

Pax Christi International Supports the Peaceful Protests in Egypt

Statement from the Co-Presidents of Pax Christi International

This week, the world witnessed events unfold in Egypt, with millions of people peacefully taking to the streets to demand the justice, basic freedom and human rights they have so long been denied. Ordinary men and women are at long last seeking to assert their identity and retrieve their dignity after decades of corruption, deprivation and subjugation. People gathered to protest against social, cultural and economic injustice. They demanded the immediate resignation of the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak.

The peaceful protests were countered on Wednesday 2 February 2011, by a significant number of regime loyalists, who engaged in organized attacks on peaceful protests. Divide and rule is used as a classic concept of keeping power. The Egyptian army, which had not stopped the peaceful protests earlier, failed to intervene. Many were injured, including journalists; some died.

Despite these attacks, opponents of the status quo continued to demonstrate publicly and in large numbers for Mubarak's immediate resignation. Pax Christi International condemns violent attacks on peaceful protesters. The people have spoken clearly by their courageous and nonviolent presence on the streets of Cairo and other major Egyptian cities. We call on to the present Egyptian regime of President Hozni Mubarak to:

- End violence and repression against peaceful protestors and the press; ensure the safety of Egyptian citizens publicly and peacefully expressing their will.
- Explicitly cease the use of detention and torture in all forms and release without charge all detained pro-democracy demonstrators, human rights workers, journalists, and others who have been deemed a threat to the regime.
- Participate in negotiations concerning the legitimate demands of the civilian protest. This means negotiations between the authorities and a broad group of Egyptian opposition forces and independent figures.
- Negotiations should lead to the formation of a government committed to respecting the will and the basic rights of the Egyptian people.

The peaceful protests of the Egyptian people, who are demanding justice, freedom and democracy, deserve the unconditional support of democratic forces and governments throughout the world. Pax Christi International calls on the international community to support the people of Egypt and the transition they seek without manipulating the outcome and to condemn all acts of violence against peaceful protest.

We honour the courage on display in Egypt these days and the resistance to violence of those calling for change. We hope and pray that the challenges of today could be converted into the opportunities of tomorrow for all Egyptians.

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Marie Dennis and Bishop Kevin Dowling
Co-Presidents Pax Christi International