

# Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

*NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*  
Promoting human rights by protecting those who defend them

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February 4, 2011

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## **Re: Arrest and detention of human rights defenders**

Dear Sirs,

I am writing on behalf of Lawyer's Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) to express our concern about the arrest of several lawyers and members of human rights groups yesterday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011, at the Hisham Mubarak Law Center. I am a director on the Board of LRWC (Research).

Lawyers Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) is a committee of lawyers who promote human rights and the rule of law internationally by protecting advocacy rights. LRWC campaigns for advocates in danger because of their human rights advocacy, engages in research and education and works in cooperation with other human rights organizations. LRWC has Special Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

We have been advised by the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture, and the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), that on February 3, 2011, in the early afternoon, several lawyers and members of NGOs,

including human rights NGOs, who had gathered at the offices of the Hisham Mubarak Law Center were arrested by the military police and driven to an unknown location.

We understand that the Hisham Mubarak Law Center was also surrounded by supporters of the current administration bearing weapons who threatened people gathered inside the Center's premises. Other individuals entered the Nadim Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence - which provides legal assistance to victims of torture - and threatened the personnel of the organisation.

The offices of the Hisham Mubarak Law Center and the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights were searched by the military police and their equipment, including cell phones, was confiscated.

We have been advised that twenty-nine people have been arrested who work for Hisham Mubarak Law Center and the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, including Mr. Ahmed Seif, Ms. Nada Sadek, Mr. Mohamed El Taher, Ms. Mona El Masry, Mr. Khaled Ali and four others.

LRWC is deeply concerned about the safety of these lawyers and human rights defenders. We urge you to release the lawyers and human rights defenders who are being held without charge at an undisclosed location. We ask you ensure that they are protected from intimidation, attack, or arrest and that their security be guaranteed.

The authorities should also order an immediate, thorough, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned facts, the result of which must be made public, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Constance Marlatt  
Lawyer's Rights Watch Canada

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