

Evidence Morsi Supporters Tortured Protesters

The international human rights organization Amnesty International, generally no friend of military-backed governments, on Aug. 2 issued the following press release on the behavior of the supporters of deposed President Mohamed Morsi in Egypt, which backs up the charges of Egyptian Amb. Mohamed Tawfik.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Evidence, including testimonies from survivors, indicates that supporters of deposed President Mohamed Morsi tortured individuals from a rival political camp, said Amnesty International.

Anti-Morsi protesters told Amnesty International how they were captured, beaten, subjected to electric shocks or stabbed by individuals loyal to the former President. Since mass rival rallies began in late June, eight bodies have arrived at the morgue in Cairo bearing signs of torture as of July 28. At least five of these were found near areas where pro-Morsi sit-ins were being held.

“Allegations that torture is being carried out by individuals are extremely serious and must be investigated as a matter of urgency,” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International. “The apparent use of torture for reprisal attacks is unacceptable. People should not take the law into their own hands.”

The rights group urges Egypt’s political leaders to take responsibility and condemn these criminal acts and call on their supporters to renounce all human rights abuses. The government must not use

these crimes as a pretext to collectively punish all pro-Morsi supporters or use excessive force to disperse their sit-ins.

Mastour Mohamed Sayed, 21, told Amnesty International he and a group of 20 others were attacked by a group of Morsi supporters near the pro-Morsi sit-in at Rabaa al-Adawiya on 5 July. His assailants wore balaclavas and some were armed with knives or machine guns. Some escaped but Mastour Mohamed Sayed and a few others were captured.

“I felt terrorized by the guns pointed at me.... They grabbed me.... They called us ‘infidels’.... We were then driven to the sit-in.... I was dragged on the ground. We were eventually held under a podium.... I was beaten with bars, and given electric shocks. I lost consciousness a few times,” he told Amnesty International.

Amnesty International has found that the capture and torture of suspected anti-Morsi protesters most frequently occurs during or in the immediate aftermath of violent clashes between the two camps.

The Ministry of Interior said on July 30 that 11 bodies bearing signs of torture have been found since the outbreak of the crisis. A further 10 complaints regarding torture were made by survivors.

The Egyptian campaign group “I am Against Torture” told Amnesty International that it had independently verified that 11 people have died following torture at the hands of Morsi supporters since the beginning of the crisis.

“Let’s be clear: capturing people because they hold different views and torturing them is a criminal act and those responsible must be held to account,” said Hadj Sahraoui.

Torture or other ill-treatment at the hands of security forces in Egypt has continued under successive governments. Police and security forces continue to torture or otherwise ill-treat detainees with total impunity.