



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 21, 2011

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Carter Center Statement on Egypt's Pre-election Environment

The Carter Center is greatly concerned about the ongoing violence at Tahrir Square and elsewhere in Egypt that has resulted in more than 30 casualties. As events continue to unfold, we urge the authorities to act with restraint and for all involved to continue to advance a meaningful democratic transition in Egypt through peaceful political participation and respect for

discourse and competition, but which have been curtailed by the continuing State of Emergency and the by-passing of civilian courts, thereby challenging the possibility of an open, inclusive, and secure campaign environment and

define the system as an attempt to manipulate the election outcome. Clear and timely information to parties on this process would defuse many of these concerns.

Recruitment and preparation of polling station staff

Polling day is the principal point of interaction between voters and the election administration. As such, the trustworthiness, competency, and efficiency of poll workers will shape a voter's impression of the overall credibility of an election. To build confidence and transparency in the process, The Carter Center recommends that the SJCE inform the public about how poll workers will be recruited and trained. Recruitment of poll workers would be enhanced by seeking to employ an equal number of men and women. Ensuring that each polling station is staffed by at least one woman upholds Egypt's commitments for ensuring equal participation of women.¹¹ Guaranteeing gender equality in poll worker recruitment would also alleviate difficulties in identifying voters wearing *Naqab*.¹²

The Carter Center mission to 'witness' Egypt's Parliamentary Elections has been accredited by the Supreme Judicial Commission for Elections. The Carter Center deployed the first phase of its international delegation on Nov. 6, 2011. This initial delegation of more than 20 field analysts, experts, and core staff – from a wide range of countries – have been deployed to governorates throughout Egypt. While deployed, these witnesses will observe the election administration, campaigning, voting and counting operations, and other activities related to the electoral process in Egypt. The Carter Center delegation will be expanded with additional witnesses in the next few days to intensify its activities shortly before the first round of polling and thereafter. The objectives of the Carter Center's election observation mission in Egypt are to: a) provide an impartial assessment of the overall quality of the electoral process, b) promote an inclusive electoral process for all Egyptians, and c) demonstrate international interest in Egypt's transition.

The Carter Center's election mission is conducted in accordance with the Regulations and Code of Conduct for Elections Followers issued by the Supreme Judicial Commission for Elections, as well as the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct that was adopted at the United Nations in 2006 and has been endorsed by 37 election observation groups. The Center assesses the electoral process based on Egypt's national legal framework and obligations for democratic elections contained in regional and international agreements.

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"Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope."

¹¹ CEDAW; UN ICCPR, Art. 25.

¹² Revised Arab Charter on Human Rights, Art. 3(3): "Men and women are equal in respect of human dignity, rights and

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