

22 July 2009

Arab Human Rights Organizations' Statement

On the International Day of Solidarity with the Iranian People

We, the undersigned human rights organizations and advocates from the Arab region, express our utter condemnation of all forms of brutal repression undertaken by the Iranian authorities against large masses of the Iranian people involved in peaceful demonstrations and protests against the course and outcome of the Iranian presidential elections. The repressive acts led to the death of dozens and the detention of thousands, including members of political opposition, journalists, workers, people involved in civil society organizations, as well as human rights defenders. The detainees have been subject to different forms of maltreatment and torture intended to force them to make condemning confessions or to give statements to be broadcast by the state media to distort the image of the popular uprising. The Iranian government has used the latter statements to support its fallacious claim that any dissonance or upheaval around the elections is merely the result of a foreign ploy to target Iran.

In this statement, the undersigned organizations emphasize their deep concerns that “show trials” of detainees may lead to unjust death sentences issued against them. The recent uprising, sparked by what is widely accepted as an engineered and fraudulent election, may be the greatest challenge to the thirty-year ruling regime in Iran. This theocratic-styled government is based on the rule of the jurispudent, where all power remains in the hand of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution. Thus, all his judgments and acts are deemed holy, unquestionable and unchallengeable. In light of the widespread opposition to the actions of the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khameneí, and the threat this popular uprising poses to the current Iranian government, we fear that the punishment for the alleged dissidents will be particularly cruel and unjust.

The undersigned organizations regret that the Iranian people, who made enormous sacrifices to rid of themselves of the former dictatorial regime, must once more suffer through the equally tyrannical rule of the Islamic Republic. The worst violations characterizing the previous dark era have been incessantly resumed—namely through torture, arbitrary detentions, extra-judicial killing, and suppression of the political opposition, and social cultural freedoms - under the cloak of religious notions and authorities, which Iran’s ruling clerical elites take shelter.

The undersigned organizations belong to a region where the peoples have lived through calamities under despotic regimes. These regimes would justify their tyranny as a necessary response to the conflict with Israel or the animosity of the West. Likewise, they seek to employ religion to enhance their corroded political projects, to camouflage the deeply rooted problems, or to block the path towards democracy and human rights in the Arab world. These catastrophic policies have only deepened external interventions and converted many of our countries into battlefields of civil war.

We urge Iranian authorities to learn from the region’s bitter lessons. We look forward to the day when the government of Iran respects the rights of its citizens to freely express their opinions and peacefully assemble. Immediate measures should be taken to defuse the current crisis. Specifically,

- The government must release all detainees arrested since the post-election crisis began, and conduct fair investigations concerning claims of torture and ill-treatment. Perpetrators of such human rights violations must be prosecuted by Iranian courts.
- The Basij militia, or plainclothes vigilantes, widely used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to terrorize and brutalize the population into submission must be dissolved.
- Independent investigations should be conducted concerning cases of likely extra-judicial murders and death sentences. International human rights missions should be allowed

to enter the country as a first step to combat impunity with respect to crimes that have been committed.

- Journalists and human rights defenders must be allowed to carry out their work unhindered, and government-ordered interruptions and surveillance of phone and internet communications must be halted.

Signatory Organizations:

1. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies.
2. Alnadim Center for Treatment and Psychological Rehabilitation for Victims of Violence - Egypt.
3. Alternative Development Studies Center - Egypt.
4. Amman Center for Human Rights Studies.
5. Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies.
6. Arab Penal Reform Organization - Egypt.
7. Association for Human Rights Legal Aid – Egypt.
8. Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates – Tunisia.
9. Bahrain Center for Human Rights.
10. Committees for the Defense of Democracy Freedom and Human Rights - Syria.
11. Conseil National Pour Les Libertés En Tunisie – Tunisia.
12. Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies.
13. Democratic Development Foundation – Egypt.
14. Egyptian Child's Rights Center.
15. Egyptian Organization for Human Rights.
16. El-Khiam Rehabilitation Center – Lebanon.
17. Filastiniyat Organization – Palestine
18. Group for Human Rights Legal Aid - Egypt.
19. Hesham Mubarak Law Center - Egypt.
20. Human Rights Information and Training Center – Yemen.
21. International Institute for Women's Solidarity – Jordan.
22. Land Center for Human Rights – Egypt.
23. Libyan League for Human Rights.
24. National Observatory for the Freedom of Press, Publishing and Creation – Tunisia.
25. National Organization for Human Right – Syria.
26. New Women Research Center – Egypt.
27. Organisation marocaine des droits de l'homme – Morocco.
28. Palestinian Human Rights Organization – Lebanon.
29. Sisters Arab forum for Human Rights – Yemen.
30. Syrian Organization for Human Rights
31. The Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession - Egypt.
32. The Arab Network for Human Rights Information – Egypt.
33. The Arab Program for Human Rights Activists
34. The Bahrain Human Rights Society
35. The Centre for Trade Union and Workers' Services – Egypt.
36. The Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement.
37. The Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights.
38. The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
39. The Human association for Human Rights – Iraq.
40. Treatment and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture – Palestine.
41. Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights.
42. Yemeni Organization for Defending Rights and Democratic Freedom.