court. In the first few months after the SCAF assumed control of the country, military trials resembled summary trials on the battlefield: defendants were not permitted counsel and verdicts and sentences were issued in a matter of hours or even minutes. Whereas some 2,000 civilians were tried in military courts during Mubarak's 30-year tenure, 11,879 civilians were prosecuted in military courts from January 25 to September 5, 2011, according to a statement by the head of the military judiciary in a press conference. Of these defendants, 5,326 were sentenced,

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ihitjazuhum ba'd fadd i'tisam maydan al-Tahrir," Mar. 20, 2011,  
<<http://eipr.org/pressrelease/2011/03/20/1126>>.

<sup>23</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "Interior Ministry Must Take Full Responsibility for the Death of Essam Atta," Oct. 31, 2011,  
<<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/10/31/1282>>.

1,836 were handed suspended sentences, and 597 were acquitted; at the time, 1,038 defendants were awaiting ratification of their verdicts.<sup>24</sup>

The issue of due process is even more serious in those cases that ended in death sentences, as is the case with four defendants, among them a 17-year-old, sentenced to death by the court on May 16, 2011, on charges of kidnapping and assaulting a young girl. This ruling constitutes a flagrant violation of international standards as well as the Egyptian child law and the Egyptian Code of Military Justice, indicating to what degree the military courts have disregarded both civilian and military laws.<sup>25</sup>

In justifying its consistent use of military trials, the SCAF has pointed to the spread of thuggery, weapons possession, and assaults on the armed forces. However, hundreds of political activists, bloggers, and peaceful protesters have also been referred to military courts. For example, a military court sentenced political activist Amr al-Beheiri to five years in prison on charges of assaulting a public servant and breaking curfew. He was convicted only three days after being detained during a peaceful demonstration on February 26 in front of the Cabinet building. Beheiri was not permitted a lawyer during questioning and was denied contact with his family, which deprived him of the opportunity to bring witnesses or submit evidence for his innocence.<sup>26</sup> Blogger Maikel Nabil was also sentenced to three years in prison by a military court after he was arrested on March 28 on charges of insulting the army and disseminating false news via his blog, which had included criticisms of the military establishment and an appeal to end military conscription.<sup>27</sup> A retrial was ordered after his appeal was

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<sup>24</sup> al-Ahram, "Ra'is hay'at al-qada' al-'askari fi mu'tamar sahafi: atahadda an yathbut ahad an al-thuwwar tammam muhakamatuhum 'askariyan," <<http://www.ahram.org.eg/Al-Mashhad-Al-Syiassy/News/99424.aspx>>; for more details see Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: Retry or Free 12,000 after Unfair Military Trials," Sep. 10, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/10/egypt-retry-or-free-12000-after-unfair-military-trials>>.

<sup>25</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "Supreme Military Court Sentences Minor to Death...EIPR Urges Immediate Suspension of the Sentence and a Full Review of Cases Heard by the Military Judiciary," May 17, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/05/17/1168>>.

<sup>26</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "Human Rights Organizations Condemn the Trial of Civilians before Military Courts," Mar. 2, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/03/02/1112>>.

<sup>27</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: Blogger's 3-Year Sentence a Blow to Free Speech," Apr. 11, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/11/egypt-blogger-s-3-year-sentence-blow-free-speech>>; Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: Drop Charges against Blogger Critical of Military," Apr. 6, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/05/egypt-drop-charges-against-blogger-critical-military>>; for more information see Reporters Without Borders, "al-Majlis al-a'la li-l-quwat al-musallaha yu'ajjal muhakamat Maykal Nabil Sanad mujaddadan," Oct. 3, 2011, <[http://arabia.reporters-sans-frontieres.org/article.php?id\\_article=32104](http://arabia.reporters-sans-frontieres.org/article.php?id_article=32104)>.

accepted, but Nabil and his attorneys boycotted it to protest his prosecution as a civilian before a military court. The court then appointed an attorney for him against his will and ordered a medical exam to determine his mental acuity.<sup>28</sup>

Political activist Asmaa Mahfouz, a member of the Egyptian Current Party and a former leader of the April 6th youth movement, was also referred to investigation before the military prosecution on charges of defaming the SCAF and promoting rumors over satellite channels liable to threaten the societal security. She was released on LE20,000 bail.<sup>29</sup>

Prominent political activist, revolutionary, and well-known blogger Alaa Abdel Fattah was also harassed. In articles and on his blog, Abdel Fattah publishes severe criticisms of SCAF policies and demands that they relinquish power. He was summoned for questioning by the military prosecution in late October only to find himself facing serious charges in connection with the Maspero massacre, including incitement against the military, assembly, assault on military equipment, and theft of weapons. Abdel Fattah exercised his right to remain silent during questioning, motivated by his rejection of military trials for civilians and his belief that the military judiciary could not be impartial on the matter of the Maspero massacre, for which the armed forces were responsible. Abdel Fattah was provisionally detained for more than a month under orders from the military judiciary. Due to growing criticisms at home and abroad for the military prosecution of civilians, the authorities were forced to refer the Maspero case to the State Security Prosecution, but in late November that court also ordered that Abdel Fattah continue to be held provisionally.<sup>30</sup>

The legal handling of the Maspero massacre set the course followed by all other investigations into crimes committed by military personnel against civilians or cases in which military personnel were the prime suspects. No investigations of military personnel were conducted and the events during which the crimes took place were used to retaliate against political activists such as Abdel Fattah and others, by leveling baseless charges against them

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<sup>28</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "La li-l-isti'sad 'ala Maykal Nabil," Oct. 27, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=42396>>.

<sup>29</sup> al-Masry al-Youm, "Ihalat Asma' Mahfuz ila-l-mahkama al-'askariya bi-tuhmat ihanat al-majlis al-'askari," Aug. 17, 2011, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=307598&IssueID=2230>>; al-Masry al-Youm, "al-Niyaba al-'askariya tukhli sabil Asma' Mahfuz bi-kafalat 20 alf junayh ba'd ittihamiha bi-sabb al-majlis al-'askari," Aug. 15, 2011, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=307354&IssueID=2228>>.

<sup>30</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "A Leaf out of Mubarak's Book: Arrest of an Activist Who Uncovered the Truth of a Massacre," Oct. 31, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/10/31/1277>>.

and repeatedly bringing forward the same witnesses to corroborate charges in various separate cases.

### **Widespread violations of freedom of opinion and expression:**

In the year since the revolution, the country took no steps to lift the highly repressive legal restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, and these liberties continued to be ad-hoc and provisional, as under Mubarak, depending on the degree to which those in charge in the country chose to tolerate criticisms. As a result, numerous political activists, bloggers, journalists, and media professionals were summoned for questioning by the military prosecution for their criticisms of the SCAF or for allegedly insulting the army. The SCAF also issued strict directives to the press urging it to refrain from publishing stories, news, statements, complaints, or photos involving the armed forces or its leaders before consulting with the army's Morale Affairs Directorate and military intelligence.<sup>31</sup>

On May 10, the head of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) canceled the live broadcast for the program "Talk Street," which had hosted well-known media presenter Buthaina Kamel, a potential presidential candidate. Kamel had criticized the SCAF and was later summoned to appear before the military prosecution.<sup>32</sup> General Tareq al-Mahdi, during his tenure as head of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU), issued an order in June suspending the program "Cairo Time," hosted by Hafez al-Mirazi.<sup>33</sup> In addition, activist and blogger Hossam Hamalawy was summoned to appear before the military prosecution after he held the commander of the military police responsible for acts of torture. Adel Hammouda, the editor-in-chief of *al-Fajr*, and journalist Rasha Azab were also summoned after the paper published a story about army abuses.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: Military Trials Usurp Justice System," Apr. 29, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/29/egypt-military-trials-usurp-justice-system>>.

<sup>32</sup> US Copts Association, "Halqat Buthayna Kamil al-lati dafa'at Maspuru li-talab inha' iha bi-shakl fawri qabl an yaqta'u al-bathth 'an al-qana,"

<<http://www.copts.net/forum/showthread.php?p=378638>>; al-Wafd, "Ba'd al-tahqiq ma'aha Buthayna Kamil tuhammil li-l-jumhur rasa'il 'askariya," May 16, 2011,

<<http://goo.gl/3srZE>>.

<sup>33</sup> al-Masrawy, "Qalaq huquqi min waqf barnamij 'tawqit al-Qahira'," Aug. 6, 2011,

<[http://www.masrawy.com/news/egypt/politics/2011/june/8/worries\\_program.aspx?ref=more\\_clip](http://www.masrawy.com/news/egypt/politics/2011/june/8/worries_program.aspx?ref=more_clip)>.

<sup>34</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: Military Intensifies Clampdown on Free Expression," Aug. 17, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/08/17/egypt-military-intensifies-clampdown-free-expression>>.

Similar measures were taken against well-known ONTV presenter Reem Maged, journalist and writer Nabil Sharaf al-Din, *Wafd* editor Sayyed Abd al-Ati, and journalist Hossam al-Soueifi. The minister of justice also questioned three judges—Hassan al-Naggar, president of the Zaqaziq Judges Club; Alaa Shouqi, president of the Giza Criminal Court; and Ashraf Nada, president of the Beni Soueif Appeals Court—because of their criticism of the referral of civilians to military trials and their demands for judicial reforms which had been aired via radio and television.<sup>35</sup>

Amid growing pressures on the media, the Dream channel ended its contract with presenter Dina Abd al-Rahman in July after she criticized the SCAF on her program, “Dream Morning,” following the crackdown on demonstrators in Abbasiya Square and SCAF accusations that April 6th received funding from abroad.<sup>36</sup> Well-known media figure Yosri Fouda was forced to suspend his program, “The Last Word,” broadcast on ONTV, after he was pressured to refrain from hosting well-known writer Alaa al-Aswani on the program of October 20.<sup>37</sup>

Even as the Ministry of Information tightened its grip over broadcasting, the Interior Ministry’s arts police division raided the offices of 16 satellite channels in September, including Jazeera International and Jazeera Live Egypt, ostensibly to ascertain the validity of their broadcast licenses. The force took one broadcast engineer at Jazeera Live Egypt into custody, claiming that the channel was broadcasting without a license; he was released the next day. The Al-Jazeera channel had applied for a license to establish a channel dedicated to Egyptian issues in the wake of Mubarak’s fall and was told that it could air the new channel through the Al-Jazeera Arabic permit until the licensing procedures were completed. On September 29, the Jazeera Live offices were again raided, and police confiscated equipment and machinery and mistreated office staff.<sup>38</sup> The minister of

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<sup>35</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Majlis al-‘askari yajib an yakun aydan fi khidmat al-sha’b wa laysa qami’an lahu,” May 31, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=32688>>; al-Jazeera, “Ittihmat li-‘askar Misr bi-tadyiq al-hurriyat,” June 4, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/PqRwB>>.

<sup>36</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “‘Ala-l-majlis al-‘askari al-kaff ‘an intihak hurriyat al-i’lam,” July 25, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=36412>>.

<sup>37</sup> al-Shorouk, “Yusri Fuda yu’alliq ‘akhir al-kalam’ li-ajl ghayr musamma,” Oct. 21, 2011, <<http://shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=21102011&id=08ea3108-e6d9-49c1-9895-14fdcc3dc91f>>; al-Masry al-Youm, “Yusri Fuda yu’alliq ‘akhir al-kalam’ li-ajl ghayr musamma,” Oct. 22, 2011, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=314833&IssueID=2296>>; Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “Dughut shadida tusfir ‘an tawaqquf barnamij akhir al-kalam,” Oct. 22, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=42037>>.

<sup>38</sup> al-Masry al-Youm, “Hamlat li-wizaratay al-dakhiliya wa-l-i’lam ‘ala 16 fada’iya wa mudahamat maktab al-jazira wa ittihamuha bi-l-bathth dun tarkhis,” Sep. 12, 2011,

information then issued a moratorium on all new satellite licenses, accusing the media of lack of discipline and urging legal measures against satellite channels that purportedly harmed stability and security.<sup>39</sup> Soon after this, ONTV and Dream TV received warnings from the General Authority for Investment and Free Zones, stating that the content of ONTV exceeded the channel's license and that Dream had violated the media ethics code.<sup>40</sup>

Confiscations of newspapers also returned. On September 24, *Sawt al-Umma* was confiscated without any reason being presented. Editor Abd al-Halim Qandil believed that the move came because of the issue's publication of a document about intelligence officials.<sup>41</sup> For the first time, a state paper was also confiscated. The editor of *Rose al-Youssef* revealed that the management of the Ahram Press refused to print a page in the issue of September 27, demanding that it be replaced based on orders from "a sovereign body" arising from the publication ban on a case connected with allegations of a pro-Israel network, one of whose members was protected by the deposed president.<sup>42</sup>

In the face of growing pressure on media and the interference of military censorship, several writers protested by refusing to print their regular columns and leaving the column space blank.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the year, journalists and media workers were targets for assault, threat, and intimidation while covering the news, especially given the excessive force used to suppress peaceful demonstrations and sit-ins.<sup>44</sup>

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<<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=310453>>; Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Shabaka al-'Arabiya: al-tadyiq 'ala-l-i'lam yu'add istimrar li-l-ta'akul fi mukhtasabat al-thawra," Sep. 11, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=39094>>; France 24, "Quwat al-amn taqtahim maktab qanat al-jazira mubashir fi-l-Qahira li-l-marra al-thaniya," Sep. 29, 2011, <<http://www.france24.com/ar/20110929-al-jazeera-bureau-direct-cairo-attacked-police-egypt-scaf>>.

<sup>39</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "Disturbing Moves against News Media by Supreme Council," Sep. 12, 2011, <<http://en.rsf.org/egypt-disturbing-moves-against-news-12-09-2011,40967.html>>.

<sup>40</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "Misr: intilaq mubadarat al-a'mida al-bayda' didd tadakhkhul al-raqib al-'askari," Oct. 6, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=40889>>.

<sup>41</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "Misr: taraju' hadd fi hurriyat al-ra'i wa-l-ta'bir," Sep. 26, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=39997>>.

<sup>42</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Shabaka al-'Arabiya tunaddid bi-istimrar istihdaf hurriyat al-ra'i wa-l-ta'bir," Sep. 27, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=40203>>.

<sup>43</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "Misr: intilaq mubadarat al-a'mida al-bayda' didd tadakhkhul al-raqib al-'askari."

<sup>44</sup> International Freedom of Expression Exchange, "al-I'tida' 'ala 17 sahafiyin 'ala-l-aqall ithna' al-musadamat fi Misr," Nov. 22, 2011, <[http://www.ifex.org/egypt%20/2011/11/22/journalists\\_assaulted/ar/](http://www.ifex.org/egypt%20/2011/11/22/journalists_assaulted/ar/)>.

Three female journalists were sexually harassed, two of them by what were thought to be paid agitators, to give the impression that police violence was targeting thugs rather than peaceful demonstrators. In the third case, Egyptian-American journalist Mona Eltahawy said she was arrested while taking part in demonstrations on November 19 and that Interior Ministry personnel attempted to sexually assault her before she was released.<sup>45</sup> Rights organizations cautioned foreign female correspondents and reporters against going to Egypt due to potential sexual harassment or assault.

### **Increasing pressures on NGOs and trade unions:**

Pressures increased substantially on civil society institutions and human rights organizations in particular after those in charge of the country launched several media smear campaigns of the type used by the Mubarak regime against human rights and civil society groups, portraying them as unpatriotic with loyalties to foreign parties. The campaign reached a climax when judicial investigations were announced into hundreds of organizations and their heads in connection with allegations up to and including high treason, according to judicial sources. Confidential information about bank accounts held by many of these organizations and their directors was also disclosed, and it was claimed that this measure proved the accusations to be true.

This unprecedented campaign was noteworthy for the wide range of actors who partook in it, including SCAF leaders and the ministers of international cooperation, justice, social solidarity, and information. The media hype was fed by daily leaks from the investigating committee formed by the minister of justice to look into the foreign funding of civil society associations.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> International Freedom of Expression Exchange, "Media Urged to Prioritise Safety after Another Sexual Assault on Woman Reporter," Nov. 25, 2011, <[http://www.ifex.org/egypt/2011/11/25/prioritize\\_safety/](http://www.ifex.org/egypt/2011/11/25/prioritize_safety/)>.

<sup>46</sup> For more information about the campaign and the parties involved, see 'Isam al-Din Hasan, "Hamalat al-tashhir wa-l-tamwil al-ajnabi: qira'a fi-l-hajma 'ala-l-jam'iyat al-ahliya wa munazzamat al-mujtama' al-madani," paper presented at a panel discussion organized by the United Group, Sep. 19, 2011; CIHRS, "Warathat nizam Mubarak yushaddidun hajmatahum 'ala-l-mujtama' al-madani wa hurriyat al-tanzim," Aug. 28, 2011, <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=1351>>; Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Munazzamat ghayr al-hukumiya tudin istimrar siyasad al-nizam al-sabiq fi qam' wa muhasarat al-'amal al-ahli," July 25, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=36342>>; al-Shorouk, "Taklif wazir al-'adl tashkil lajnat taqassi haqa'iq hawl tamwil munazzamat al-mujtama' al-madani," July 12, 2011, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/ContentData.aspx?id=502644>>; Human Rights Watch, "Egypt: Government Moves to Restrict Rights and Democracy Groups," Sep. 26,



The campaign revealed the growing intolerance of criticisms on the part of those in charge of the country, especially criticism from human rights groups regarding the political course of the country and the administration of the transitional phase, as well as the grave human rights abuses committed since the January revolution. It should be remembered that on February 3, 2011, the military police, accompanied by members of State Security Investigations and a group of thugs, raided the offices of the Hisham Mubarak Legal Center and arrested founder and well-known lawyer Ahmed Seif al-Islam, several other attorneys, and researchers with Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch during a meeting at the center, which at that time had become an operations room for a group of Egyptian human rights organizations calling themselves the Front for the Defense of Egyptian Demonstrators. During the arrest, groups of thugs under the building threatened the detainees, calling them traitors and agents.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the fact that some political groups whose work had helped prepare the way for the revolution, such as Kifaya and April 6th, were targeted by the smear campaigns and possible legal action, the past year did mark the opening of more space for the formation of political parties. The minor amendments introduced to the political parties law eliminated the Political Parties Committee, which had been composed of NDP leaders under Mubarak, and replaced it with a judicial committee. This change, despite the preservation and even addition of restrictions on the right to form parties, was sufficient to prompt a qualitative advance in legally licensed political parties, which now number more than 50. Although the law prohibits the formation of parties on a religious basis, lax enforcement of this restriction led to the licensing of several religious parties growing out of Salafi groups, the Gamaa al-Islamiya, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Trade unions also successfully used the revolutionary climate to breathe new life into some professional syndicates that had been unable to convene elections for years or had been placed under judicial receivership in the Mubarak period. The Ministry of Manpower and the government were also relatively flexible in dealing with the rights of workers to form independent organizations and trade unions, after the International Labor Organization had placed Egypt on the blacklist of countries violating labor freedoms. These pressures contributed to the establishment of several trade syndicates and unions independent of the official Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF). In August, the cabinet also implemented a court order invalidating

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2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/26/egypt-government-moves-restrict-rights-and-democracy-groups>>.

<sup>47</sup> CIHRS, "Warathat nizam Mubarak yushaddidun hajmatahum 'ala-l-mujtama' al-madani wa hurriyat al-tanzim."

ETUF elections for the 2006-2011 session, which in turn dissolved the union board, the management boards of the general trade unions, and local union committees formed as a result of the rigged elections. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Manpower decided in November that the management boards and the local union committees would be maintained in their current form until new elections.<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that the Ministry of Manpower prepared a draft law on trade union freedoms, consistent with international standards and in consultation with rights and labor activists, but the SCAF refrained from issuing the bill as a law.<sup>49</sup>

### **Increasing pressures on religious freedoms and fears of civil strife:**

Pressures on religious freedoms and sectarian tensions continued to deepen as Mubarak-era policies were perpetuated. Lax enforcement of the law for perpetrators of sectarian violence continued, and the long-promised unified law on houses of worship continued to be broached, but not issued. Meanwhile, Copts increasingly felt that rebuilding churches demolished by extremists or re-opening churches when licensing procedures had stalled now required not just meeting all administrative conditions, but seeking the permission of the Muslim majority.

The year began with the bombing of the Two Saints' Church in Alexandria following the New Year's service, killing 22 people and injuring 79.<sup>50</sup> Security services dealt violently with protests showing solidarity with Copts, using rubber bullets and tear gas; more than 300 people were arrested in Alexandria alone. Several suspects in the case of the bombing were also tortured, leading to the death of al-Sayyed Bilal in a State Security Investigations office one day after his arrest.<sup>51</sup> After Mubarak's ouster, lawyers filed a complaint with the Public Prosecutor accusing former Interior Minister Habib al-Adli of responsibility for the bombing based on information indicating the existence of a secret agency inside the Interior

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<sup>48</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "Dar al-khidmat al-niqabiya wa-l-'ummaliya tudin qarar wa ittifaq 19 Nufimbir," Nov. 24, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=43732>>.

<sup>49</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Intisar li-haqq al-'ummal al-Misriyin fi takwin niqabatihim bi-hurriya," Aug. 10, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=37374>>.

<sup>50</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "Joint Statement by 12 Egyptian Human Rights Organizations...Let the Massacres in Alexandria Be the Beginning of the End of Failed Government Policies," Jan. 4, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/01/04/1066>>.

<sup>51</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, "Widespread Security Abuses during Investigations of Alexandria Bombings," Jan. 15, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/01/15/1068>>.

Ministry that organized terrorist acts whenever the regime faced any political crisis.<sup>52</sup>

In the first week of March, extremist Muslims stormed the Two Martyrs Church in the Atfih district of southern Cairo and demolished it as a response to rumors of a relationship between a Christian merchant and a Muslim girl.<sup>53</sup> The SCAF promised to rebuild the church, but it was not possible to begin reconstruction until religious leaders were brought in to convince local Muslims to permit it; the perpetrators of the crime were not prosecuted.

On March 8, the Manshiyat Nasser area of Cairo also witnessed clashes between thousands of Copts and Muslims after some Copts, angry at the demolition of the Two Martyrs Church, blocked Salah Salem Road. The clashes left 13 dead, 140 injured, and more than 20 homes torched.<sup>54</sup>

The governorate of Qena was the scene of unrest for several weeks after the appointment of a Coptic governor. Groups of Salafis organized sectarian demonstrations demanding the appointment of a Muslim governor while cutting off major roads and railroads. The authorities were forced to suspend the powers of the governor and delegate them to the governorate's secretary-general for three months before a new governor was appointed.<sup>55</sup>

On May 7, the Imbaba neighborhood of Giza saw bloody sectarian clashes and the torching of the Church of the Virgin after hundreds of Salafis attempted to storm the Mar Mina Church, following a rumor that a Christian girl who had converted to Islam was being held inside the church. The clashes left 15 dead and 242 wounded. Field reports by rights groups

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<sup>52</sup> al-Youm al-Sabia, "Niyabat amn al-dawla tuhaqqiq fi ittiham al-'Adli bi-l-tawarrut fi tafjir al-qiddisayn," Feb. 7, 2011,

<<http://www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=347570&SecID=65&IssueID=15>>.

<sup>53</sup> al-Shorouk, "Fi hadith Atfih al-sha'i'at wa ghiyab al-amn wara' tafaqum al-ahdath," Mar. 7, 2011, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/contentdata.aspx?id=403452>>.

<sup>54</sup> al-Masry al-Youm, "Layla damiya fi Munsha'at Nasir: ishtibakat musallaha bayn al-Aqbat wa-l-Muslimin tusqit 13 qatilan wa 140 musaban wa ihtiraq 20 manzalan wa 'adad min al-sayyarat," Mar. 10, 2011, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=290064>>.

<sup>55</sup> Masrawy, "Tazahurat fi muhafazat Qina bi-Sa'id Misr ihtijajan 'ala ta'yin muhafiz Masihi," Apr. 19, 2011, <<http://www.masrawy.com/news/mideast/afp/2011/april/19/4596631.aspx>>; al-Hayat, "Ihtijajat Qina tundhir bi-tajaddud al-muwajahat al-ta'ifiya," Apr. 18, 2011, <<http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/256688>>; Asharq al-Awsat, "Misr: fashal fi hall azmat muhafazat Qina wa-l-mutazahirin yuwasilun ighlaq al-turuq," Apr. 20, 2011, <<http://aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=11831&article=618063>>; al-Masry al-Youm, "Sharaf yujammid nashat muhafiz Qina wa-l-ahali yafuddun al-i'tisam," Apr. 26, 2011, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=294820&IssueID=2117>>; al-Shorouk, "Wahid Hamid: fashal al-hukuma fi hall azmat Qina ya'ni suqut al-dawla," Apr. 21, 2011, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/contentData.aspx?id=437226>>.

documented the failure of police and army forces to protect churches that came under attack.<sup>56</sup> The authorities referred suspects to the “emergency” State Security Court, an exceptional court.

In an attempt to contain Copts’ growing anger, which was expressed by ongoing sit-ins by Copts in front of the radio and television building in Maspero, Cairo, the prime minister announced that he intended to reopen 16 closed churches in several governorates.<sup>57</sup> However, the government was unable to keep this promise following violent clashes between Coptic citizens and Salafi groups which protested the opening of the Church of the Virgin and Father Ibram in the Ain Shams area of Cairo. As a result, the church was forced to close its doors again.<sup>58</sup>

On September 30, in the village of Marinab in the Edfu district of Aswan, extremists demolished parts of a new church building, constructed to replace the old dilapidated structure, leading to violent clashes between local Muslims and Copts.<sup>59</sup> This crime stoked the anger of Copts, prompting 5,000 to launch a sit-in in front of the radio and television building in Maspero, Cairo to demand the reconstruction of the church. Army forces attacked the sit-in with force, arresting dozens of participants. Only a few days later, on October 9, the previously-mentioned Maspero massacre took place, leaving at least 28 people dead, 12 of them crushed under military vehicles.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, “EIPR Releases Findings of Field Investigation into Imbaba Events,” May 14, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2011/05/14/1166>>.

<sup>57</sup> al-Masry al-Youm, “Fath 16 kanisa mughlaqa fi 6 muhafazat,” May 16, 2011, <<http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=296994&IssueID=2137>>.

<sup>58</sup> al-Shorouk, “Ighlaq kanisat ‘Ayn Shams hatta in’iqad jalsa ‘urfiya al-sabt al-muqbil,” May 20, 2011, <<http://www.shorouknews.com/contentdata.aspx?id=459618>>.

<sup>59</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, “Fi taqrir li-l-mubadara al-Misriya li-l-huquq al-shakhsiya: ahdath Marinab namudhaj sarikh li-inhiyaz al-dawla li-janib al-ta’assub,” Oct. 5, 2011, <<http://eipr.org/pressrelease/2011/10/05/1265>>.

<sup>60</sup> National Council for Human Rights, report on the findings of the council’s fact-finding commission into the Maspero events, Nov. 2, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/D8Pe5>>; Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, “Maspero: State Incitement of Sectarian Violence and Policy of Extrajudicial Killings.”