HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

ALL ACCORDING TO PLAN

The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

All According to Plan

The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt

Copyright © 2014 Human Rights Watch
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America
ISBN: 978-1-62313-1661
Cover design by Rafael Jimenez

Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide. We scrupulously investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and pressure those with power to respect rights and secure justice. Human Rights Watch is an independent, international organization that works as part of a vibrant movement to uphold human dignity and advance the cause of human rights for all.

Human Rights Watch is an international organization with staff in more than 40 countries, and offices in Amsterdam, Beirut, Berlin, Brussels, Chicago, Geneva, Goma, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, Moscow, Nairobi, New York, Paris, San Francisco, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto, Tunis, Washington DC, and Zurich.

For more information, please visit our website: http://www.hrw.org

AUGUST 2014

978-1-62313-1661

All According to Plan

The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt

Map I

Summary and Key Recommendations 1

Methodology 22

I. Background 25
- Mass Killings of Protesters 25
- Mass Arrests 26
- Restrictions on Freedom of Expression, Assembly, and Association 28

II. The Dispersals at Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda Squares 31
- Forcible Dispersal of the Rab'a Sit-in 33
  - Overview 33
  - Nasr Street, Tiba Mall (East Entrance) 35
  - Anwar al-Mufti Street (Parallel to East Nasr Street, Behind Tiba Mall) 43
  - Nasr Street, Manassa (West Entrance) 46
  - Tayaran Street, Republican Guard (North Entrance) 51
  - Tayaran Street, Manufiya Building (South Entrance) 52
  - Central Rab'a Square (Rab'a Hospital, Mosque, & Surrounding Structures) 59
  - Killings of Protesters 77
  - The Death Toll 82
- Dispersal of the al-Nahda Square Sit-in 86
- Dispersal at Mustafa Mahmoud Square 92
- The State's Justification for the Dispersals 94
- Government Planning 98
- August 14 Attacks on Churches and Police Stations 104

III. Other Mass Killings of Protesters 108
- July 5: Five Protesters Killed outside the Republican Guard Headquarters 108
- July 8: Sixty-one Protesters Killed outside the Republican Guard Headquarters 112
- July 27: Ninety-five Protesters Killed outside the Manassa Memorial 121
- August 16: One Hundred Twenty Protesters Killed in the Ramses Square Area 130

IV. Legal Standards and Accountability **140**
Freedom of Assembly and Use of Force 140
Crimes against Humanity 142
Command Responsibility 144
Investigations and Accountability 147
Access to Medical Care 149
Egyptian Law on the Use of Force and Firearms 150

V. Authorities' Response: Denial and Impunity **152**
Denial of Wrongdoing 152
Failure to Provide Information on the Dispersal 155
Fact-Finding Commission 157
National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) 159
The Need for Accountability 162
International Response 162

VI. Recommendations **165**
To the Egyptian Government 165
To the Interior and Defense Ministries 166
To the Public Prosecutor 167
To the Post-June 30 Fact-Finding Commission 168
To UN Member States 168
To UN Security Council 169
To UN Human Rights Council 169
To the Arab League 170
To the African Union 170

Acknowledgments **171**

Appendix I: Letter to Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy **172**

Appendix II: Letter to Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim **174**

Appendix III: Letter to Defense Minister Sidki Subhi **178**

Appendix IV: Letter to Public Prosecutor Hisham Barakat **181**

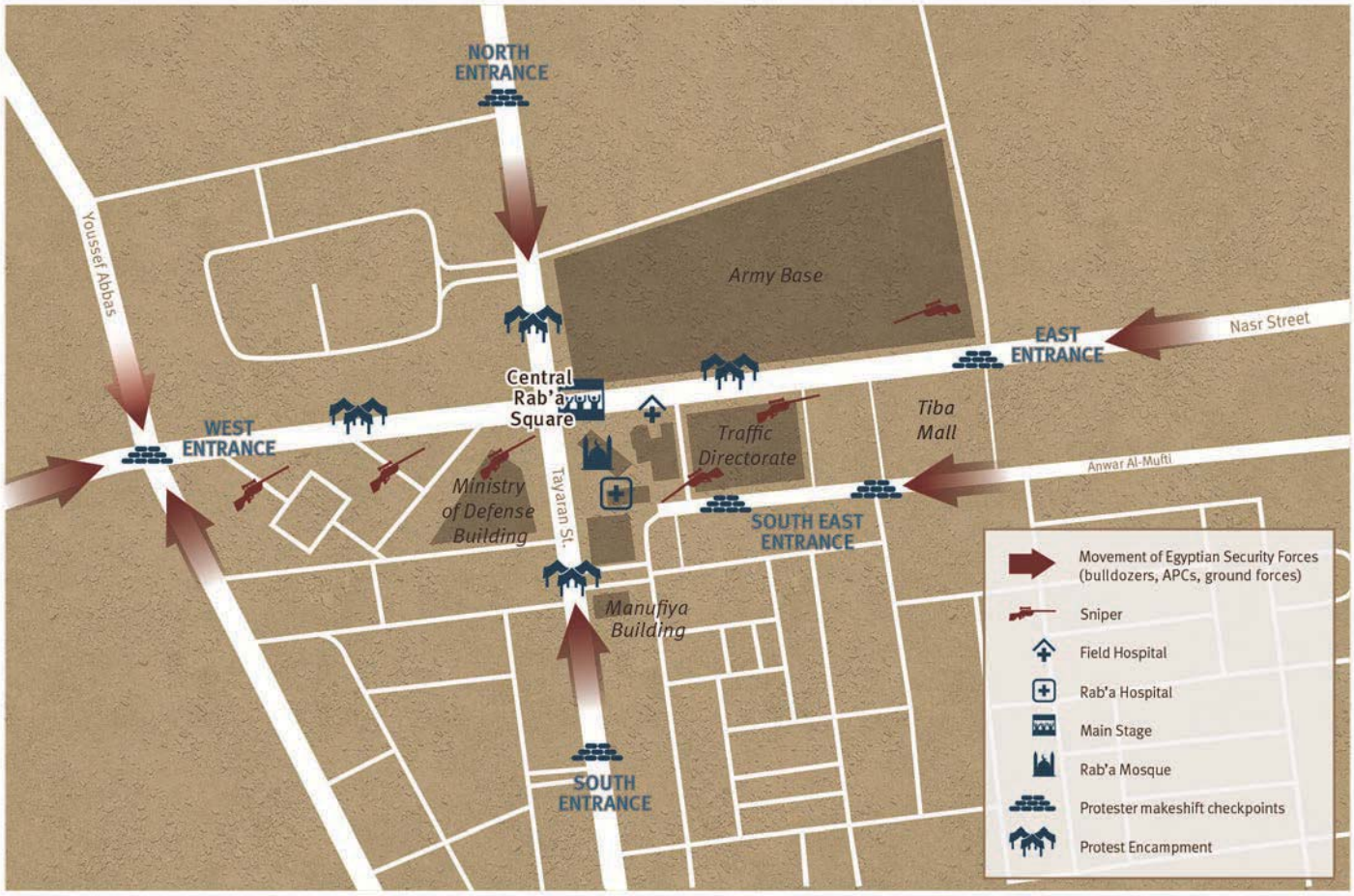
Appendix V: Follow-up Letter to Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry **184**

Appendix VI: Follow-up Letter to Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim **186**

Appendix VII: Follow-up Letter to Defense Minister Sidki Subhi **187**

Appendix VIII: Follow-up Letter to Public Prosecutor Hisham Barakat **188**

DISPERSAL OF RAB'A AL-ADAWIYA SIT-IN BY EGYPTIAN SECURITY FORCES
AUGUST 14, 2013



SUMMARY AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In July and August 2013, many of Egypt's public squares and streets were awash in blood. On July 3, 2013, the military deposed Mohamed Morsy, Egypt's first elected civilian president and a high-ranking member of the Muslim Brotherhood, on the heels of massive popular protests against Morsy calling for early presidential elections.

Over the course of the following two months, Muslim Brotherhood supporters organized two large sit-ins in Cairo and smaller protests across Egypt to denounce the military takeover and demand the reinstatement of Morsy. In response, police and army forces repeatedly opened fire on demonstrators, killing over 1,150, most of them in five separate incidents of mass protester killings.

A ripped up poster that reads 'No to the Coup', in reference to the military's ouster of Morsy on July 3, 2013 lies in a pool of blood in Rab'a Square on August 15, 2013.

© 2013 Scott Nelson/Redux

Smoke rises over demonstrators congregated in front of the main stage at the center of Rab'a Square early on August 14, 2013, as security forces begin their forceful dispersal of the sit-in organized to call for the reinstatement of ousted president Mohamed Morsy. Human Rights Watch used satellite photography from one night of the sit-in, August 2, to estimate that there were approximately 85,000 protesters in the square that night. Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim estimated that there were "more than 20,000" demonstrators at the sit-in on August 14. © 2013 Private

Human Rights Watch's one-year investigation into the conduct of security forces in responding to these demonstrations indicates that police and army forces systematically and intentionally used excessive lethal force in their policing, resulting in killings of protesters on a scale unprecedented in Egypt. The evidence we examined includes on-site investigations at each of the protest sites during or immediately after the attacks were underway, interviews with over 200 witnesses, including protesters, doctors, journalists, and local residents, and review of physical evidence, hours of video footage, and statements by public officials. On this basis, Human Rights Watch concludes that the killings not only constituted serious violations of international human rights law, but likely amounted to crimes against humanity, given both their widespread and systematic nature and the evidence suggesting the killings were part of a policy to attack unarmed persons on political grounds. While there is also evidence that some protesters used firearms during several of these demonstrations, Human Rights Watch was able to confirm their use in only a few instances, which do not justify the grossly disproportionate and premeditated lethal attacks on overwhelmingly peaceful protesters.

Numerous government statements and accounts from government meetings indicate that high-ranking officials knew that the attacks would result in widespread killings of protesters; indeed, in the single largest incident, the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, the government anticipated and planned for the deaths of several thousand protesters. One year later, security forces continue to deny any wrongdoing, and authorities have failed to hold a single police or army officer accountable for any of the unlawful killings.

August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda Square Dispersals

The gravest incident of mass protester killings occurred on August 14, when security forces crushed the major pro-Morsy sit-in in Rab'a al-Adawiya Square in the Nasr City district of eastern Cairo. Using armored personnel carriers (APCs), bulldozers, ground forces, and snipers, police and army personnel attacked the makeshift

Armed personnel carriers (APCs) operated by the Egyptian police approach protesters assembled behind makeshift fences in Rab'a al-Adawiya Square in eastern Cairo on August 14, 2013. © 2013 Private

protest encampment, where demonstrators, including women and children, had been camped out for over 45 days, and opened fire on the protesters, killing at least 817 and likely more than 1,000.

Human Rights Watch researchers documented the dispersal of the Rab'a sit-in and found that security forces opened fire on protesters using live ammunition, with hundreds killed by bullets to their heads, necks, and chests. Human Rights Watch also found that security forces used lethal force indiscriminately, with snipers and gunmen inside and alongside APCs firing their weaponry on large crowds of protesters. Dozens of witnesses also said they saw snipers fire from helicopters over Rab'a Square.

While the government had declared and made public its plan to disperse the sit-ins by force, these warnings were insufficient. Government warnings in the media, and at Rab'a Square itself, in the days before August 14 failed to specify when the dispersal would take place. Warnings on the morning of the dispersal were not heard by many and did not provide protesters sufficient time to leave before security forces resorted to forcible dispersal. The vast majority of the demonstrators interviewed by Human Rights Watch in connection with this event said they did not hear the looped pre-recorded warnings security forces played over loudspeakers near at least two of the entrances to the sit-in minutes before opening fire. Security forces then besieged demonstrators for most of the day, attacking from each of the five main entrances to the square and leaving no safe exit until the end of the day, including for injured protesters in need of medical attention and those desperate to escape. Instead, in many cases security forces fired on those who sought to escape, witnesses told Human Rights Watch.

The indiscriminate and deliberate use of lethal force resulted in one of the world's largest killings of demonstrators in a single day in recent history. By way of contrast, credible estimates indicate that Chinese government forces killed between 400-800 protesters largely over a 24-hour span during the Tiananmen Massacre on June 3-4, 1989 and that Uzbek forces killed roughly similar numbers in one day during the 2005 Andijan Massacre.

An officer from the Egyptian Central Security Forces (CSF) takes aim at a crowd of retreating protesters as security forces disperse the Rab'a sit-in on August 14, 2013. © 2013 AFP/Getty Images

The dispersal of the Rab'a Square sit-in lasted 12 hours, roughly from sunrise to sunset. Police commenced their assault, in coordination with army forces, at around 6:30 a.m. by lobbing teargas canisters and shooting birdshot pellets at protesters located near the entrances to the square. They quickly, within minutes at some entrances, escalated to live fire, according to dozens of witnesses. Led by army bulldozers, police slowly advanced from each of the five major entrances to the square—two on Nasr Street, two on Tayaran Street, and one on Anwar al-Mufti Street behind the Rab'a al-Adawiya Mosque—in the early morning hours, destroying makeshift fences erected by protesters and other structures in their path. The advancing forces were supported by snipers deployed on top of adjacent government buildings. Many protesters retreated to the central area of the square for safety, but some remained on the peripheries to hurl stones, Molotov cocktails, and fireworks at advancing forces.

Injured and dead protesters quickly filled the Rab'a hospital and makeshift facilities across the square, where volunteer doctors and other medical professionals, many themselves demonstrators, tended to serious injuries using basic donated equipment and medicine. Doctors in Rab'a hospital told Human Rights Watch that the vast majority of injuries they treated were gunshot wounds, many to the head and chest. Security forces from the morning fired at makeshift medical facilities and positioned snipers to fire on those who sought to enter or exit Rab'a hospital.

Security forces advancing on the ground as well as snipers deployed on top of buildings intensified fire over the course of the morning, until indiscriminate gunfire became prevalent at the entrances around 8 a.m. By 9-10

a.m., though, security forces had become bogged down by rock-throwing protesters at each entrance, who had positioned themselves strategically to minimize exposure to direct fire, and slowed their advance.

In the early afternoon, after a brief mid-day break when gunfire was less intense, security forces intensified their fire as they made their final advance into the heart of the square. Security forces killed many protesters in these final hours, with no part of the square protected from widespread gunfire. By around 5:30 p.m., police had encircled remaining protesters around the Rab'a mosque and hospital, located near the center of the square, and then forcefully took control of the hospital. At this point, they ordered the majority of those remaining, including doctors, to exit, with instructions to leave corpses and the injured behind. As the last protesters left the square, fires broke out on the central stage, the field hospital, the mosque, and on the first floor of Rab'a hospital. Evidence strongly suggests that the police deliberately started these fires. Security forces detained over 800 protesters over the course of the day, some of whom they beat, tortured and in some cases summarily executed, six witnesses told Human Rights Watch.

Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim alleged in a press conference on the night of the dispersal that the use of force by the police in both Rab'a and al-Nahda squares came in response to violence, including gunfire, from protesters. Human Rights Watch's investigation found, in addition to hundreds of protesters who threw rocks and Molotov cocktails at police once the assault began, demonstrators fired on police in at least a few instances. According to the official Forensic Medical Authority, eight police officers were killed during the Rab'a dispersal. However, the protesters' violence in no way justified the deliberate and indiscriminate killings of protesters largely by police, in coordination with army forces.

Extensive witness evidence, including from independent observers and local residents, establishes that the number of arms in the hands of protesters was limited. In Interior Minister Ibrahim's August 14 press conference, in fact, he announced that security forces had seized 15 guns from the Rab'a sit-in. In an August 18 speech, then-Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said referencing the

Bodies of protesters killed during the August 14 Rab'a dispersal lined up in Iman Mosque, near Rab'a Square, on August 15, 2013. By the end of the day, volunteers at Iman Mosque had catalogued 257 bodies, which had been brought from the square by family members and volunteers in the aftermath of the dispersal. © 2013 Amru Salahuddien

Injured protesters rest in a makeshift field hospital in Rab'a Square, where overwhelmed volunteer doctors tended to the hundreds of injured and dead protesters in the midst of August 14 dispersal of the Rab'a sit-in. Security forces besieged protesters for nearly 12 hours without safe exit, including for injured protesters in need of medical attention. © 2013 Mosaab al-Shamy

Rab'a dispersal that, "I am not saying everyone was firing, but it is more than enough if there are 20, 30, or 50 people firing live fire in a sit-in of that size." If the figure of 15 guns is an accurate representation of the number of protester firearms in the square, it would indicate that few protesters were armed and further corroborates extensive evidence compiled by Human Rights Watch that police gunned down hundreds of unarmed demonstrators.

Furthermore, police officers stood on top of APCs facing protesters and snipers operated from atop buildings in plain view for long periods of time, according to witnesses and dozens of videos that Human Rights Watch reviewed of the dispersal, unlikely behavior if there had been a significant threat of gunfire from protesters.

Moreover, much of the shooting by police appears to have been indiscriminate, openly firing in the general direction of crowds of demonstrators instead of targeting armed protester gunmen who may have posed a serious threat. While Human Rights Watch cannot establish whether initial gunshots that day came from the security forces or armed protesters, interviews with over 100 witnesses, including local residents not sympathetic to the protesters, confirm that security forces resorted to widespread shooting from the first minutes of the dispersal, with APCs, bulldozers, ground forces, and rooftop snipers already in place.

On the same day as the Rab'a dispersal, August 14, security forces also dispersed a second smaller encampment of Muslim Brotherhood supporters in al-Nahda Square, near Cairo University in Giza in greater Cairo. The al-Nahda dispersal followed the same pattern as in Rab'a: at around 6 a.m. security forces demanded from loudspeakers that protesters leave the square, but then, almost immediately, resorted to firing at protesters, including those attempting to leave from the designated "safe" exit. Witnesses described how police fired at protesters both deliberately and indiscriminately, using teargas, birdshot and live ammunition. As some protesters took shelter inside the Engineering Faculty Building at nearby Cairo University, further violence ensued, when security officers fired at protesters barricaded in the building. The Ministry of Health set the death toll for the dispersal of the al-Nahda sit-in at 87.

For weeks in the run-up to the August 14 dispersals, Interior Minister Ibrahim, then-Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, then-Prime Minister Hazem al-Beblawy, and other government officials stated that a forcible dispersal of the sit-ins was necessary. Officials maintained that the sit-ins disrupted residents' lives, increased traffic congestion, provided a forum for sectarian incitement and terrorism, and a locale for demonstrators to detain and abuse opponents, including some to death. Human Rights Watch interviewed local residents who catalogued the serious effects the sit-in had on their everyday lives and reviewed evidence to suggest that some protesters detained and abused a number of persons they suspected of being infiltrators, possibly resulting in casualities.

Volunteers in Iman Mosque, near Rab'a Square in eastern Cairo, on August 15, 2013 catalogue the bodies they received in the aftermath of the violent dispersal of the sit-in the previous day. By the end of the day, lists with 257 names were hung from the mosque's walls, all of whom had been among the at least 817 people killed during the Rab'a dispersal. © 2013 Amru Salahuddien

However, these allegations fail to justify a forcible dispersal that resulted in the deaths of at least 817 people and amounted to collective punishment of the overwhelming majority of peaceful protesters. The mass killings of protesters were clearly disproportionate to any threat to the lives of local residents, security personnel or anyone else. To the extent that the government had a legitimate security interest in securing the sit-in site, it failed to carry out the dispersal in a way designed to minimize the risk to life, such as by ensuring safe exits. Lethal force should be used only when strictly unavoidable to protect an imminent threat to life—a standard that was far from met in this case.

Egyptian and international mediation efforts to prevent a forcible dispersal by striking a political deal between

Egypt's National Defense Council (NDC), chaired by Interim President Adly Mansour and consisting of leading civilian and security officials, meets in July 2013. On August 4, the NDC formally reviewed and approved the plan to disperse the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins drafted by the Interior Ministry. According to security sources, the plan anticipated several thousand casualties. On August 15, the day after the dispersal, Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim told Al-Masry al-Youm that "the dispersal plan succeeded 100 percent."

Muslim Brotherhood leaders and the government took place throughout July and the beginning of August until Prime Minister Hazem al-Beblawy announced their failure on August 7. The Interior Ministry, which had already drawn up a dispersal plan that had been approved by the National Defense Council and the cabinet and had received authorization to disperse from the Public Prosecutor based on citizen complaints that had been submitted, announced that it would proceed with dispersing the sit-ins. However, for weeks security officials promised that the dispersal would be gradual, starting with a cordon around the sit-in, warnings and a safe exit, in particular for women and children. None of the promised precautions, however, were taken.

The government ultimately opted to proceed with a violent forcible dispersal with full awareness that it would result in a very high death toll: one human rights defender told Human Rights Watch that, in a meeting with human rights organizations nine days before the dispersal, Interior Ministry officials revealed that the ministry's anticipated a death toll of up to 3,500. In the days before the dispersal, two prominent newspapers cited security sources as indicating that the Interior Ministry's dispersal plan anticipated several thousand casualties.

In a televised interview on August 31, 2013, Ibrahim confirmed that the Interior Ministry had estimated losses of "10 percent of the people," acknowledging that the sit-in involved "more than 20,000" people and that "you will find thousands lost from their side." Human Rights Watch used satellite photographs from one night of the sit-in, August 2, to estimate that there were approximately 85,000 protesters in the square that night; even assuming the actual attendance on August 14 was only 20,000, as Ibrahim postulated, a 10 percent casualty rate would still represent 2,000 fatalities.

In September, Prime Minister al-Beblawy told the Egyptian daily Al-Masry al-Youm that the death toll from the Rab'a and al-Nahda square dispersals on August 14 was "close to 1,000." He added, "We expected much more than what actually happened on the ground. The final outcome was less than we expected." The Egyptian government apparently planned for, and anticipated, a violent dispersal that would result in widespread killings of protesters without any serious effort to implement the safeguards they promised, including warnings and safe exits for protesters.

On November 14, FMA head Dr. Hisham Abdelhamid held a press conference and announced that the final death-toll for Rab'a was 627, including 377 bodies autopsied at the official morgue, 167 bodies identified in Iman Mosque Rab'a Square and another 83 bodies that were taken to different hospitals around Cairo. The quasi-official National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) released a report on the Rab'a dispersal in March 2014, in which it cited the figure of 624 civilians killed.

These figures, though, ignore compelling evidence of additional uncounted bodies in morgues and hospitals across Cairo documented by Human Rights Watch researchers and Egyptian human rights lawyers on August 14 and in the days immediately following the Rab'a dispersal. Based on an extensive review of evidence, which compared death lists put out both by the official FMA and quasi-official NCHR and human rights lawyers and other survivors, Human Rights Watch documented 817 deaths in the Rab'a dispersal alone. Human Rights Watch also reviewed evidence of a possible 246 additional deaths, documented by survivors and civil society groups. This evidence, in addition to credible reports of additional bodies taken directly to hospitals and morgues without accurate record or known identity, and individuals still missing from Rab'a, it is likely that over 1,000 protesters were killed in Rab'a alone.

Other Mass Killings Incidents

The Rab'a and al-Nahda square dispersals were both preceded and followed by other mass killings of protesters. In July and August, as protesters organized marches across Cairo in response to the military's overthrow of the Morsy government, security forces repeatedly used excessive force to respond to demonstrations, indiscriminately and deliberately killing at least 281 protesters in different incidents separate from the August 14 dispersals between July 5 and August 17, 2014.

In the first of these incidents, on July 5, soldiers fired live ammunition at protesters gathered outside the Republican Guard headquarters on Salah Salem Street in eastern Cairo, where protesters believed Morsy to be held. The soldiers killed at least five protesters, including one who was attempting to place a Morsy poster on a fence outside the headquarters.

Three days later, on July 8, army units opened fire on crowds of Morsy supporters participating in a peaceful sit-in outside the same Republican Guard headquarters, killing 61 protesters according to the FMA. Two officers on the scene were also killed. The attack began at dawn and continued for the next six hours. Soldiers and snipers posted on military building rooftops used live ammunition to fire at assembled protesters and those emerging from a nearby mosque after performing morning prayers. Some protesters threw stones and Molotov cocktails and a few used firearms, but witnesses said that the vast majority of protesters were unarmed. Based on its investigation, Human Rights Watch found that the majority of these killings were unlawful. In the aftermath, the military refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing on the part of its forces or the police, saying that protesters had planned to attack the Republican Guard headquarters. Interim President Adly Mansour said he would set up a judicial panel to investigate the incident, but he failed to do so before leaving office on June 8, 2014.

In another incident on July 27, hours after thousands of Egyptians took to the streets in an orchestrated demonstration at al-Sisi's behest to give the government a "mandate to fight terrorism," Egyptian police deployed to stop a march of hundreds of Brotherhood supporters moving out of the Rab'a sit-in on Nasr Road towards the October 6 Bridge. Over a period of at least six hours, police and plainclothes armed men acting in coordination with security forces shot and killed 95 protesters, according to the FMA. One policeman also died in the clashes. Human Rights Watch's investigation of this incident, which included being in the field hospital as many of the dead and wounded were brought in, concluded that security forces used intentional lethal force against largely peaceful protesters. Medical staff reported that the majority of the bullet injuries were to the head, neck, and chest, indicative of intent to kill. A doctor on the scene concluded, based on the nature of the wounds, that the shootings had to have been from close range. Later in the day, the

interior minister insisted, "We never, as police, pointed any firearms at the chest of any demonstrator."

Two days after the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, on August 16, police at the Azbakiya police station in the Abbasiyya neighborhood of central Cairo opened fire on hundreds of protesters who had gathered after the Friday noon prayer as part of a "Day of Anger" called by Brotherhood supporters to protest the dispersal of the sit-ins and ouster of Morsy. In the course of the next six hours, at least 120 protesters were killed, according to the FMA. Prosecutors have also identified two policemen who were killed. A senior police officer at the station told Human Rights Watch that gunmen attacked the police station, triggering the government response. Although gunmen attacking the police station might have justified the use of lethal force, the number of protesters killed, statements by victims and witnesses, including independent observers, and video footage show that the police intentionally fired on largely peaceful protesters. Human Rights Watch documented several instances of police killing clearly unarmed protesters. Witnesses who saw bodies and wounded in the hospitals and morgues, including medical personnel and journalists, told Human Rights Watch that a high number of protesters had suffered wounds in the head, neck, and upper body, raising the question of whether some police officers may have been shooting to kill.

Both the police and army took part in the attacks on demonstrators. Army units played the primary role in confronting demonstrators outside the Republican Guard headquarters on July 5 and 8, though police participated as well. Police dispersed the July 27 march outside the Manassa Memorial and the August 16 demonstration in Ramses Square. Police, including both Central Security Forces (CSF) and Special Forces (ESF), took the lead role in the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, though the army played a critical role. Army forces secured the entrances, inhibiting protesters from entering and exiting, operated some of the bulldozers that cleared the way for police to advance, operated some of the helicopters, including Apaches, that flew over the square, and opened a military base adjacent to Rab'a Square to snipers. Police officers led the advance into Rab'a Square and appear to be responsible for most of the force used there.

International legal standards allow the intentional use of lethal force in policing situations in limited circumstances where strictly necessary to protect life. While security services may have been justified in using a degree of force to stop armed attacks by protesters or even to disperse protests that constituted a danger to public security, there is no justification for the manner and scale of the violence that was used. Those planning the dispersal operations were under a strict duty to take all feasible measures to ensure the operations posed a minimal risk to life, which the organizers comprehensively failed to do.

Then-Deputy Prime Minister for Security Affairs Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in a speech at an army graduation ceremony broadcast live on state television on July 24, 2013 calls on Egyptians to take to the streets to "to give [him] a mandate and an order to confront potential violence and terrorism." On July 26, tens of thousands of Egyptians gathered in orchestrated demonstrations in Tahrir Square and across Egypt to answer his call. Hours later, in the early morning of July 27, police opened fire on a march of pro-Morsy supporters near the Manassa Memorial in Cairo, killing at least 95 demonstrators. The next day, the Egyptian National Defense Council, on which al-Sisi served, met to begin planning the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals and on July 31 the cabinet, citing a popular mandate to "fight violence and terrorism," approved the Interior Ministry's dispersal plan. Al-Sisi was elected president in June 2014. © 2013 AFP

Helicopters hover over protesters assembled in the Ramses Square area in the Abassiya neighborhood of Cairo on August 16, 2013 to protest the dispersal of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins two days prior to the ouster of Morsy. Dozens of witnesses told Human Rights Watch that they saw snipers fire on demonstrators from helicopters over both Raba'a Square on August 14 and Ramses Square on August 16. © 2013 Mosaab al-Shamy

Moreover, the systematic and widespread use by Egyptian security forces of unlawful lethal force, resulting in the deaths of well over 1,000 protesters, in a manner that was not only anticipated, but planned by Egyptian government leaders, likely constitutes crimes against humanity. The mass killings at Rab'a and al-Nahda squares fit a pattern of government security forces' widespread and systematic killings of protesters seen throughout July and August 2013 following Morsy's ouster. The prohibition of crimes against humanity is among the most fundamental in international criminal law and can be the basis for individual criminal liability in international fora, as well as in domestic courts in many countries under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

This report identifies the most senior security officials and key leaders in the chain of command who should be investigated and, where there is evidence of responsibility, held individually accountable for the planning and execution or failing to prevent the widespread and systematic killings of protesters during July-August 2013, including:

- Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim, who formulated the dispersal plan and oversaw its implementation and acknowledged that he "ordered the Special Forces to advance and purify" key buildings at the heart of Rab'a Square;
- Then-Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who held a command role over the armed forces, which opened fire on protesters on July 5 and July 8, oversaw security in the country as Deputy Prime Minister for Security Affairs, and acknowledged spending "very many long days to discuss all the details" of the Rab'a dispersal;

- Special Forces head and commander of the Rab'a operation Medhat Menshawy, who boasted that he told Minister Ibrahim from Rab'a Square on the morning of August 14 that "we will attack whatever it cost us."

The report further identifies other figures, including the head of the General Intelligence Services, Mohamed Farid Tohamy, eight key Interior Ministry deputies, three senior army leaders, and several high-ranking civilian leaders, whose roles in the mass protester killings of July-August 2013 should be investigated further. If found complicit in the planning or execution of the mass killings of protesters or failing to prevent crimes committed by their subordinates that they knew or should have known about, they should also be held accountable.

The government has created a fact-finding committee to investigate the mass killings and the quasi-official National Council on Human Rights has released a report on its own investigations into the Rab'a dispersal finding wrongdoing. However, there has been no actual accounting for what happened or any credible judicial investigations or prosecutions, much less actual accountability. The police and government to date have refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing on the part of security services in their violent dispersal of the sit-ins or other attacks on protesters. In a news conference on August 14, Interior Minister Ibrahim said that his ministry successfully had carried out the dispersal of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins "without losses," and referred to a nonexistent "international standard death rate of 10 percent in the dispersal of non-peaceful sit-ins." Days later, the Interior Ministry provided all officers that participated in the dispersal with a bonus for their efforts. Until February, authorities failed to even acknowledge that they had used live ammunition in the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals. Other members of the government have similarly praised security forces and failed to acknowledge any wrongdoing on the part of security forces.

The government also has refused to publicly disclose almost any information on the dispersals, even to the NCHR in connection with its investigation. Nasser Amin, a member of NCHR and lead author of its report on the Rab'a dispersal, said on the Egyptian channel ONTV that the Interior Ministry did not cooperate with its investigation, including failing to provide its dispersal plan, and suggested that it sought to hide the truth. Although video footage of helicopters and buildings overlooking Rab'a Square show security forces recording the dispersal, the Interior Ministry has only selectively released footage pointing to violence on the parts of some demonstrators.

The NCHR report on the Rab'a dispersal, released on March 16, has significant methodological weaknesses that seriously undermine its findings. In particular it relies heavily on testimony of local residents, largely antipathetic to the Brotherhood, and there is little use of accounts of participants in the sit-ins who were the primary witnesses and victims. Nonetheless, the NCHR report concluded that security forces used excessive force on August 14 and faulted security forces for insufficient warnings and failure to provide a safe exit for much of the day. It also called for the opening of a full judicial inquiry into the dispersal and for the provision of victim compensation.

Prosecutors to Human Rights Watch's knowledge have not seriously investigated police or army officers for protester killings since June 30, 2013, but have extensively investigated protesters in relation to clashes with security forces. Prosecutors have initiated criminal proceedings against over 1,000 protesters and bystanders detained from the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals alone. Many face lengthy prison sentences.

One year after the dispersals, authorities have failed to hold accountable police and army officers and other officials responsible for the repeated use of excessive lethal force and indiscriminate and deliberate attacks on protesters. On March 19, former President Mansour requested the Justice Ministry to open a judicial investigation into the Rab'a and Nahda dispersals. The Ministry of Justice, however, announced that it would not be assigning a judge to investigate these events, since investigations fall under the prerogative of the public prosecutor, which in turn says that it is already investigating these events. Almost one year later though, prosecutors have yet to bring charges against or refer to trial a single member of the security forces for the unlawful use of firearms against protesters since June 30, 2013.

A demonstrator grieves in one of the makeshift field hospitals that held injured and deceased protesters during the dispersal of the Rab'a sit-in on August 14, 2013.
© 2013 Mosaab al-Shamy

Five months after promising to do, Mansour announced in December 2013 that he had established "a national independent fact-finding commission to gather information and evidence that accompanied the June 30, 2013 revolution and its repercussions." The committee, though, has operated with little transparency and, by its mandate, will not make its findings public. The decree establishing the committee further failed to provide it with the authority to compel witnesses, including governmental officials, to testify or to subpoena information, raising questions about the sort of information it has relied upon during its investigation.

Since the events of July and August 2013, Egyptian authorities have continued to brutally suppress dissent. While focused overwhelmingly on the country's largest political opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood, authorities have also targeted other opposition groups and individuals. Security forces have continued to use excessive lethal force against demonstrators, including killing 57 protesters on October 6, 2013 and 64 on January 25, 2014, according to the FMA. An assembly law passed in November 2013 authorizes the Interior Ministry to forcibly disperse protests that they have not been approved in

The inside of Rab'a al-Adawiya mosque on August 15, 2014, the day after security forces dispersed the over month-long sit-in that had taken place in the surrounding area. The mosque, which had served as a refuge for women and children seeking to escape the violence during the dispersal, was set ablaze as security forces took control of central Rab'a Square around 6 p.m. The Egyptian government has claimed that protesters set the mosque afire, but accounts gathered by Human Rights Watch strongly indicate that security forces were responsible. © 2013 Private

advance and to arrest demonstrators on vague grounds such as "attempt[ing] to influence the course of justice" or "imped[ing] citizen's interests." Authorities have also arrested, by their figures, at least 22,000 people since July 3, many on charges relating to their exercise of basic rights or for membership in the Muslim Brotherhood, which the government declared a terrorist organization on December 25, 2013. Prosecutors routinely renew pretrial detention orders against those detained on the basis of little evidence that would warrant prosecution, effectively detaining them arbitrarily for months on end, lawyers have told Human Rights Watch. Many of the cases that have gone to trial have been riddled with serious due process violations, including mass trials that have failed to assess the individual guilt of each defendant, yet resulted in sentences of lengthy prison terms or even the death penalty for hundreds of defendants.

Human Rights Watch reiterates calls it has made throughout the last year for the Public Prosecutor to thoroughly, independently, and impartially investigate the mass killings of protesters since June 30, 2013 and prosecute those found to have committed violations. Government statements make clear that the August 14 dispersals and attacks on demonstrators before and after were ordered by the government. As such, investigations must look at those responsible in the chain of command, including Interior Minister Ibrahim and then-Defense Minister and now President al-Sisi, ensuring that all perpetrators of serious human rights abuses are brought to justice regardless of rank or political affiliation.

The new Egyptian government should also acknowledge the serious violations that it committed in July and August 2013, provide fair compensation to victims' families, and undertake a serious process of security sector reform that results in a police force that acts in accordance with international standards on the use of force in future policing of demonstrations.

In light of the failure of Egyptian authorities until now to undertake investigations and continuing rampant impunity for serious abuses, Human Rights Watch calls on the UN Human Rights Council member states to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate all human rights violations resulting from the mass killing of demonstra-

tors since June 30, 2013. The inquiry should be mandated to establish the facts, identify those responsible with a view to ensuring that the perpetrators of violations are held accountable, as well as collect and conserve information related to abuses for future use by credible judicial institutions. Such a call follows a joint declaration made by 27 states during the March session of the Human Rights Council, which cited the need for "accountability" and "bring[ing] to justice those responsible" for the violence.

Human Rights Watch further calls for the investigation and prosecution of those implicated in these acts in national courts under the principle of universal jurisdiction and in accordance with national laws.

The European Union and the United States have both publicly criticized the mass killings in Egypt. EU High Representative Catherine Ashton for example on August 21, 2013 called the dispersal operations "disproportionate" and the "number of people who have been killed" "alarming." However the EU and other states have continued to provide support to Egypt. The United States suspended a portion of its military aid in October 2013 pending a finding required in aid legislation that Egypt was meeting particular benchmarks on rights and democratic development. But in April 2014, Washington announced its intention to release 10 Apache helicopters and $650 million in military aid on the basis of US counter-terrorism and national security interests. A bulk of the aid has since been released. The EU similarly suspended the export of military equipment to Egypt in August 2013, but left in place flexibility that permits individual states to continue supplying arms and other equipment to the government.

In light of the ongoing abuses and severe political repression in Egypt and the government's failure to investigate, much less prosecute, those implicated in the mass killings of protesters, Human Rights Watch calls on states to suspend military aid and cooperation with Egyptian law enforcement and military until the government adopts measures to end serious human rights violations.

President al-Sisi takes over an Egypt bloodied, divided, and rife with deep economic and political challenges. While it is tempting to turn the page and look past prior abuses, reckoning with the past lies at the heart of the national reconciliation process that Egypt needs to undertake in order to stabilize and move forward.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Egyptian Government

- Order security forces to end unlawful, excessive use of force and to act in accordance with international human rights law and standards on the use of force in policing demonstrations.
- Make public the findings and recommendations of the post-June 30 fact-finding commission, in addition to those of the 2011 and 2012 fact-finding commissions.

To the Public Prosecutor

- Thoroughly and impartially investigate the unlawful use of force by security forces for protester killings since June 30, 2013, and prosecute those, including in the chain of command, against whom there is evidence of criminal responsibility.
- Immediately release any people still detained without charge following demonstrations in July and August 2013, or immediately charge them with specific cognizable criminal offences followed within a reasonable timeframe by a fair trial.

To UN Member States

- Establish through the UN Human Rights Council an international commission of inquiry to investigate all human rights violations resulting from the mass killings of protesters since June 30, 2013. The inquiry should be mandated to establish the facts, identify those responsible with a view to ensuring that the perpetrators of violations are held accountable, as well as collect and conserve information related to abuses for future use by credible judicial institutions. Ensure that the mandate is sufficiently broad to cover past and future acts and other human rights abuses committed by Egyptian security forces, as well as violence by protesters.
- Suspend all sales and provision of security-related items and assistance to Egypt until the government adopts measures to end serious human rights violations, such as those related to suppression of largely peaceful demonstrations, and to holding rights violators accountable.
- Under the principle of universal jurisdiction and in accordance with national laws, investigate and prosecute those implicated in serious crimes under international law committed in Egypt in July-August 2013.

Methodology

This report focuses on several of the most significant incidents of state violence against demonstrators in July-August 2013. The events documented in this report are not an exhaustive list of all killings that took place during this period; the report, in particular, does not investigate bloody acts of violence that took place between pro-Morsy and pro-government supporters throughout this period. It also does not explore in depth other rights violations, including mass arrests of Morsy supporters.

This report is based on research carried out largely in Cairo from July 2013 to July 2014. Human Rights Watch interviewed over 200 victims and their family members, witnesses, doctors, journalists, and lawyers. Researchers largely conducted interviews in two periods: one in the days immediately following the events in July-August 2013 and a second one six months later in January-February 2014. The report also makes use of official statements from government officials.

In some cases, Human Rights Watch was able to examine television and video footage of specific incidents documented in this report, which it has preserved on file. Before inclusion in this report, Human Rights Watch determined that all video footage it referenced was authentic. It did so through a variety of means, including carefully studying contextual clues, reviewing footage alongside independent witnesses, and, in some cases, interviewing the videographer him/herself.

The shrinking space for free association, expression, and assembly, increasing restrictions on the work of human rights organizations, including arrests of rights defenders, and highly polarized political context in Egypt imposed significant obstacles on the researchers and authors of this report, including difficulty accessing protest sites, morgues, and hospitals and constant security threats in conducting victim interviews.

Human Rights Watch researchers visited hospitals on the same day as the July 5 shootings at the Republican Guard headquarters and visited the Rab'a field hospital at the time of the July 27 Manassa Memorial mass killing and in the final hours of the August 14 Rab'a dispersal. A Human Rights Watch researcher was also on site for much of the Rab'a dispersal itself.

For the investigation of the shootings at the Republican Guard headquarters on July 5, Human Rights Watch visited Taa'min al-Saahi, the government hospital where many injured and dead protesters were taken, and interviewed seven witnesses, including demonstrators, as well as an independent journalist on the scene, a local resident, and relatives of the deceased protesters.

With regards to the July 8 mass killings at the Republican Guard headquarters, Human Rights Watch spoke to 24 witnesses, including protesters and neighborhood residents, and interviewed seven doctors. Human Rights Watch also visited the site of the incident, four hospitals where the dead and injured were taken, and Cairo's main morgue.

For the July 27 killing of protesters outside the Manassa Memorial, Human Rights Watch interviewed 11 witnesses to the violence, including at field hospitals as the attacks were taking place.

In documenting the dispersal of the Rab'a sit-in on August 14, Human Rights Watch staff interviewed 122 witnesses, including 69 protesters, 20 journalists, 20 medics, 3 lawyers, and 10 local residents, including some fleeing the dispersal on August 14 and in hospitals and morgues in the surrounding area in subsequent days.

In investigating the August 14 al-Nahda dispersal, Human Rights Watch interviewed ten witnesses present during the dispersal of the sit-in, and spoke to four administrators of hospitals who received casualties that day. Human Rights Watch also interviewed five demonstrators and two doctors who treated wounded from a nearby August 14 protest in Mustafa Mahmoud Square.

Human Rights Watch interviewed 22 witnesses to the August 16 violence in Ramses Square, including 12 journalists, 6 doctors, 2 protesters, and a senior police officer and a sniper at the Azbakiya police station who were present during the clashes.

All interviews were conducted with the full consent of those being interviewed and all of the interviewees were told how Human Rights Watch would use the information provided. The vast majority of interviews were conducted in Arabic at different locations in and around Cairo. Human Rights Watch is withholding names of many witnesses for their security.

Human Rights Watch also met with several members of the June 30 fact-finding commission and Nasser Amin, lead author of the report on the Rab'a dispersal prepared by the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR).

Human Rights Watch wrote to the Interior Ministry, Office of the Public Prosecutor, Defense Ministry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassy in Washington, D.C., and Mission in New York on June 12, 2014 soliciting the Egyptian government's perspectives on the issues covered in this report. Human Rights Watch sent follow-up letters on July 8, 2014. The letters laid out preliminary findings and requested answers to specific questions and information not available to Human Rights Watch, including details on officers killed by armed demonstrators and instructions given to security forces regarding the use of live ammunition. The letters were sent by post, e-mail, and fax and receipt was confirmed. While Foreign Ministry officials responded by indicating that they are in touch with other ministries regarding Human Rights Watch's request, as of August 1, 2014, Human Rights had not received responses to its questions. Copies of the letters are included in the appendix of this report.

In establishing the number of casualties for each incident of mass killings of protesters outside of the Rab'a dispersal, Human Rights Watch relied on official figures, generally from the Forensic Medical Authority (FMA), a part of Egypt's Health Ministry. Because the FMA only includes in its count bodies which it has received and processed at official morgues, it may undercount the actual number of fatalities. These figures, therefore, should be considered lower-bound estimates.

For the Rab'a dispersal, Human Rights Watch arrived at its own casualty figure, which exceeds the FMA tally, by cross-checking the official register with figures compiled by the quasi-official National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) and documentation conducted by Human Rights Watch researchers and Egyptian human rights lawyers. Human Rights Watch further reviewed lists of additional dead compiled by survivors and other civil society organizations.

I. Background

In January 2011, Egyptians took to the streets protesting police brutality and demanding bread, freedom, and social justice. Although the 18-day uprising succeeded in toppling President Hosni Mubarak, human rights violations remained a serious concern under successive regimes—the Supreme Council for the Armed Forces (SCAF) from February 2011-June 2012 and Mohamed Morsy from June 2012-June 2013. Since the ouster of Morsy on July 3, 2013, under both the military backed interim government which took power then and the government headed by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi which took power in June 2014, Egypt has experienced a human rights crisis as dire as in any other period in the country's modern history, including mass killings of protesters, large-scale death sentences, and mass arrests of the political opposition.[1]

Mass Killings of Protesters

Since January 2011, Egyptian security forces repeatedly used excessive lethal force to disperse protests, killing well over 2,000 protesters. Between January 25 and February 11, 2011, during the course of the 18-days of mass protests across Egypt calling for the end of the Mubarak government, police killed at least 846 demonstrators in squares and near police stations in Cairo, Alexandria, Suez, and other cities.[2]

Under the 18-month rule of the SCAF, new incidents of violent dispersals of protest took place, including the killings of 27 unarmed Coptic Christian protesters outside the government television building known as Maspero in October 2011, and 51 protesters on

[1] "Egypt: New Leader Faces Rights Crisis," Human Rights Watch news release, June 10, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/09/egypt-new-leader-faces-rights-crisis.

[2] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2012* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2012), Egypt, http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/world-report-2012-egypt.

Mohamed Mahmoud Street in November 2011.[3] Under Mohamed Morsy, police killed 46 protesters outside the Port Said prison over three days in January 2013.[4]

The use of excessive force escalated significantly with the overthrow of Morsy in July 2013 as the military and security forces embarked on a campaign of intense and extensive repression against the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as non-Islamist critics of the new government. This report focuses on the mass killings of July and August 2013. During the same period, Egypt experienced bloody acts of communal violence that often pitted pro-Morsy supporters against supporters of the interim government and sectarian attacks against Coptic Christians.[5] Security forces subsequently have continued to use excessive lethal force, including in dispersing pro-Morsy marches on October 6, leading to at least 57 deaths,[6] and on the third anniversary of January 25, 2014, killing at least 64 protesters across Egypt.[7]

Mass Arrests

Under President Morsy, police arrested at least 800 protesters at various demonstrations across Egypt.[8] In one incident outside the presidential palace in December 2012, credible accounts victims and witnesses gave to Human Rights Watch indicate that supporters of the president subjected dozens of persons to abuse. Security forces failed to intervene to

---

[3] "Egypt: No Acknowledgment or Justice for Mass Protester Killings," Human Rights Watch news release, December 10, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/10/egypt-no-acknowledgment-or-justice-mass-protester-killings. See also "Egypt: Investigate Violence against Coptic Christians," Human Rights Watch news release, October 10, 2011, http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/10/egypt-investigate-violence-against-coptic-christians. See also "Egypt: Protesters' Blood on the Military Leadership's Hands," Human Rights Watch news release, November 22, 2011, http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/11/22/egypt-protesters-blood-military-leadership-s-hands.

[4] "Egypt: No Acknowledgment or Justice for Mass Protester Killings," Human Rights Watch news release, December 10, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/10/egypt-no-acknowledgment-or-justice-mass-protester-killings. See also "Egypt: Officials Turn Blind Eye to Port Said Police Abuses," Human Rights Watch news release, March 2, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/03/02/egypt-officials-turn-blind-eye-port-said-police-abuses.

[5] See Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), "The Weeks of Killing: State Violence, Communal Fighting, and Sectarian Attacks in the Summer of 2013," June 2014,

http://eipr.org/sites/default/files/reports/pdf/weeks_of_killing_en.pdf, (accessed July 21, 2014); "Egypt: Deadly Clashes at Cairo University," Human Rights Watch press release, July 5, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/05/egypt-deadly-clashes-cairo-university; "Egypt: Mass Attacks on Churches," Human Rights Watch news release, August 22, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/08/21/egypt-mass-attacks-churches.

[6] "Egypt: Protester Killings Not Being Investigated," Human Rights Watch news release, November 2, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/11/02/egypt-protester-killings-not-being-investigated.

[7] "Egypt: New Leader Faces Rights Crisis," Human Rights Watch news release, June 10, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/09/egypt-new-leader-faces-rights-crisis

[8] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2014* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2014), Egypt, http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/egypt.

protect the peaceful sit-in by anti-Morsy protesters and stop the violence by both pro- and anti-Morsy demonstrators.[9]

Following the military's ouster of Morsy in early July, an intense campaign of arrest and detention largely focused on members and sympathizers of the Muslim Brotherhood. According to the government's own figures, security forces have detained at least 22,000 people since July.[10] WikiThawra, an initiative run by the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, has determined that authorities have arrested or indicted over 41,000 since July 3, 2013.[11] Many of those detained were rounded up solely as a result of their peaceful exercise of the rights to peaceful assembly, free association, and free expression or membership in the Muslim Brotherhood, including simply displaying signs commemorating the Rab'a massacre.[12]

Military officials held Morsy along with nine senior aides in secret military detention for months.[13] Police also arrested the majority of the high-level and much of the mid-level leadership both of the Muslim Brotherhood and of its political party, the Freedom and Justice Party, across the country, including figures exclusively involved in politics and communications.[14]

Prosecutors have ordered the pretrial detention of most of those arrested pending investigation on a range of cut-and-paste charges, including incitement or participation in violence, "thuggery," vandalism, membership in a banned or terrorist organization, and illegal public assembly. Prosecutors in dozens of cases reviewed by Human Rights Watch have renewed pre-trial detention orders on the basis of little evidence that would warrant prosecution, effectively detaining them arbitrarily for months on end. Mounting reports

---

[9] "Egypt: Investigate Brotherhood's Abuse of Protesters," Human Rights Watch news release, December 12, 2012, http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/12/12/egypt-investigate-brotherhood-s-abuse-protesters.

[10] Associated Press in Cairo, "Son of former Egyptian president Mohamed Morsy sentenced to prison," *Guardian*, July 2, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/02/mohamed-morsi-son-egypt-sentenced-prison?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=%2AMideast%20Brief&utm_campaign=2014_The%20Middle%20East%20Daily_7.3.14, (accessed July 21, 2014).

[11] "Index of those arrested and prosecuted in the Sisi/Adly Mansour era, updated until May 15, 2014," WikiThawra, January 9, 2014, http://wikithawra.wordpress.com/2014/01/09/sisi-mansour-detainees/ (last accessed July 24, 2014).

[12] See "Egypt: Dangerous Message for Protesters," Human Rights Watch news release, December 7, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/07/egypt-dangerous-message-protesters.

[13] "Egypt: Morsy Aides Moved from Secret Detention," Human Rights Watch news release, December 25, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/25/egypt-morsy-aides-moved-secret-detention.

[14] Ibid.

indicate that scores of detainees have faced torture and ill-treatment in detention.[15] In one incident on August 18, 2013, four days after the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, Egyptian police outside the Abu Zaabel prison in Cairo lobbed teargas canisters into the back of a cramped police truck, in which 45 prisoners had been huddled together for six hours in temperatures bordering 40C, resulting in the deaths of 37 men.[16]

Many of the trials reviewed by Human Rights Watch have been grossly unfair and riddled with serious due process violations, violating both Egyptian law and international standards. These trials, including mass trials involving hundreds of people in a single case, failed to assess the individual guilt of each defendant, yet resulted in lengthy sentences or even the death penalty, which Human Rights Watch opposes in all circumstances. Some cases have resulted in acquittals. A criminal court in Minya recommended the death penalty for over 1,200 people in preliminary verdicts in two separate cases in March and April 2014 without allowing defendants the right to mount a meaningful defense or even assess whether they had counsel or were present in the courtroom, falling far short of ascertaining their guilt individually.[17] Many of these sentences were commuted in the final verdict, some resulting in lengthy prison terms and others in acquittals.[18]

Restrictions on Freedom of Expression, Assembly, and Association

Following the ouster of former president Hosni Mubarak, there was scope for government critics to express their views publicly in privately-owned media. During President Morsy's year in office, however, prosecutions resumed of journalists and political activists on charges of "insulting" the president or other officials and institutions and "spreading false information," using Mubarak-era penal code provisions.[19] After July 2013, the military-backed government closed down all TV stations affiliated with or sympathetic to the

---

[15] "Egypt: New Leader Faces Rights Crisis," Human Rights Watch news release, June 10, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/09/egypt-new-leader-faces-rights-crisis.

[16] Patrick Kingsley, "How did 37 prisoners come to die at Cairo prison Abu Zaabal?" *Guardian*, February 21, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/22/cairo-prison-abu-zabaal-deaths-37-prisoners (accessed July 21, 2014).

[17] "Egypt: Shocking Death Sentences Follow Sham Trial," Human Rights Watch news release, March 25, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/03/24/egypt-shocking-death-sentences-follow-sham-trial; "Egypt: Fresh Assault on Justice," Human Rights Watch news release, April 29, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/29/egypt-fresh-assault-justice.

[18] "Egypt: 183 Death Sentences Confirmed in Minya," Human Rights Watch news release, June 21, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/21/egypt-183-death-sentences-confirmed-minya.

[19] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2014* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2014), Egypt, http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/egypt.

Muslim Brotherhood, as well as other Islamist stations.[20] Egypt has particularly targeted Doha-based Al Jazeera, closing its Egypt offices, and arresting many of its reporters. Three Al Jazeera English journalists, Mohamed Fahmy, Peter Greste, and Baher Mohamed, received multi-year prison sentences after a trial in which prosecutors failed to present any credible evidence of criminal wrongdoing.[21]

The government issued a new law in November that severely restricts peaceful demonstrations and has continued to use penal code provisions that criminalize speech offenses to imprison journalists and activists. The authorities have imprisoned prominent activists like the co-founder of the April 6 Youth Movement Ahmed Maher, April 6 leader Mohamed Adel, human rights defenders Mahienoor al-Masry and Yara Sallam, and bloggers Ahmed Douma and Alaa Abdel Fattah under the new protest law, along with scores of other activists and government critics. Maher, Douma, and Adel received three-year prison sentences in December 2013.[22] Al-Masry was given a two-year sentence in May 2014.[23] Abdel Fattah was sentenced to 15-years in prison in June 2014.[24] Sallam was detained and facing trial at the time of writing.[25] Authorities also arrested some of the few activists who openly challenged the draft constitution proposed by the military-backed government or called for a "no" vote in the January 2014 constitutional referendum.[26]

In January, the government put a travel ban on academic and former Member of Parliament Amr Hamzawy. Prosecutors charged Hamzawy with "insulting the judiciary" based on a tweet that deemed a particular court case to be politicized. The same month authorities charged another prominent academic, Emad Shahin, with conspiring with foreign organizations to

---

[20] "Egypt: Halt Arbitrary Action Against Brotherhood, Media," Human Rights Watch news release, July 8, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/08/egypt-halt-arbitrary-action-against-brotherhood-media.

[21] "Egypt: Jazeera Convictions Miscarriage of Justice," Human Rights Watch news release, June 23, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/23/egypt-jazeera-convictions-miscarriage-justice.

[22] "Egypt: New Leader Faces Rights Crisis," Human Rights Watch news release, June 10, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/09/egypt-new-leader-faces-rights-crisis.

[23] Ibid

[24] "Egypt: 15-Year Sentences for 25 Peaceful Protesters," Human Rights Watch news release, June 11, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/11/egypt-15-year-sentences-25-peaceful-protesters.

[25] "Egypt: Free 23 Held for Protesting Protest Law," Human Rights Watch news release, June 24, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/24/egypt-free-23-held-protesting-protest-law.

[26] "Egypt: Activists Arrested for 'No' Campaign," Human Rights Watch news release, January 13, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/01/13/egypt-activists-arrested-no-campaign.

harm national security. Both Hamzawy and Shahin had been critical of some of President Morsy's policies, but also criticized the heavy repression that followed his ouster.[27]

On December 25, 2013 the government designated the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. Since July 3, 2013, authorities have also frozen the assets of senior leaders and taken control of over 1,000 NGOs linked to the Brotherhood and dozens of Brotherhood-affiliated schools.[28] The government has yet to put forward an evidentiary basis for this designation and the related sanctions.

On April 28, 2014, the Court of Urgent Matters banned the activities of the April 6 Youth Movement, which led many of the mass protests during the 2011 uprising, and ordered the authorities to shut down its headquarters. The court ruled that the group was "co-operating with foreign states, including the US, to cut US aid, possessing weapons, protesting and spreading chaos in the country," and had "distorted Egypt's image."[29]

On December 19, 2013, just after midnight, security forces raided the Cairo office of the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, a prominent rights group, and detained two staff members and four volunteers, subjecting them to ill-treatment before releasing five of the group the next morning. The sixth, the above-mentioned Mohamed Adel, was sentenced to three years in prison for allegedly violating the assembly law.[30] On May 22, 2014, police raided the same group's Alexandria office, briefly arresting at least 15 activists and lawyers and subjecting them to ill-treatment.[31]

---

[27] "Egypt: High Price of Dissent," Human Rights Watch news release, February 20, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/02/19/egypt-high-price-dissent.

[28] "Egypt: Terrorist Tag Politically Driven," Human Rights Watch news release, December 28, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/28/egypt-terrorist-tag-politically-driven.

[29] "Egypt: Lift Ban on Youth Opposition Group," Human Rights Watch news release, April 30, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/30/egypt-lift-ban-youth-opposition-group.

[30] "Egypt: Government Broadens Crackdown on Dissenters," Human Rights Watch news release, December 21, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/20/egypt-government-broadens-crackdown-dissenters.

[31] "Egypt: New Leader Faces Rights Crisis," Human Rights Watch news release, June 10 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/09/egypt-new-leader-faces-rights-crisis.

II. The Dispersals at Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda Squares

Both in the lead-up to the June 30, 2013 anti-government protests called for by the protest group Tamarod and in the aftermath of the military's ouster of Mohamed Morsy on July 3, 2013, thousands of Egyptians staged demonstrations throughout Egypt to show support for Morsy. Located just kilometers away from the Presidential Palace, Rab'a al-Adawiya Mosque in the Nasr City neighborhood of eastern Cairo was transformed after July 3 into the epicenter of their protest, as organizers declared an open-ended sit-in until the military resorted Morsy to the presidency. Brotherhood supporters also maintained a second smaller encampment in al-Nahda Square in Giza in greater Cairo.

Human Rights Watch visited the two protest sites, both of which were densely populated with women and children as well as men, on several occasions prior to the dispersals. Using aerial photos, Human Rights Watch calculated that there were approximately 85,000 protesters at the Rab'a sit-in alone on August 2.[32] One video shows aerial footage of the sit-in that evening.[33]

From the first days of the sit-ins, the government raised the possibility of dispersal, citing the need to halt the detention and abuse of non-Brotherhood members that they alleged was taking place within the sit-ins, the disruption of traffic and disturbance to residents of the sit-in areas, and the incitement and sectarianism of Brotherhood leaders. On July 31, citing what it called a popular mandate to "fight violence and terrorism," the Egyptian cabinet authorized the interior minister to "take all necessary measures to face these

---

[32] Assuming uniform density value across the whole area, and based on a count in four zones near the main stage, the best estimate for the crowd on Friday August 2, 2013, is 85,688. Human Rights Watch is 95% confident that the true number of protesters lied between 71,588 and 99,550. These estimates are based on a measurement of the total protest area (approx. 110,000m2) from a review of a video of the sit-in and GPS points at the entrances to the sit-in. Using overhead imagery of the crowd, the center of the crowd was divided into four polygons. The square area was determined for each polygon. Three independent coders identified the number of individuals in each polygon. Each coder therefore had four counts of individuals for a total of 12 counts. The inter-reliability of the coders was tested using Krippendorf's alpha (.7821), and the coders were found to be reliable. These counts were then normalized by the square area of each polygon for a per square meter count. With 12 total counts of people per square meter, we computed the mean, standard deviation and standard error of the mean, where were used to develop the 95% confidence interval.

[33] "Breaking: First aerial footage of Rab'a Square," video clip, YouTube, August 3, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3hXK4ETrow (accessed July 21, 2014).

dangers and put an end to them within the framework of the constitution and the law."[34] In the days leading up to the dispersal, security officials promised a gradual dispersal, which would include warnings and a safe exit.[35]

These precautions were not taken. On August 14, authorities used deliberate and indiscriminate lethal force to disperse the two sit-ins, where protesters had remained encamped for 45 days, resulting in one of the most bloody incidents of mass unlawful killings of largely peaceful protesters in recent history.[36] While Egyptian security forces have repeatedly since 2011 used excessive force to respond to demonstrations, the August 14 dispersals were unprecedented in the scale of sheer brutality.

By the end of that day, the police in concert with the army had killed at least 904 people during the dispersals, at least 817 from Rab'a and 87 from al-Nahda, including women and children. In September, Prime Minister al-Beblawy told the Egyptian daily *Al-Masry al-Youm* that the death toll from the Rab'a and al-Nahda square dispersals on August 14 was "close to 1,000."[37] Ten members of the security forces were also killed—eight in Rab'a and two in Nahda. Although some protesters were armed and shot at the police, Human Rights Watch concluded that they were few in numbers based on 132 interviews with protesters, local residents, medics, and journalists from both incidents, and review of hours of video footage.

---

[34] Cabinet of Ministers Press Release, July 31, 2013, on file with Human Rights Watch; Associated Press, "Egypt's government orders police to end sit-in protests by supporters of ousted president," *Fox News*, August 1, 2013, http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/31/egypt-government-orders-police-to-end-sit-in-protests-by-supporters-ousted/ (accessed November 26, 2013).

[35] See, e.g., "Ministry of Interior Statement, Ministry of Interior Official Facebook Page," Facebook, August 1, 2013, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=577159528994381&set=a.181676241876047.36036.181662475210757&type=1&theater (last accessed July 24, 2014).

[36] Precise estimates of the number of protesters killed in both the Tiananmen and Andijan Massacres are not available. Human Rights Watch has described "untold numbers" of protesters killed in Tiananmen Square. "China: Tiananmen's Unhealed Wounds," Human Rights Watch news release, May 13, 2009, http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/05/12/china-tiananmen-s-unhealed-wounds. Credible estimates by journalists put the overall figure between 400-800. Bernard Gwertzman, "Interview, Kristof: 15 Years Later, Tiananmen Square Remains 'Elephant' in Chinese Politics," *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 28, 2004, http://www.cfr.org/china/kristof-15-years-later-tiananmen-square-remains-elephant-chinese-politics/p7065 (accessed July 21, 2014). Human Rights Watch estimates that "hundreds of largely peaceful protesters were killed by Uzbek government forces indiscriminately and without warning" and that the actual number of civilian deaths is "several times" the official figure of 187 killed. "Uzbekistan: No Justice 7 Years After Andijan Massacre," Human Rights Watch news release, May 12, 2012, http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/11/uzbekistan-no-justice-7-years-after-andijan-massacre.

[37] "Yasser Rizk and Mansour Kamel, "Dr. Hazem Beblawy in an interview with Al-Masry al-Youm–the emergency law is the 'least of evils' and will likely be extended for two months," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, September 11, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=396463&IssueID=2985 (accessed August 5, 2014).

Following its year-long investigation, Human Rights Watch has further concluded that the government used disproportionate force, failed to take measures to minimize loss of life, and knowingly opened fire on unarmed protesters with live ammunition, therein committing serious violations of international human rights laws. The systematic and widespread nature of the deliberate and indiscriminate killings, coupled with evidence indicating that the government anticipated and planned to engage in mass unlawful killings, i.e. murder, and that they fit into a consistent pattern of protester killings, indicate that the violations likely amount to crimes against humanity. One year later, authorities have made no effort to investigate or otherwise hold police and army officers and other officials accountable for their actions.

Forcible Dispersal of the Rab'a Sit-in

Overview

Rab'a al-Adawiya square lies at the intersection of Nasr Street, a major artery connecting downtown Cairo to its international airport, and Tayaran Street in the eastern Cairo district of Nasr City. Demonstrators occupied the roughly one kilometer stretch of road on Nasr Street, stretching from Yousif Abbas Street in the west to Tiba Mall in the east, as well as a roughly half-kilometer stretch of Tayaran Street and parts of intersecting side streets. The square is named after the mosque located in the center of the square and is surrounded by residential and government buildings, including a military base in the northeast quadrant of the square, the Traffic Directorate building of the Interior Ministry on the east side of Nasr Street, and a Defense Ministry building on the southwest corner of the square.

The dispersal of the Rab'a sit-in—a 12-hour assault lasting from sunrise to sunset—marked the single bloodiest event in the government's brutal crackdown on dissent since the July 3 ouster of Morsy. Police and army forces attacked the protest encampment at each of its five major entrances—two entrances on Nasr Street, two on Tayaran Street, and one on Anwar al-Mufti Street—with APCs and bulldozers and with government snipers on the tops of surrounding buildings. Thirty-one witnesses also said they saw security forces fire teargas, birdshot, or live ammunition from helicopters hovering over the square. Security forces besieged demonstrators, leaving them without access to safe exit from the first minutes of

the dispersal until the very end of the day, including for severely injured protesters in need of urgent medical attention and men, women, and children desperate to escape the violence.[38] Security forces failed to provide sufficient warning in advance of the dispersal. Warnings in the days ahead did not specify a date and time during which the dispersal would take place. Minutes before opening fire early on the morning of August 14, security forces played pre-recorded loops, calling on protesters to leave and identifying a safe exit, over loudspeakers near at least two of the entrances to the square. The vast majority of the over 100 witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch, however, said they did not hear the warning until after forces had opened fire. Many of those in the square only came to know of the dispersal after being awoken by other demonstrators or by the sound and smell of teargas and gunfire at the entrances to the square.

Police commenced their assault by lobbing teargas canisters and using other less than lethal forms of riot control against protesters located near the entrances to the square, but they quickly, within minutes in places, escalated to live fire. Brotherhood organizers had established security committees at the entrances, which had erected makeshift fences to slow the approach of forces. Police forces, though, destroyed the makeshift fences and other structures in their path. Many protesters took cover in the central area of the square, which remained relatively safe, except for teargas, until the late morning. The situation on side streets greatly varied from location to location—some, such as Sibawayh al-Masry Street, remained relatively safe for most of the day—but could only be accessed after braving gunfire from one of the five major entrances.

Advancing forces and snipers on top of buildings intensified fire over the course of the morning, at times firing continuously for minutes at a time without pause. The main entrance to the Rab'a hospital, which protesters referred to as "Sniper Alley," was the target of sniper fire for much of the day, posing serious risk to those seeking medical attention. Many of the protesters who did not take cover and stayed at the peripheries joined the protester security committees and threw stones and Molotov cocktails at advancing forces and, in some cases, carried sticks and clubs. Some protesters also carried firearms and shot at the police; the number of armed men, though, was limited, according to the accounts of witnesses. By around 9-10 a.m., these makeshift defense

[38] This section provides an overview of the Rab'a dispersal and is based on 122 interviews with victims, doctors, journalists, local residents, and other witnesses and extensive review of video footage, government statements, and physical evidence. The sourcing for each claim, particular to each section of Rab'a Square, is footnoted in the sections below.

strategies, concentrated at strategic points at the entrances, succeeded in temporarily slowing the advance of forces.

After a brief mid-day period when clashes diminished, security forces, in coordination with snipers, intensified their fire and made their final advance into the heart of the square. Many were killed in these final hours, with no part of the square protected from prevalent gunfire. Security forces opened fire at structures that had turned into makeshift medical facilities, including Rab'a hospital, the field hospital, and the courtyard adjacent to Rab'a mosque. By around 5:30 p.m., police had encircled remaining protesters around Rab'a mosque and hospital, eventually allowing the majority of those remaining to exit, with instructions to leave corpses and the injured behind. As the last protesters left the square, the central stage, field hospital, mosque, and first floor of the hospital were set ablaze, likely by security forces. Police detained over 800 protesters over the course of the day, some of whom they beat, tortured, and, in several cases, summarily executed.

The operation involved close cooperation between the police and the army. The police, consisting of both the Central Security Forces (CSF), Egypt's riot police, and the Special Forces (ESF), who usually are reserved for specialized operations, took the lead role during the dispersal and appear to be responsible for most of the lethal force used. While difficult to distinguish between the CSF and ESF given the similar armament both forces wore during the dispersal, Interior Minister Ibrahim has said that ESF led the final push into Rab'a Square. The army also played an important supporting role. Army forces secured the entrances, inhibiting protesters from entering and exiting, operated the bulldozers that cleared the way for police to advance, operated some helicopters, including Apaches, which flew over the square, and opened a military base adjacent to Rab'a Square to snipers.

Nasr Street, Tiba Mall (East Entrance)

The dispersal commenced from the east with the arrival of security forces on Nasr Street near Tiba Mall and on Anwar al-Mufti Street, a parallel street behind Tiba Mall, at around 6:15-6:30 a.m. Human Rights Watch interviewed 26 witnesses near the Tiba Mall entrance to Rab'a Square and none heard any warning or siren before the dispersal began.
Many of these witnesses came to know that security forces were forcibly dispersing protesters only when the operation was already underway. Asma Shehata, a young protester, told Human Rights Watch that she had been walking to her parked car near Tiba

Mall when she suddenly saw gas falling around her.[39] A leader of the group Youth Against the Coup said he awoke from the tent he had sleeping in a little after 6 a.m. upon hearing fire all around him and immediately ran towards the center of the square.[40]

Security forces began their assault by lobbing teargas canisters from Anwar al-Mufti Street onto Nasr Street and by firing from positions on top of the Military Intelligence building in the adjacent army base, witnesses told Human Rights Watch. A 19-year-old videographer told Human Rights Watch that he first noticed snipers in the base at 2 or 3 a.m. that morning, fortifying their defenses. The snipers began firing from the first minutes of the dispersal.[41]

Four protesters recounted to Human Rights Watch witnessing fire from the army base strike a member of Ultras Nahdawy, a youth group supportive of Morsy.[42] A high school student who had been sleeping near Tiba Mall described to Human Rights Watch how he saw an officer from the base "spot [name redacted] and hit him in the leg with a teargas canister," which caused him to fall.[43]

Snipers deployed on top of the base supported security forces advancing west towards the center of the square on Nasr Street from near Tiba Mall. According to witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch, forces moved in formations: first, a large Caterpillar bulldozer, equipped with metal tank tracks instead of wheels, would clear the path, "plowing through anything in its way,"[44] including sandbags and makeshift rock walls set up by demonstrators to slow the advance. APCs manned by the ESF flanked the bulldozer. CSF police trucks followed behind, while army forces secured the periphery and blocked new protesters from entering the square.

Members of the Brotherhood security committee in charge of the Tiba Mall entrance interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that they hid behind sandbags and used a variety

---

[39] Human Rights Watch interview with Asma Shehata, protester and activist, Cairo, January 22, 2014.

[40] Human Rights Watch interview with Youth Against the Coup group leader (name withheld), Cairo, February 4, 2014.

[41] Human Rights Watch interview with 19-year-old videographer (name withheld), Cairo, February 2, 2014.

[42] Human Rights Watch interview with four Ultras Nahdawy group members (names withheld), Cairo, February 4, February 5, and February 9, 2014.

[43] Human Rights Watch interview with high school student (name withheld), Cairo, February 5, 2014.

[44] Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

of strategies to try to slow the advance.[45] According to witnesses, many protesters threw rocks and later Molotov cocktails at approaching security forces. Some burned tires, whereas others used fireworks in order to intimidate forces as they advanced.[46]

Advancing forces and snipers acting in tandem very quickly resorted to using birdshot and live fire, witnesses said. According to the high school student who had witnessed the incident, the same member of the Ultras Nahdawy was hit at approximately 6:30 a.m. by a live bullet in the pelvis, though he did not see where the fire came from.[47] Injured protester Mohamed Ali told Human Rights Watch on August 14, as he lay with his right leg bloodied and bandaged in the Rab'a hospital, that he had been standing next to his tent, towards the front of Nasr Street, when police moved in and shot him in his right leg above the knee.[48]

A father of three and member of one of the Brotherhood security committees in charge of protecting the field hospital on Nasr Street west of Tiba Mall described hearing live fire "in rapid succession" minutes after seeing teargas.[49] Shehata recalled hearing "a quick succession of bullets" not more than 10 minutes after first seeing teargas.[50]

One man, who sought to make his way to the field hospital in the center of the square, described how the snipers in the army base began to shoot indiscriminately at protesters shortly after gunfire began:

> I saw one or two officers on top of the military intelligence building on the northern side of Nasr Street, opposite the Tiba Mall. We call it Unit 75. Another one or two were standing on top of the interior ministry traffic building on the same side of Nasr Street as Tiba Mall. They were like snipers but they were firing randomly. They were hiding behind sandbags on top of the building. They'd stand up to shoot then hide again. They kept doing this: shoot, then hide.[51]

---

[45] Human Rights Watch interview with Brotherhood security committee members (names withheld), Cairo, February 5, 2014.
[46] Human Rights Watch interviews with witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014.
[47] Human Rights Watch interview with high school student (name withheld), Cairo, February 5, 2014.
[48] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Ali, Cairo, August 14, 2013.
[49] Human Rights Watch interview with Brotherhood security committee member (name withheld), Cairo, February 9, 2014.
[50] Human Rights Watch interview with Asma Shehata, protester and activist, Cairo, January 22, 2014.
[51] Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

A video reviewed by Human Rights Watch shows a female protester shot in the neck while holding a handheld video camera in the morning on eastern Nasr Street.[52]

Another witness, a businessman participating in the sit-in, said:

> They immediately fired teargas and live fire. It was so intense, I can't even describe it; it was not like the other times before [referring to prior mass killings], one or two at a time. It was raining bullets. I smelled the gas and immediately saw people being hit and falling down around me. I have no idea how many people were hit. We didn't hear any warnings, nothing. It was like hell.[53]

Habiba Abd al-Aziz, a 26-year-old staff reporter for *Xpress*, a sister publication of the UAE-based *Gulf News*, was one of those who fell as forces advanced from Tiba Mall. At 7:33 a.m. Abd al-Aziz sent a text message to her mother to tell her that she was heading to the front lines from the center of the square "in a little while."[54] She had brought her camera with her to cover the advance, two witnesses hold Human Rights Watch. A friend of Habiba told Human Rights Watch, "Police were shooting left and right...Habiba was holding a camera and a tripod. I told her to move. She wasn't listening and wouldn't move. I saw her fall."[55] A journalist who witnessed the shooting also recounted that Abd al-Aziz had been shot after rushing to the front lines in her capacity as a journalist to document the clashes.[56] Abd al-Aziz died as a result of her injuries. Her mother messaged her at 12:46 p.m. to say, "Habiba,

---

[52] "A veiled woman shot in front of me in Rab'a al-Adawiya," video clip, YouTube, August 14, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=6ikTgyTuxrI (accessed July 21, 2014). In authenticating the timing and location of the video, Human Rights Watch showed it to one of the protesters who had been in the area at the time, Asma Shehata, who indicated that the shooting had taken place on Nasr Street near Tiba Mall on the morning of August 14, 2013. Human Rights Watch email correspondence with Asma Shehata, protester and activist, July 7, 2014.

[53] Human Rights Watch interview with businessman witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.

[54] "Mother of UAE reporter killed in Egypt publishes their last SMS exchange," *National (UAE)*, August 15, 2013, http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/mother-of-uae-reporter-killed-in-egypt-publishes-their-last-sms-exchange (accessed April 26, 2014).

[55] Human Rights Watch interview with friend of Habiba Abd al-Aziz (name withheld), Cairo, January 24, 2014.

[56] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Hamdy, Cairo, August 14, 2013. The witness, though, identified the shooting as having taken place in a different part of the square.

please reassure me. I've called thousands of times. Please, my darling, I'm worried sick. Tell me how you are."[57]

Statements from the Interior Ministry on the morning of August 14 maintaining that no bullets had yet been fired and thereafter insisting there were no casualties on the eastern side of Nasr Street until security forces had arrived at the center of square, are inconsistent with Human Rights Watch's documentation.[58]

Outflanked, pro-Morsy protesters at the front lines gradually retreated backwards towards the center of the square. As forces advanced down Nasr Street, they destroyed structures in their path, including an iconic three-story wooden tent demonstrators had built on the east side of the square.[59] A young father from Alexandria who managed to enter Rab'a Square through side roads shortly after the dispersal began found himself "the only one" behind the advancing forces on Nasr Street. He told Human Rights Watch that the bulldozer had "destroyed everything" and that CSF officers, who had advanced behind the ESF, were rummaging through half-destroyed tents in search of valuables to steal.[60]

By around 10 a.m., forces had advanced to the Traffic Directorate building, an Interior Ministry building adjacent to the Rab'a field hospital and mosque. One protester, who had gone inside a building off Nasr Street at around 8:30 a.m. to escape the teargas, described to Human Rights Watch the scene when she went out at around 10 a.m.:

> I went out, and it was the shock of my life. They were no tents. They were all burned. When I went in, the street was full of tents. The square had become a piece of coal.[61]

---

[57] "Mother of UAE reporter killed in Egypt publishes their last SMS exchange," *National (UAE)*, August 15, 2013, http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/mother-of-uae-reporter-killed-in-egypt-publishes-their-last-sms-exchange (accessed April 26, 2014).

[58] Yousry al-Badry, "Interior Ministry: We did not fire live ammunition and only used teargas…6 killed and 66 injured," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, August 15, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=393448 (accessed July 21, 2014); "Khairy Ramadan, al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014).

[59] Human Rights Watch interview with pro-Morsy protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 28, 2014.

[60] Human Rights Watch interview with pro-Morsy protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014.

[61] Human Rights Watch interview with Yasmeen Abdel Fattah, Cairo, February 4, 2014.

Pro-Morsy protesters, though, regrouped. Concentrating several hundred protesters near the Traffic Directorate building, demonstrators built makeshift fences to hold back the advance of forces and fought back with rocks and Molotov cocktails.[62] One protester told Human Rights Watch that he also saw at least one shotgun with birdshot among the demonstrators. He described the makeshift strategy they employed, which contributed to keeping security forces from advancing for several hours:

> APCs continued to hit continuously, and forces approached with birdshot. We took pots for protection from the cooking area…found fridges for defense…and would approach from the side of Nasr Street, throw rocks, and retreat…. They didn't know how to get through us…. Things continued back and forth like this. [63]

Egyptian freelance journalist Maged Atef told Human Rights Watch that around mid-day he saw a police officer, who had come on foot with a microphone to tell protesters to leave the central part of Rab'a Square, shot on the eastern side of Nasr Street.[64] The National Council for Human Rights report on Rab'a highlights this event, which the report author said was largely based on an interview with Atef, and identifies it as a main factor behind the escalation of shooting by security forces in the late morning period in this area.[65]

Human Rights Watch cannot establish precisely when the shooting took place.

There did, however, appear to be intensification of shooting in the late morning, with many protesters falling. One protester, a college student studying engineering, told Human Rights Watch that she decided to move from the center of the square to near the Traffic Directorate building at around 10:30 a.m. to assist those on the front lines by breaking pavement to make rocks to use against advancing forces. While doing so, she met Warda Mustafa, whose daughters she knew, around 11:15 a.m. She recounted to Human Rights Watch what happened next:

---

[62] Human Rights Watch interview with pro-Morsy protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 9, 2014.
[63] Human Rights Watch interview with pro-Morsy protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.
[64] Human Rights Watch interview with Maged Atef, journalist, Cairo, August 17 and September 4, 2013.
[65] Human Rights Watch interview with Nasser Amin, member of the National Council for Human Rights, Cairo, May 24, 2014.

> I was saying goodbye to her, and [the guys] told us to get down. Forces were shooting low, and Warda was not sitting, but lying down. Suddenly, around her head cover, her brains fell out in front of me.[66]

Another protester, who also saw Mustafa fall, provided a similar account to Human Rights Watch.[67] Mustafa eventually succumbed to her injuries, dying on August 18, according to the death certificate reviewed by Human Rights Watch.[68]

Shortly thereafter, protesters surged forward in an effort to push back security forces. Ahmed Ammar, a civil engineer and a member of the Rab'a field hospital security committee, encouraged the group to keep up their resistance, Ammar's wife Yasmeen Abdel Fattah and three protesters who were on the front lines with Ammar told Human Right Watch.[69] A 17-year-old, who had been using a slingshot to repel forces and considered Ammar a fatherly figure, described the scene that ensued:

> Ahmed stood up, went past the gates [we had erected], put up his arms, and said, 'We are peaceful. There is nothing here'. Then, an Interior Ministry officer—who was wearing black, Special Forces, and carrying a rifle—loaded his gun to fire. I stood to try to push Ahmed out of the way. I was only a step away, but I couldn't move. I could only call his name. The officer got him in the chest with four bullets, and he fell.[70]

Two other witnesses provided corroborating accounts of Ammar's fall.[71] He died immediately, leaving behind his wife and three children between one and ten years old.[72]

In the early afternoon, some shooting from snipers deployed on top of buildings and firing of teargas continued, but security forces temporarily halted their advance on Nasr Street.

---

[66] Human Rights Watch interview with college student (name withheld), Cairo, January 28, 2014.

[67] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 5, 2014.

[68] Death certificate on file with Human Rights Watch, August 18, 2013.

[69] Human Rights Watch interview with Yasmeen Abdel Fattah, Cairo, February 4, 2014; Human Rights Watch interviews with three protesters (names withheld), Cairo, February 5 and February 9, 2014.

[70] Human Rights Watch interview with 17-year-old protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 5, 2014.

[71] Human Rights Watch interviews with two witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, February 5 and February 9, 2014.

[72] Human Rights Watch interview with Yasmeen Abdel Fattah, Cairo, February 4, 2014.

The de-escalation may have in part resulted from some police having to move back to the Tiba Mall entrance to prevent additional pro-Morsy supporters from entering the sit-in.

However, at around 3 p.m. the security forces made a final push to reach the center of the square. A chemist, who witnessed events from the entrance to the Traffic Directorate building, described the intensity of the fire he saw then:

> I stood by the building…it was 2:50 or 2:55 p.m.…. Then suddenly I saw intense fire from all directions. For ten minutes, there was no one on the street. Then I saw a woman and man walking towards the security forces. They were the only people on the ground. Then I heard bullets and saw the woman on the ground. The man tried to carry her and also took a bullet and fell. We were not able to get their bodies because of the bulldozer.[73]

Another protester described seeing the security forces shooting wildly shortly thereafter:

> One of the APCs turned very fast, so that it faced us with its side. When that APC turned and fired, I ducked and started to run. I saw the head of a guy next to me explode. We didn't have weapons. All we had were stones. I saw [snipers in] the helicopters firing on people; once or twice I saw the door of the helicopter open, someone fire, then the door close.[74]

In order to avoid the approaching APCs, many of the protesters retreated to the side road between the Traffic Directorate building and the Rab'a field hospital, some hiding in tents or behind sandbags. Additional snipers, though, soon began firing from on top of the Traffic Directorate and surrounding buildings. According to a protester who had been hiding in a tent, the bullets entered tents and other previously secured areas, forcing the remaining protesters to head into the central square.[75] Nearly 11 hours after beginning their advance, forces arrived in the center of Rab'a Square from the east.

---

[73] Human Rights Watch interview with chemist (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.
[74] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.
[75] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014.

Anwar al-Mufti Street (Parallel to East Nasr Street, Behind Tiba Mall)

Running parallel to the eastern stretch of Nasr Street, Anwar al-Mufti Street stands as a key entry point to the central section of Rab'a Square. The street, lined by cafes and shops, runs behind Tiba Mall and the Traffic Directorate building, connecting to Nasr Street between the Traffic Directorate and central Rab'a Square, and extends to the Rab'a hospital and Tayaran Street. As a result of its strategic significance, Brotherhood demonstrators established several security checkpoints on the street.

Security forces entered Anwar al-Mufti Street from Abbas Akkad Street, a street that runs perpendicular to Nasr Street, around 6 a.m. As it was a narrower street without as many protester tents, APCs, not bulldozers, led the advance. An engineering student who was positioned at the second security checkpoint on Anwar al-Mufti Street told Human Rights Watch that at around 6:20 a.m., in the first minutes of the dispersal, security forces lobbed about a dozen teargas canisters onto Nasr Street and at demonstrators on the front lines of Anwar al-Mufti Street.[76] One local resident, who lives a few blocks from Anwar al-Mufti resident, said that she felt teargas in her home by 6:45 a.m.[77]

Within 10-15 minutes, security forces began to fire birdshot and live ammunition, according to eleven demonstrators on the front lines interviewed by Human Rights Watch. Human Rights Watch reviewed footage depicting heavy gunfire on Anwar al-Mufti in the early morning and interviewed the videographer who said that he recorded the scene from behind a sandbag.[78] Two 19-year-old protesters, who lived in the area and arrived on the scene at 7 a.m. upon hearing that the dispersal had commenced, described seeing live fire immediately upon arriving on Anwar al-Mufti Street.[79]

A 26-year-old protester said that just before 7 a.m. he was on Anwar al-Mufti Street when the police started moving in with teargas:

> We heard the sound of gunshots straight away with the teargas. I tried to hide because the shooting was everywhere. While I was there, I saw three

---

[76] Human Rights Watch interview with engineering student (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.

[77] Human Rights Watch interview with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, February 12, 2014.

[78] Human Rights Watch interview with videographer (name withheld), Cairo, February 2, 2014.

[79] Human Rights Watch interview with two 19-year-old protesters (names withheld), Cairo, January 29, 2014.

> people being shot and falling to the ground, [including] one shot in the eye and one in the side.[80]

A 21-year-old from the Manufiya Province told Human Rights Watch about how he got injured in the midst of this early fire:

> I was between two tents helping people to deal with teargas. Fire was continuous. One second I felt an odd feeling in my leg, then pain in my pelvis. I was on Anwar al-Mufti [Street] turning to pick up a Pepsi bottle [used to mitigate effects of gas] and suddenly felt pain. We all fell, six of us, in a matter of seconds… I put my hand on my chest and it was hot… I couldn't feel my chest at all. The bullet had come from the back… I saw blood on my hand and was heavily bleeding… The bullet came close to my heart.[81]

The APCs attempted to advance, but were unable to penetrate rows of cars and buses that protesters had lined up, witnesses said. One protester observed an APC attempt to push past at 8:30 a.m., but get a flat tire driving over nails protesters had set up, and back up amidst a hailstorm of rocks thrown by protesters.[82] Protesters on Anwar al-Mufti Street later also used Molotov cocktails, according to a 24-year-old chemist who was among the demonstrators.[83] One demonstrator also said he noticed several demonstrators with guns in a building off Anwar al-Mufti in the late morning.[84]

Gunfire intensified in the mid-morning, so strongly, according to one protester, that it penetrated the sandbags protesters had been crouched behind.[85] A 24-year-old from Giza told Human Rights Watch that he saw machine gun fire coming from the APCs and saw five people fall in the 15 minutes he spent on Anwar al-Mufti Street that morning.[86] A 21-year-old pharmaceutical studies student whom security forces had detained and were holding in the middle of the Anwar al-Mufti Street from around 8 to 11 a.m. recounted seeing forces

---

[80] Human Rights Watch interview with 26-year-old protester (name withheld), Cairo, August 14, 2013.
[81] Human Rights Watch interview with injured 21-year-old protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 3, 2013.
[82] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.
[83] Human Rights Watch interview with 24-year-old chemist (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.
[84] Human Rights Watch interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2013.
[85] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.
[86] Human Rights Watch interview with 24-year-old protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 3, 2014.

fire a gun on top of an APC in the mid-morning. He described what happened as the fire approached him at around 10-10:30 a.m.:

> The shots approached us, even though our hands were up. The person next to me took a bullet in his head. He asked for permission to enter the square and die there and [the police] allowed him to do so… I took a birdshot pellet in my lip, which opened it up.[87]

Fifteen protesters told Human Rights Watch that snipers positioned on top of the Traffic Directorate building supported the approaching forces. While the snipers largely directed fire at the western part of Anwar Al-Mufti Street, near the entrance to Rab'a hospital, they also supported forces from the east. Ain Shams University professor Mustafa Sharif said he had been hiding from sniper fire in Sibawayh al-Masry Street, which runs parallel to Anwar al-Mufti Street near Rab'a al-Adawiya school, at around 8:30 a.m., and saw five people shot and fall to the ground.[88] Their presence made it very dangerous to cross "Sniper Alley" for much of the day.

Security forces halted their advance at mid-day, although fire from snipers deployed on surrounding buildings continued. But, in parallel with their final push on Nasr Street, forces intensified their fire at around 3 p.m. One protester recalled security forces arbitrarily firing up and down the street.[89] Another protester, who had holed up with around 40 others in a tent just outside a security checkpoint off Anwar al-Mufti Street, described how fire from machine guns and snipers on top of the Traffic Directorate suddenly "rained" over the tent. Feeling exposed, with snipers able to see them through the open roof of the tent, the group quickly retreated into the courtyard adjacent to the Rab'a mosque, dodging heavy fire. The protester, who only saw 10 of the 40 people he had been hiding alongside when he arrived in the courtyard minutes later, is unsure what happened to the rest of the group.[90] Security forces had full control of Anwar al-Mufti Street by around 4:30 p.m.

---

[87] Human Rights Watch interview with 21-year-old pharmaceutical studies student (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014.
[88] Human Rights Watch interview with Mustafa Sharif, Ain Shams University professor, Cairo, August 14, 2013.
[89] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.
[90] Ibid.

Nasr Street, Manassa (West Entrance)

On the opposite western side of Nasr Street, the Rab'a sit-in extended to the intersection with Yousif Abbas Street, just past the large fountain and Mobil Gas station at the end of the road. Further to the west, Nasr Street leads to the Manassa, the stage Sadat spoke from the day he was assassinated in 1981, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a section of al-Azhar University, and the October 6 Bridge, which connects eastern Cairo to downtown.

During pre-recorded warnings played at some of the entrances to Rab'a, authorities identified this entry point as a "safe exit," calling on protesters to leave from here and promising that no-one would be arrested. This part of the square, though, was the site of continuous fire throughout the day; as one local resident who did not participate in the sit-in told Human Rights, "sounds of gunshots and teargas didn't stop from 6:20 a.m…until the attack stopped after 6 p.m."[91]

Egyptian freelance journalist Maged Atef, who stood near Yousif Abbas Street for much of the morning, said he saw a few demonstrators leave, but most of them stayed put as a result of gunfire and concern that "safe exits" were a trap to arrest them on their way out.[92] One Egyptian photojournalist said that when he reached the Nasr Street exit at 8:15 a.m., he saw police arrest some bearded protesters leaving the sit-in.[93]

Security forces began to approach this entrance to the sit-in around 5:30-6 a.m. Atef said that he heard the police loudspeaker playing a pre-recorded warning around 6:15 a.m.[94] However, three protesters interviewed by Human Rights Watch who said they were in the same area said they did not hear the warning at that time.[95]

At approximately 6:20 a.m., security forces began to fire teargas, according to witnesses. A lawyer, awoken from his tent at 6:10 a.m. by protester warnings that dispersal was imminent, reported smelling teargas as he prayed minutes later.[96] A woman who lives

---

[91] Human Rights Watch interview with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, April 27, 2014.

[92] Human Rights Watch interview with Maged Atef, journalist, Cairo, August 17 and September 4, 2013.

[93] Human Rights Watch interview with Mosaab al-Shamy, Cairo, September 23, 2013.

[94] Human Rights Watch interview with Maged Atef, journalist, Cairo, August 17 and September 4, 2013.

[95] Human Rights Watch interviews with two protesters (names withheld), Cairo, January 26 and February 10, 2014; Human Rights Watch telephone interview with protester (name withheld), August 19, 2013.

[96] Human Rights Watch interview with lawyer (name withheld), Cairo, January 26, 2014.

several hundred meters from the intersection of Yousif Abbas and Nasr Streets told Human Rights Watch that she felt teargas inside her house by 6:40 a.m.[97]

Around 6:30 a.m., some 100 demonstrators left the sit-in entrance down Yousif Abbas Street in order to see what exactly was headed their way, one of the men who was part of this group told Human Rights Watch.[98] He said that the group encountered two bulldozers with tank-like tracks, four APCs carrying officers, and at least 50 police officers on foot. Another witness provided a similar account of the advancing formation.[99] The two men further outlined how bulldozers quickly removed the makeshift barriers that demonstrators had erected and forces began almost immediately firing teargas, less than lethal riot control guns, and live ammunition.[100] Protesters responded largely by throwing rocks, but, with no protection outside of the square, 20-30 of them fell, according to one of the men.[101] Human Rights Watch reviewed a video from around this time and it largely corroborated the accounts from witnesses, though it was not clear from the video that security forces were firing live ammunition.[102]

Protesters quickly retreated, and security forces advanced until they arrived near the sit-in entrance on Nasr Street at 6:45 a.m. Forces attacked from both sides of Yousif Abbas Street, as well as from the October 6 Bridge side of Nasr Street, firing the same mix of weapons into the sit-in, witnesses said. One protester observed a man who he believed was not affiliated with the Rab'a sit-in wave at the police from nearby train tracks and take a bullet in his head around 6:45 a.m.[103] Journalist Mohamed Hamdy said he was filming on Yousif Abbas Street at 7 a.m. when a man standing next to him was shot in the chest and fell to the ground.[104] In order to prevent forces from entering the square, demonstrators gathered inside the nearby Mobil gas station, since the structure shielded them from incoming fire and allowed them a safe place from where they could throw rocks at advancing forces. A pharmacy student at al-Azhar University told Human Rights Watch that protesters threw

---

[97] Human Rights Watch email correspondence with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

[98] Human Rights Watch interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014.

[99] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

[100] Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014; Human Rights Watch telephone interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

[101] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014.

[102] Footage on file with Human Rights Watch.

[103] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 26, 2014.

[104] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Hamdy, journalist, Cairo, August 14, 2013.

rocks, sometimes with slingshots, from the gas station and from behind sandbags and makeshift walls on Nasr Street.[105] Journalist Maged Atef said that he saw one homemade shotgun with birdshot among protesters in the area, but no other weapons.[106] No other witnesses, including locals not affiliated with the Brotherhood, saw any other arms on protesters in this area at this point, they said.[107]

These efforts succeeded in preventing forces from entering Nasr Street until 10:30-11 a.m., but it came at a significant cost to protesters. One protester described to Human Rights Watch the killing of two protesters he witnessed at around 8:30 a.m.

> I saw a woman who was wearing black and taking pictures fall. I found later that she took a bullet in the neck. I then saw one man standing by the fountain in the middle of Nasr Street on Yousif Abbas. It was a tough scene. He took a bullet in his shoulder and fell. He tried to get up and got one in the leg. He began to crawl, as blood trickled down. He was the only person up front and kept taking bullets in the arm and chest. He took at least eight bullets. The bullet would come, he would shake, and then not move…we tried to drag him to safety, but weren't able to [for some time] because of the fire.[108]

Another protester, who had been breaking pavement to provide rocks to the front lines, described how a group of youth from the group Youth Against the Coup had been throwing rocks from behind sandbags on the front lines. At around 10 a.m., he said, he witnessed security forces climbing over the sandbags and shooting the protesters at close range with birdshot. He also saw bulldozers lift sandbags and drop them on top of the demonstrators.[109] According to him security forces briefly paused their fire later to allow protesters to collect the bodies of those killed.[110]

---

[105] Human Rights Watch interview with Al-Azhar University pharmacy student (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014.
[106] Human Rights Watch interview with Maged Atef, journalist, Cairo, August 17 and September 4, 2013.
[107] Human Rights Watch interview with witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, April 27, January 26, and February 10, 2014.
[108] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014.
[109] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 26, 2014.
[110] Ibid.

Another protester, who was among the group that went to collect the bodies, said he recalled seeing about 20 corpses. He described the scene to Human Rights Watch:

> We found a pile of bodies over each other. They were all dead, no injured. The barricade was made of sandbags and the sand got mixed with the blood. It was clear that the APCs had passed over limbs. We found limbs that were totally crushed. There were people with no arms, obviously an APC ran over them. Imagine you are carrying piles of bodies, it is something you can't imagine. Even the bodies that you are carrying, you carry an arm of a person, alongside the leg of another person. The scene was very difficult.[111]

As the morning progressed, security forces began firing more intensely, and snipers began to appear and fire from adjacent government buildings. One demonstrator who had been transporting the injured from Yousif Abbas Street to the field hospital described "relentless" fire from APCs that "made things shake."[112] Another protester described hearing gunfire come from the adjacent Central Authority for Organization and Administration building and then looking ahead and seeing the man in front of him fall and his brain "come out into his hands."[113]

An activist from Mansoura had come down Nasr Street to check on a photo panorama of images of deceased demonstrators from earlier protests she helped administer near Yousif Abbas Street. As she walked, she said she noticed a helicopter flying very low—at about the height of a three-story building—that stopped near her. She told Human Rights Watch that she began to run and, as she slid into a tent, a gunman in the plane shot birdshot pellets into her leg, injuring her.[114] Another protester told Human Rights Watch that he saw helicopters dropping teargas earlier in the morning.[115]

As a result of this push, security forces took over part of Nasr Street by 11 a.m., having succeeded in forcing protesters out of the Mobil gas station, and more or less secured the

---

[111] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014.
[112] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 4, 2014.
[113] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 26, 2014.
[114] Human Rights Watch interview with activist (name withheld), Cairo, January 28, 2014.
[115] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014.

Yousif Abbas entrance to Nasr Street by around 1 p.m. Gunfire became less intense shortly thereafter, according to protesters and locals, but picked up significantly at around 3 p.m.

However, unlike their advance on the east side of Nasr Street, security forces did not push into the square. Instead, snipers on top of buildings repeatedly opened fire into crowds of demonstrators, local residents and protesters told Human Rights Watch. A university student described the chaos around the tent he had been hiding in at about 3:30 p.m.:

> I saw an old man inside the tent take a bullet in the chest and fall. The bullet came from nearby buildings. I ran to the square, walking low. Snipers were everywhere, and I didn't know how to move. I saw one tent with six martyrs. There was someone crouched next to me with blood on his face. I didn't know what to do, as I couldn't take bodies or injured people, because the snipers would hit me…it was over. I thought I would die, not get arrested, since they came to kill.[116]

When security forces eventually arrived at the center of Rab'a Square and took control, they again played pre-recorded warnings calling for protesters to leave from the west entrance of Nasr Street towards Manassa, several witnesses said.[117] A local resident, with a view overlooking this exit, told Human Rights Watch about the scene she saw when protesters began leaving from this exit:

> At 3 p.m., protesters were coming out in lines, around tens of them, maybe 80 total. Security forces were firing at the ground just to scare them and force them to move faster at the end of the street…. At 4:30 p.m., I saw policemen hitting [two guys in their early 20's] with the back of their rifle until I couldn't see them…. At 4:45 p.m., I saw four policemen shooting at a human's height, not to the ground as before…. They kept on shooting for at least three minutes nonstop at the four of them. And when they were done, they collected all the remains of the bullets from the floor.[118]

---

[116] Ibid.

[117] Human Rights Watch interview with witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, September 29, 2013, and February 10, 2014.

[118] Human Rights Watch email correspondence with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2014.

One protester, who had spent the day defending the west entrance of Nasr Street, described the "terror" he felt exiting the square for the final time, as gunmen in APCs shot over people and as forces flashed victory signs and hurled insults at the protesters.[119] Ultimately, even as security forces finally allowed protesters to exit from west Nasr Street at the end of day, they failed to secure it and turn it into the "safe exit" that had been promised.

Tayaran Street, Republican Guard (North Entrance)

Bisecting Nasr Street, Tayaran Street runs north to south. On the north side, the road has a military base on one side and a residential neighborhood to the other, and provides an outlet to Salah Salem Street, a major highway that runs parallel to Nasr Street, and the Republican Guard headquarters.

As at other entrances, security forces made their initial approach around 6 a.m., heading south on Tayaran Street from Salah Salem Street. Freelance journalist Maged Atef, who went to Salah Salem Street at 6:30 a.m. to make sure he could get out safely if he needed to, noticed that army soldiers had already arrested a handful of "bearded men" who had tried to leave the demonstration. Shortly thereafter, Atef saw security forces fire the first teargas canisters on protesters on the front lines down Tayaran Street.[120]

Within 15 minutes, security forces began using live fire, in addition to teargas. Mohamed Tareq, a zoology professor from Alexandria, and a 19-year-old college student from Cairo, both awoke from their tents on the northern part of Tayaran Street at 6:45 a.m. to the simultaneous sounds of live fire and teargas.[121] The heavy teargas overwhelmed many of the demonstrators. One protester told Human Rights Watch that the teargas caused him to lose consciousness.[122]Tareq said that many around him were choking from it.[123] As he helped those around him deal with the gas, Tareq noticed that several birdshot pellets had struck him.

---

[119] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 26, 2014.

[120] Human Rights Watch interview with Maged Atef, journalist, Cairo, August 17 and September 4, 2013.

[121] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Tareq, zoology professor, Cairo, February 2, 2014; Human Rights Watch interview with 19-year-old student (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014.

[122] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February, 11, 2014.

[123] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Tareq, zoology professor, Cairo, February 2, 2014.

By 7:30 a.m., Tareq told Human Rights Watch that security forces were "arbitrarily shooting all around." As Tareq turned to face the square, three bullets penetrated his body, one in his arm, one that went into his back and through his chest, and a third that struck him in the side, he said.[124] He fell and was immediately carted away to the Rab'a field hospital. One protester said that many retreated during this period to the center of the square, which at the time was still comparatively safe.[125]

Security forces slowly advanced behind bulldozers, which destroyed blockades erected by demonstrators. Two witnesses told Human Rights Watch that protesters attempted to slow the advance by lobbing rocks, Molotov cocktails, and fireworks, but to little avail.[126] By around 10:30-11 a.m., security forces had arrived roughly 200 meters from the stage, according to one protester.[127] After a brief lull in firing around midday, security forces quickly completed their advance, forcing the few remaining protesters into the center of the square.

Tayaran Street, Manufiya Building (South Entrance)

The southern part of Tayaran Street, which leads into the heart of Nasr City in eastern Cairo, witnessed some of the heaviest firing in all of Rab'a Square on August 14. While the protest encampment extended past the KFC Restaurant near Ibn Hani al-Andalusi Street, much of the violence took place in front of a building under construction that demonstrators referred to as the Manufiya Building. The ten-story building, named after the province from which the members of the Brotherhood security committee in charge of security at this entrance hailed, lies at the outlet of Sibawayh al-Masry Street, a side street that provides direct access to the Rab'a hospital.

Security forces began playing a looped pre-recorded warning around 6:30-6:40 a.m. on southern Tayaran Street calling on protesters to vacate the area, identifying a "safe exit," and stating that no one who attempted to leave via the safe exit would be arrested. While several in the area said they heard the warning then, the majority of the 19 protesters whom Human Rights Watch interviewed who were located at this entrance said they did not hear it until later in the morning. One resident who lives off Tayaran Street told Human

---

[124] Ibid.

[125] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014.

[126] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014; Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Tareq, zoology professor, Cairo, February 2, 2014.

[127] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014.

Rights Watch that from around 8 a.m. onwards, she heard loudspeaker announcements calling on protesters to leave the sit-in.[128]

Almost simultaneously, security forces began to attack demonstrators on the edges of the street with teargas and birdshot, five demonstrators on the front lines told Human Rights Watch. One protester estimated that forces lobbed fifty canisters a minute at the beginning of the dispersal.[129]

Bulldozers led the advance of APCs and police vans, pushing through makeshift barriers of rock, sand, and rows of cars that demonstrators had set up at the entrance. By around 7:30-8 a.m., protesters at the scene said that security forces began using live ammunition, which they described as "arbitrary" and "random," as the forces pushed north from Tayaran Street and intersecting side streets. [130] By 8:30-9 a.m., forces had arrived within meters of the Manufiya Building.

Demonstrators primarily attempted to slow the advance of forces by throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at security forces. Moaz Alaa, a first-year student at Cairo University, recounted one harrowing scene he witnessed in the morning:

> As the bulldozer came to lift the fences, one person got on the bulldozer and threw a rock on its windshield. The bulldozer moved back and forth and picked him up. He definitely died.[131]

Several demonstrators also told Human Rights Watch that that they observed or heard about a few armed protesters in the Manufiya Building in the later morning and early afternoon. One protester, who was throwing rocks at security forces from within the Manufiya Building, told Human Rights Watch that he saw one person with a handmade shotgun with birdshot and later one with a rifle and overhead someone say, "Don't worry, we have weapons and are responding."[132] The Interior Ministry also has released video

---

[128] Human Rights Watch interview with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, August 14, 2013.
[129] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 3, 2014.
[130] Human Rights Watch interviews with protesters (names withheld), Cairo, January 28 and January 30, 2014.
[131] Human Rights Watch interview with Moaz Alaa, first-year student at Cairo University, Cairo, January 26, 2014.
[132] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 30, 2014.

footage showing fire coming from the Manufiya Building at some point during the dispersal.[133]

The Manufiya Building offered protesters strategic elevation from which to reach approaching forces with rocks and Molotov cocktails and walls and pillars to hide behind. Protesters also hurled projectiles from Tayaran Street itself and the gas station across the street. One demonstrator told Human Rights Watch that protesters on the front lines were supported by others who stayed behind and burned tires to lessen the effect of teargas, collected glass and gas for the Molotov cocktails, and broke rocks to pass up front.[134] These efforts succeeded in preventing forces from entering the square for over six hours.

However, security forces quickly escalated their fire in order to break the stalemate. One journalist told Human Rights Watch that he heard the distinct sound of 14 mm cannon fire—eight or nine consecutive shots—from Tayaran Street around 10:30 a.m.[135] Human Rights Watch could not independently verify use of this particular weapon. Several protesters recounted seeing snipers stationed on top of the Ministry of Defense Building on the opposite side of Tayaran Street open fire on protesters below.[136] An electronics store owner said that many died during this period in the late morning:

> There was lots of fire coming from officers on top of APCs and behind them. 40 or 50 people died around me…. One took a shot in his head, splitting it open. His brains fell on my foot.[137]

Apart from a short de-escalation in firing around mid-day, the back-and-forth, on-and-off exchanges of gunfire on one side and rocks and Molotov cocktails on the other continued until around 3 p.m., when authorities significantly escalated fire. One protester described seeing an APC turn around a full 360 degrees, "firing arbitrarily in all directions."[138] A video reviewed by Human Rights Watch corroborates this description, showing an APC fire in this

---

[133] "Wireless radio recording between officers," [n.d.], video clip, YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzP3WdANipU (accessed July 21, 2014).

[134] Human Rights Watch interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, February 12, 2014.

[135] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 21, 2013.

[136] Human Rights Watch interviews with protesters (names withheld), Cairo, January 28 and February 4, 2014.

[137] Human Rights Watch interview with electronics store owner (name withheld), Cairo, January 28, 2014.

[138] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 12, 2014.

manner on southern Tayaran Street.[139] Moaz Alaa of Cairo University described the scene on the first floor of the building at the time:

> They started shooting randomly, hitting the brick wall (in front of us). I was in a state of serious fear, as bullets flew by. I took a bullet in my foot. One toe broke, the other was hanging on. I was in a state of terror and thought I would die. The bullets were not normal. I saw one person trying to run; he was trying to escape. He was shot in the back of his head. He fell suddenly and did not move…. Bullets were whizzing by; I even felt the air… They were using rifles and rapid-fire...guns for 20 minutes. They were not far. I could hear them. There were also snipers and others shooting from above.[140]

At this time, Alaa told Human Rights Watch that his childhood friend, Mustafa Abd Raboh, who had been crouching next to him, put his head on his shoulder. Although he did not realize it at the time, Alaa said he later learned that Abd Raboh had been shot and killed as a result of the gunfire. One demonstrator said he observed snipers arbitrarily shooting from helicopters above Tayaran Street.[141] A 19-year-old computer science student in the Manufiya Building described the shooting as "hysterical," noting that the intensity of fire caused "chunks of concrete to fall on me."[142] One protester who similarly observed heavy fire that dislodged bricks from within the building said he saw 10 protesters fall in the span of five minutes in front of the Manufiya Building.[143]

Supported by the heavy fire, forces made their final advance into Rab'a Square around 4 p.m. A 16-year-old high school student recounted to Human Rights Watch the efforts he and his close friend made to try to stop the advance:

> I threw rocks and tried to stop [the bulldozer's] advance. It entered and ran over bodies. Then I suddenly saw police officers run behind the bulldozers with guns. I was on the right of the bulldozer, [my friend] on the left. I was

---

[139] "The worse you can see on the Rab'a massacre…live ammunition," video clip, YouTube, August 15, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCgsh5HfctQ (accessed July 21, 2014).

[140] Human Rights Watch interview with Moaz Alaa, first-year student at Cairo University, Cairo, January 26, 2014.

[141] Human Rights Watch interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, January 28, 2014.

[142] Human Rights Watch interview with 19-year-old computer science student (name withheld), Cairo, January 30, 2014.

[143] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 3, 2014.

> going to get hit, but someone pushed me out of the way. That saved my life. No-one was with [him]; he took a bullet in his back that came out of his chest and was martyred.[144]

Another protester, who was on Sibawayh al-Masry Street perpendicular to Tayaran Street, described how he got injured around the same time:

> I saw Dr. Ahmed Fattah, a dentist, walking slowly and peacefully towards me, as I was 10 meters away. He got hit by a bullet in his leg. The blood splattered…. There was fire everywhere. We all prayed and tried to pull him back, but couldn't. Fire then got lighter, and I wanted to go. I got the courage and went. I pulled him back two meters and then saw blood on my arm and realized something was not right. I jumped back and saw that the bullet had struck me. I think they were aiming for my chest, but because I was dragging him, I moved and it hit my arm.[145]

By 4:30-5 p.m., security forces had entered Rab'a Square and the Rab'a hospital from Tayaran Street. Unlike at other entrances, though, their assault on the southern side of Tayaran Street continued, as Egyptian police entered the Manufiya Building on foot around 5 p.m. Over the course of the next four hours, they proceeded to beat, torture, and, in some cases, execute the demonstrators there, according to three witnesses.[146]

Terrified at the thought of confronting the forces that had been firing into the sit-in all day, one protester, who had gone to the ninth floor of the building to deliver food and drinks to protesters there, described to Human Rights Watch what happened as he tried to escape the building.

> I looked for an exit, but couldn't find one. I went down the stairs to the seventh floor and then went down from there by scaffold. On the second floor, an officer there told me to come down. I came down, and he said to lie on my stomach. I lay on my back, took off my hat, and he put a gun on

---

[144] Human Rights Watch interview with 16-year-old high school student (name withheld), Cairo, February 5, 2014.

[145] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 12, 2014.

[146] Human Rights Watch interview with Moaz Alaa, first-year student at Cairo University, Cairo, January 26, 2014; Human Rights Watch interviews with two witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, January 30, February 11, and February 27, 2014.

> me and called me a coward and kicked me. I was all by myself. He then said to get up and go to another officer on the same floor. I went to him, and he hit me with the bottom of his rifle. The ground floor was all bodies, tens and tens of them.[147]

A computer science student described the entry of security forces into the Manufiya building:

> They entered the building, and killed five around me...I was not sure what to do. I had nowhere to go. I was next; my time had come. They entered the room and told us we would die. They called me and said to leave the building. An officer entered and said 'Don't worry!' I put my hands down, and then he beat me. They called us dogs and other names. Each hit us a different way. I was on the first floor and didn't know what to do. The officer said if you don't run, we will kill you, but one ran away and I found him on the floor dead. The officer spit on the policeman who fired, saying, "Why didn't you shoot him in the eye?" There were many corpses on the ground. I left.[148]

Moaz Alaa, who had been shot in the foot and lost his friend Mustafa Abd Raboh during the intense afternoon assault, was not as fortunate. He told Human Rights Watch that, as security forces entered, "They shot everyone who moved," including people running from floor to floor. He said officers checked to see if people were alive by "hitting them on the head with the barrel of their guns," and "stepping on wounds." He said they piled the dead bodies up like "pyramids." He recounted what transpired when officers got to him:

> [The officer] kicked me and stepped on my head with his big boots. My face was all bloodied, but we were silent. Whoever spoke died. He jumped on my head and body. He stepped hard on my injured foot, and I stopped feeling it. They did the same things to others, as I saw. We were like this for an hour.... Next to me, there was an injured person: a 50-year-old with his guts out, as a result of gunfire. The soldier did the same thing to him that he did to me until he died. He hit him in the area of his injury, kicked him there.[149]

---

[147] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 27, 2014.

[148] Human Rights Watch interview with computer science student (name withheld), Cairo, January 30, 2014.

[149] Human Rights Watch interview with Moaz Alaa, first-year student at Cairo University, Cairo, January 26, 2014.

The torture and killings continued for several hours, according to Alaa, during which time all he could hear were the screams of injured protesters being tortured and killed. A protester, who left the central part of the square when security forces took over around 5:30-6 p.m., said he recalled "hearing people in [the] Manufiya [Building] calling out." He described seeing a protester, who was around 25 years old and wearing a gas mask, "get shot and fall as he was moving to the stairs to exit."[150] Another young protester also told Human Rights Watch that he witnessed beatings and torture within the Manuyfia Building after police took control of it in the late afternoon.[151]

A short while later, the officer returned again to Alaa:

> He hit me so hard that I lost consciousness. Two officers were hitting me at once and swearing. I have had to grow out my hair, because of the scars on my head. They were kicking me and one kept hitting me with a gun until I lost consciousness again. He told me, 'Did you think you are going to heaven? You aren't. It's in our hands to kill, in our hands to put you in heaven or hell. We'll put you in hell."[152]

Shortly thereafter, the officer turned to the man sitting a few meters away, Alaa said:

> The man told [the officer] that he had diabetes and would die if he didn't take a shot in his waist. The officer took out the shot and broke it. The man was on my left, two people over. There was liquid in his mouth. Salman, the guy next to me, said 'the guy next to me is dying, give him water!' They hit Salman, and the other soldier brought water and spilled it on [the diabetic man's] face and said drink. Drops were going down, and he was trying to grab whatever he could. His face was all bloody and dirty though.[153]

---

[150] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014.
[151] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 30, 2014.
[152] Human Rights Watch interview with Moaz Alaa, first-year student at Cairo University, Cairo, January 26, 2014.
[153] Ibid.

Alaa was only able to leave the Manufiya Building at around 8:30 p.m., several hours after security forces had fully taken over the square, when an ambulance came and insisted on transporting the injured to local hospitals. The Manufiya Building was the last part of Rab'a Square to be taken by the security forces.

> **"He told me, 'Did you think you are going to heaven? You aren't. It's in our hands to kill, in our hands to put you in heaven or hell. We'll put you in hell.'"**
>
> —Moaz Alaa, Cairo University Student

Central Rab'a Square (Rab'a Hospital, Mosque, & Surrounding Structures)

The Rab'a sit-in centered around the square at the intersection of Nasr and Tayaran Streets in front of the Rab'a al-Adawiya Mosque. Brotherhood organizers had set-up a stage, from which hung a large photograph of Morsy, in front of the mosque. Immediately behind the mosque is the Rab'a hospital, a multi-story government medical facility that provides regular outpatient services, though has only basic facilities. Three separate small buildings, to which demonstrators had access during the sit-in, stand adjacent to the mosque:

- The field hospital, which lies on northern side of Nasr Street near the Traffic Directorate building and which protesters had converted from a rental hall into a field hospital in the early days of the sit-in;
- The media center, which had been a central coordinating point for journalists during the sit-in; and,
- Hall 3, which was reserved for senior Brotherhood leaders.

On the day of the dispersal, protesters brought injured and dead protesters into the three halls, Rab'a mosque, and the Rab'a hospital, which did not open to the public on the day of the dispersal in light of the violence that began in the early morning. Volunteer doctors and other professionals, many themselves demonstrators, tended to the injured using only basic donated equipment.

When the dispersal began shortly after 6 a.m., firing largely focused on the peripheries of the square. Until about 9:30 a.m., the center of the square remained largely free from heavy teargas and gunfire. Very few of the demonstrators Human Rights Watch interviewed who had been in the center of the square said they heard the warnings security forces had played at some of the square's entrances in the morning. Most demonstrators in the

square awoke either to warnings from speakers on the stage that the dispersal had commenced or to the sound of teargas and gunfire on the peripheries.

However, the quick resort to force led to serious injuries and casualties from the first minutes of the dispersal. While Brotherhood organizers had organized to have doctors and small makeshift medical facilities at the entrances to the square, the amount of force overwhelmed demonstrators, who almost immediately began transferring the injured and dead by gurney, motorcycle, and via other means to the center of the square. Initially, most were put in the field hospital and media center.

Two doctors interviewed separately who were volunteering at the field hospital told Human Rights Watch on the day of the dispersal that they received their first injuries from live ammunition around 6:30 a.m.[154] A medical volunteer, who called Human Rights Watch at 7:10 a.m. saying that there were already people with bullet wounds in the field hospital, later told Human Rights Watch in an interview:

> We made it to the front of the field hospital at around 7 a.m. There were already a lot of wounded there. I saw people with birdshot and bullet wounds. The shooting was extremely intense, and people couldn't breathe from the gas. I really couldn't tell you how many people had gunshot wounds at that point. Another wounded person was brought in every minute.[155]

Another doctor at the field hospital told Human Rights Watch that by 7 a.m., 26 protesters had already been brought to the field hospital dead or died of their wounds there.[156]

With few doctors, limited supplies, and almost no equipment, medical personnel were not able to do much more than stabilize wounds. One volunteer doctor in the field hospital told Human Rights Watch that, by the mid-morning, he felt that there was "no role for us as doctors," as all they could do by then was "just wrap wounds."[157] Another volunteer

---

[154] Human Rights Watch interview with field hospital doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 14, 2013; Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Abdelaziz, field hospital doctor, Cairo, August 14, 2013.

[155] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with medical volunteer (name withheld), Cairo, August 14, 2013.

[156] Human Rights Watch interview with field hospital doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

[157] Human Rights Watch interview with field hospital doctor (name withheld), Cairo, January 29, 2014.

described the scene in the hospital as "terrifying," with "screams everywhere and oceans of blood on the ground."[158]

A demonstrator whom Human Rights Watch interviewed at a Cairo hospital the day after the dispersal depicted what he saw when he arrived at the field hospital with a wounded friend at around 8:30 a.m.:

> There were bodies everywhere. There were so many bodies, and no way to treat them. There were men lying unable to move, many with internal bleeding, and nothing to do for them. We could barely walk among them. They couldn't do anything for [my friend] either; they were just overwhelmed.[159]

The situation in the field hospital was exacerbated by the difficulty in transporting and evacuating the wounded. Protesters and independent observers consistently told Human Rights Watch that once the dispersal started, the intense gunfire made it very dangerous to move around or to leave the square. One Egyptian journalist compared the situation to a "mousetrap," explaining that you just "couldn't get out." [160]

One journalist who had spent the previous three days at the sit-in told Human Rights Watch that he wanted to leave the sit-in around 1 p.m., but that police had blocked all the roads out, and that snipers on rooftops were firing on people in the streets, making it dangerous to try to leave. He eventually managed to leave around 3:30 p.m. after having searched for a safe exit for more than two hours without success.[161] The mother of one 15-year-old boy told Human Rights Watch that her son had called her from the sit-in when the dispersal started, saying that he wanted to leave but could not because there was shooting where the army had announced safe exits. The boy ended up sustaining a head-wound, apparently from rubber bullets, doctors had told the mother.[162]

---

[158] Human Rights Watch interview with field hospital volunteer (name withheld), Cairo, January 24, 2014.
[159] Human Rights Watch interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.
[160] Human Rights Watch interview with Maged Atef, journalist, Cairo, August 17 and September 4, 2013.
[161] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 21, 2013.
[162] Human Rights Watch interview with mother of wounded 15-year-old boy (name withheld), Cairo, August 16, 2013.

One protester told Human Rights that, while there were ambulances at the entrances to the square, they were virtually unable to move during the day:

> The medical staff needed to take the injured from the field hospital to other hospitals because it was too crowded. But the police weren't allowing the ambulances to get through, and some of the ambulance drivers were injured and killed just like us. I saw them in the hospital injured with bullet wounds. I recognized that they were ambulance drivers because of their uniforms. This was still early in the morning… There was no safe exit during the attack. There are four main entrances to Rab'a Square. From the beginning, the police was attacking from all sides. Soldiers blocked even the side streets, so no one could leave.[163]

Photojournalist Mosaab al-Shamy also observed ambulance drivers who had been injured and killed at the field hospital:

> That's where I took the picture of the ambulance worker who had been killed. Four other ambulance workers were with him at the time. The whole time I was there, I didn't see a single ambulance able to access the area and reach the wounded.[164]

---

[163]Human Rights Watch phone interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

[164] Human Rights Watch interview with Mosaab al-Shamy, photojournalist, Cairo, September 23, 2013;

Photograph of injured ambulance driver, Cairo. Mosaab al-Shamy, August 14, 2013, https://www.flickr.com/photos/mosaaberising/9508376211/in/set-72157635071774090 (accessed July 24, 2014);

Rab'a events album, Cairo. Mosaab al-Shamy, August 14-16, 2013, https://www.flickr.com/photos/mosaaberising/sets/72157635071774090/ (accessed July 24, 2014).

An injured ambulance worker surrounded by colleagues in the Rab'a field hospital on August 14, 2013 after getting shot while trying to reach injured protesters during the dispersal in Rab'a square. He died of his injuries, according to witnesses. © 2013 Mosaab al-Shamy

By around 8:30-9 a.m., security forces had arrived near the Traffic Directorate building on Nasr Street and teargas, birdshot, and live fire began to reach the field hospital, just meters away. Doctors instructed volunteers and the injured to move away from windows, as pellets and bullets came through. A volunteer pharmacy student, who helped doctors on the day of the dispersal, told Human Rights Watch:

> At 8:30 a.m., teargas came to us, and doctors were trying to cope. We couldn't treat ourselves, much less others. We gave our masks to women, but we had difficulty. Gas spread, and people were choking. We said we cannot treat people with the gas everywhere; we would work until we couldn't handle it and then leave. At 9 a.m., birdshot arrived through the windows from the direction of Tiba Mall. I was struck by a pellet in my head, then took one in my back.[165]

[165] Human Rights Watch interview with volunteer pharmacy student (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014.

Around the same time, the center of the square had begun to come under fire. Teargas had begun to seep into the square by 8 a.m., but, by 9:30-10 a.m., security forces fired teargas directly at the center of the sit-in, four witnesses said. Two of those witnesses — a mother who was with her 16-year-old daughter and a 29-year-old realtor — separately saw teargas fired from helicopters hovering above the square.[166]

Six witnesses told Human Rights Watch that, a short while later, snipers in a helicopter fired at a cameramen and his aide, who had been filming the speeches on the stage, injuring them both.[167] An engineering student at al-Azhar University and a member of organizing team for the stage told Human Rights Watch:

> I was standing in front of the stage, three or four meters away, moving back and forth. The helicopter was above and the camera directly in front of me. The helicopter descended, and the sniper shot the videographer manning the main camera on stage. He was injured, not killed. I saw him falling… His aide was also injured and was taken away from the stage."[168]

By 10 a.m., the situation in the field hospital became untenable, and doctors ordered patients transferred to the Rab'a mosque, media center, Hall 3, and the Rab'a hospital. Volunteer doctors and demonstrators described similar scenes of carnage and devastation in in each location, each of which had already been receiving dead and injured protesters.

For most of the day, the Rab'a mosque served as a refuge for those looking to escape the violence, particularly women and children. By mid-morning though, a section had been turned into a hospital and morgue. One protester, whose fiancé was killed during the dispersal, told Human Rights Watch that, by 9:30 a.m., the mosque held so many corpses that it felt like it "had turned into a cemetery."[169] As violence intensified, more people packed into the mosque. Without fans and with windows closed—an attempt to keep

---

[166] Human Rights Watch interviews with two witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, February 2 and February 4, 2014.
[167] Human Rights Watch interviews with six witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, January 28, February 9, February 10, and February 11, 2014.
[168] Human Rights Watch interview with engineering student at al-Azhar University (name withheld), Cairo, January 28, 2014.
[169] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 7, 2014.

gunfire and teargas out—the situation becoming harder and harder to bear, one protester who had gone inside looking for a family member told Human Rights Watch.[170]

The media center was "full of bodies, lined up side-by-side," Asma Shehata, an activist in Rab'a who had been documenting the killings, told Human Rights Watch.[171] A protester described the scene in the media center by the afternoon as a "massacre," with many corpses, not enough room for the many injured, and the smell of a butcher's shop.

Hall 3, the last facility to be turned into a makeshift hospital and morgue in the late morning, also quickly filled up. A medical student who treated patients in the hall from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. told Human Rights Watch that he received a "continuous stream of martyrs" throughout the afternoon. He felt, by the evening, their "medical ability had stopped," as they were "not able to do anything" with "all in need of intensive care."[172]

Beginning in the late morning though, Rab'a hospital became the primary destination for injured protesters. Human Rights Watch visited the hospital at 3:30 p.m. and saw many volunteers carrying people with gunshot wounds into the hospital. Doctors were operating on men in the passageways, and the hospital was overflowing with injured lying on the ground.

One volunteer described what the hospital looked like when she arrived in the afternoon:

> I got to the hospital's first floor, which was covered in blood. Most wounds appeared to be to the legs, chest, and head. The ground was the reception, triage area. The elevator was not working properly. Wounded persons were just left there, brought in by relatives. It was very crowded and doctors very confused…. The simplest supplies were lacking… [Patients] were screaming for doctors…. Elevators were filled with wounded; people just put them in and pushed the buttons.[173]

---

[170] Human Rights Watch interview with Yasmeen Abdel Fattah, protester, Cairo, February 4, 2014.
[171] Human Rights Watch interview with Asma Shehata, protester and activist, Cairo, January 22, 2014.
[172] Human Rights Watch interview with medical student (name withheld), Cairo, January 30, 2014.
[173] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital volunteer (name withheld), Cairo, February 6, 2014.

One doctor said that about half of the injuries he received were in the head, many to the top of the head, indicating that they had been hit from above.[174] Another doctor told Human Rights Watch that the two hours she spent treating patients in the hospital were "the longest two hours of my life," and shared details about a few of the patients she treated:

> A 70-year-old woman, Fadila, had taken a bullet in her head. One 18-year-old boy came in, saying his stomach hurt. I looked down and his intestines were all out. He had taken seven bullets and [later] died. Another took a bullet in the face, causing his face to open and tongue to fall out. He didn't know though. He spent 40 minutes looking at me and gesturing for help, but I couldn't do anything. Surgery was not possible.[175]

Dr. Mohamed Abdelaziz, working at the hospital, told Human Rights Watch on August 14 that all but one person he had seen had been killed by live ammunition, with shots to the head and chest, and that the one man had been burnt to death in his tent.[176] Another doctor said, of the 32 dead protesters he tended to, 30 had been killed by live fire to the head and chest, while another two were killed in an explosion.[177] Video footage of nine bodies carried into the hospital show that two appeared to have been shot in the chest, five in the back of the head, and two in the face.[178]

The hospital lacked proper equipment for surgical operations. Continual sniper fire in front of the main hospital entrance, on the west side of Anwar al-Mufti Street, made entry and exit out of the hospital—the only way to evacuate wounded out of the square—extremely dangerous.

Fire from snipers onto the hospital entrance began from the early morning, witnesses said. A 19-year-old demonstrator said that he dodged "arbitrary, random" fire coming from the adjacent Traffic Directorate building around 7:15 a.m. when he went to wash for prayer in bathrooms located in a garage in front of the hospital. He hid behind cars, while two guys

---

[174] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital doctor (name withheld), Cairo, January 30, 2014.

[175] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital doctor (name withheld), Cairo, January 22, 2014.

[176] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Abdelaziz, Rab'a hospital doctor, Cairo, August 14, 2013.

[177] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 14, 2013.

[178] "Documenting the Rab'a Massacre," video clip, YouTube, August 15, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6Mnm9neSLc&list=PLPCoUdeof3T7xFOGsb-MoByRcDIMYzbCA (accessed July 22, 2014).

near him went ahead to the bathrooms. He looked over and noticed that only one remained standing, as "the other had fallen and his brains were out."[179]

A resident of Nasr City told Human Rights Watch about the sniper fire he encountered around 10:30 a.m. as he sought to evacuate a group of young women from the square in the midst of the fire:

> I ran fast [out of the hospital] as bullets were flying. A guy stood in front of me to shield me from a bullet and fell on the sidewalk. I fell too and felt fire in my leg. I looked at him, and his face was not there. Blood was coming out of his neck. He saved my life… I only took a birdshot pellet in my leg. It turned out that I knew him personally; I couldn't recognize him at the time because of his injuries, but later discovered that he is somehow still alive.[180]

For the entirety of the day—at least ten hours—snipers on top of the Traffic Directorate building continued to fire at those who entered or exited the hospital, many witnesses said, meaning that anyone who wanted to leave had to brave almost constant sniper fire coming from the east. One foreign correspondent who covered the events of that day told Human Rights Watch that she was unable to reach the hospital around 2:30 p.m. because of sniper fire. As she tried to reach the hospital, she saw one man getting shot while he was helping carry a wounded protester to a nearby ambulance. Another man, who was initially sitting up on his elbows on a stretcher being carried to the ambulances, was also shot and died before he reached the ambulance, she said.[181]

By the late afternoon, additional fire came from advancing security forces. At around 3 p.m., a Human Rights Watch researcher witnessed the shooting of a man not displaying any weapons or using or threatening any violence as he left the Rab'a hospital and headed across the road. The fire came from the direction of security forces, towards the sit-in. He fell to the ground, blood seeping out of his head, but was able to crawl to safety.

---

[179] Human Rights Watch interview with 19-year-old demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, January 30, 2014.
[180] Human Rights Watch interview with resident of Nasr City (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014.
[181] Human Rights Watch interview with foreign correspondent (name withheld), Cairo, August 21, 2013.

The constant fire at times made ambulance workers unable to access those critically wounded in the hospital. At times, demonstrators would brave the gunfire and run across the road carrying a wounded person on a stretcher to ambulances waiting outside, but many people did not have this option or any safe way of getting medical help. Video footage shows a man being shot in the center of the square as he carries a blood-stained lifeless body.[182] One medical professional who volunteered at the Rab'a hospital told Human Rights Watch that most of those who died under his watch did so as a result of bleeding and hemorrhages, in large part due to the inability to receive timely medical attention.[183]

Mohamed Tareq, injured at 7:30 a.m. by three live bullets to his torso and arm on Tayaran Street, said he was one of hundreds of demonstrators unable to receive necessary medical attention for hours. Tareq said he spent several hours at the field hospital—including 30 minutes waiting for medical attention as doctors struggled to deal with the influx of injured protests after the dispersal began—but all medical staff could do was wrap his injury. Transferred to the Rab'a hospital at 10 a.m., doctors told him that they could not perform the surgery he needed and that he needed outside treatment, he said. He told Human Rights Watch that he did not leave the hospital until 9 p.m. After several hospitals rejected him and with hospitals overflowing with injured and dead protesters, he said he only managed to have a surgery performed at 11 p.m. the following day.[184] Seven protesters told Human Rights Watch that hospitals in the Nasr City area rejected injured or dead protesters coming from Rab'a Square, including the al-Mokawleen al-Arab, Taa'min al-Saahi, Hassabo International, Dar al-Hikma, and Mounira hospitals.[185]

As security forces inched forward in the early afternoon, fire intensified throughout the center of Rab'a Square. Fire from snipers, in particular ones located in the Ministry of Defense building opposite the stage at the beginning of Tayaran Street, became more constant, according to dozens of witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch.

---

[182] "Man being shot while carrying body of martyr in Rab'a massacre," video clip, YouTube, August 15, 2013, http://youtu.be/TZLx3gsvXR4 (accessed July 22, 2014).

[183] Human Rights Watch interview with volunteer medical professional at Rab'a hospital (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.

[184] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Tareq, zoology professor, Cairo, February 2, 2014.

[185] Ibid; Human Rights Watch interview with Moaz Alaa, first-year student at Cairo University, Cairo, January 26, 2014; Human Rights Watch interview with Yasmeen Abdel Fattah, protester, Cairo, February 4, 2014; Human Rights Watch interviews with protesters (names withheld), Cairo, January 28-29, February 3, and February 10, 2014.

One protester recounted the shooting of a friend, which he witnessed in the early afternoon:

> Abdullah [our friend] had taken a bullet in his stomach at 1:30 p.m., and Khallad [his brother-in-law] came [to Rab'a Square] to take him to an [outside] hospital at 2 p.m. He entered through a side street and went to the field hospital. We were standing with Abdelhamid [another friend] in a small makeshift field hospital by the stage because the other hospital couldn't take any new people. Khallad took a bullet in his head while standing and died right away. He was on the fence by the hospital, near the mosque. Abdullah died one week later.[186]

At roughly the same time, near the center of Rab'a Square, another demonstrator recounted a similarly harrowing encounter by a sniper in a helicopter:

> I then saw a helicopter and a sniper shooting out of it. I froze and stopped... then suddenly a guy in his 20s fell. Then, [another man] took a bullet from the sniper…he is now a paraplegic. Then a third person was shot in the head, and I fell on him…. It was not 20 meters away.[187]

By 1 p.m., the stage was under constant fire, one Egyptian journalist told Human Rights Watch.[188] Video footage clearly shows unarmed men crouching near the remains of the main stage in Rab'a to hide from incessant gunfire. The footage shows two of them being shot and apparently killed, and a third shot in the leg.[189]

In response, Brotherhood organizers built a wooden enclosure to protect those still using the stage to rally the protesters. As the afternoon progressed, though, this proved to be insufficient protection and speakers abandoned the stage. Protest organizers resorted instead to having speakers speak off-stage and to recordings, one organizer told Human

---

[186] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 28, 2014.

[187] Human Rights Watch interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, January 22, 2014.

[188] Human Rights Watch interview with Egyptian journalist (name withheld), Cairo, February 6, 2014.

[189] "Egypt: protesters mowed down by heavy gunfire on camera," video clip, *LiveLeak*, August 15, 2013, http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=a7a_1376615614 (accessed July 22, 2014).

Rights Watch.[190] By around 4-4:30 p.m., bulldozers and APCs arrived and occupied the stage area, continuing to destroy all in their path, and demonstrators retreated inside the courtyard of the mosque, hiding between the mosque, adjacent halls, and hospital.

Meanwhile, some medical volunteers had remained in the field hospital after many evacuated it in the late morning and continued to receive injured protesters and corpses throughout the afternoon. As security forces broke through on the heels of intense fire on Nasr Street, though, the field hospital came under intense fire, as one demonstrator told Human Rights Watch:

> I heard a lot of firing then from both sides—from Anwar al-Mufti [Street], behind us, and from Nasr Street in front. It sounded like the bullets were flying right over our heads. In the field hospital, they [the doctors] told us, 'Exit from the passageway; they're surrounding us'. There was so much firing. Someone said, 'We're surrounded; we have to get out'. There were so many people in the field hospital then. We tried to hide and stay there. A friend of mine, named Hazem, was injured by a bullet in his back. He was paralyzed. We had to try to get all of the injured people from the hospital to the Rab'a hospital. But we couldn't carry the bodies. We had to leave them there. There was shooting between the field hospital and Rab'a hospital, and it was too difficult to carry the injured. My friends were shot at when they were trying to carry Hazem, so they had to put him down and wait for someone else to come and help.[191]

Another protester told Human Rights Watch that she remained in the field hospital until 5:40 p.m., at which point security forces surrounding the building told her to leave, as they intended to burn the building. Fifteen minutes later, the field hospital was on fire, and she had to leave by jumping out the window, she said.[192] One other demonstrator, who had fallen asleep upstairs in the field hospital while the structure began to burn, began

---

[190] Human Rights Watch interview with protest organizer (name withheld), Cairo, February 9, 2014.

[191] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, August 16, 2013.

[192] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 10, 2014.

immediately to move corpses, some of which had begun to burn, to the courtyard between the Rab'a mosque and media center.[193]

At around 4:30 p.m., the assault reached the very center of Rab'a Square, with gunfire reaching the mosque, courtyard, and adjacent halls. An education student at Cairo University said that police began targeting the hospital with teargas and live ammunition after 4 p.m. She recounted the horrific scene—the ground a "sea of blood" and "full of people"—and her looking upon badly injured protesters, knowing that "I was not able to do anything besides watch them die."[194] A medical volunteer told Human Rights Watch that teargas hit the courtyard between the mosque and halls, where he had been treating injured protesters, at around 4:30 p.m. A heavily crowded area, he said "people did not know what to do [and] could not control their breathing and were choking."[195]

At around the same time, the courtyard adjacent to the mosque came under direct gunfire. One protester, who entered the courtyard area around 4:30 p.m., told Human Rights Watch that the man standing next to him "was hit by sniper [fire] and fell." With "bullets coming from all sides," he said he "was waiting for my moment for the same to happen."[196] One 17-year-old saw a small child take a bullet in his arm.[197] As security forces entered at around 5:30-6 p.m., another protester said that many demonstrators had "given up and were writing their name and ID numbers on themselves," so they could be identified once they were killed. He called his parents to say goodbye.[198]

Security forces, who had been constantly firing at the entrance to Rab'a hospital all day, began taking direct aim at the building itself at around 4 p.m., witnesses said. One doctor described the situation to Human Rights Watch:

> There was lots of automatic gunfire. An explosion outside destroyed the glass door to the hospital. At times the shooting was so heavy that we had

---

[193] Human Rights Watch interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, January 30, 2014.
[194] Human Rights Watch interview with education student at Cairo University (name withheld), Cairo, February 5, 2014.
[195] Human Rights Watch interview with medical volunteer (name withheld), Cairo, February 11, 2014.
[196] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 4, 2014.
[197] Human Rights Watch interview with 17-year-old witness (name withheld), Cairo, February 5, 2014.
[198] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.

> to lie on the floor. The walls protected us, but it was dangerous to be close to a window. I thought that they would kill us all.[199]

Human Rights Watch visited the Rab'a hospital at 3:30 p.m. during the dispersal on August 14. Upon entering, one volunteer doctor told Human Rights Watch staff to stay away from the passageway next to the stairwell because security forces were shooting bullets through the building.[200] A protester in the building confirmed seeing that happen.[201]

Security forces also attacked the Rab'a hospital with teargas, which reached one protester all the way on the top floor, where she had been sleeping, the volunteer told Human Rights Watch.[202] A doctor in the hospital said that the teargas seriously affected injured patients, causing many to suffocate and some to die.[203]

After police broke through past the Manufiya Building on southern Tayaran Street, they headed to Rab'a hospital, led by APCs.[204] At the time, Anas and Ammar al-Beltagy, sons of prominent Brotherhood figure Mohamed al-Beltagy, had just exited Rab'a hospital in an effort to leave the square and take the corpse of their 17-year-old sister Asma, who had been killed earlier in the dispersal, to a nearby hospital, two witnesses told Human Rights Watch. As they left, APCs began firing in the direction of the hospital, forcing them to drop Asma Beltagy's body and seek protection.[205]

Egyptian journalist Asma al-Khatib described the scene inside the hospital as the APCs approached:

> I saw three APCs in front of the hospital, from which police were firing. I was right there behind the [reception] desk and saw them hitting hard. I hid under the desk for protection. The fire continued for 15 minutes. Those who

---

[199] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

[200] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital volunteer doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 14, 2013.

[201] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Tareq, zoology professor, Cairo, February 2, 2014.

[202] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital volunteer doctor (name withheld), Cairo, February 12 2014.

[203] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital doctor (name withheld), Cairo, January 29, 2014.

[204] Human Rights Watch Skype interview with Asma al-Khatib, Egyptian journalist, Cairo, February 1, 2014.

[205] Human Rights Watch interview with Asma Shehata, protester and activist, Cairo, January 22, 2014; Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, January 29, 2014.

> couldn't hide got injured standing. The bullets entered next to me and broke the glass. It was a terrifying moment. I thought death was near. I charged my phone and, with bullets flying by me, thought it was done and that I would die. I took out my phone and called my mom.[206]

A hospital volunteer caught in the same hail of gunfire told Human Rights Watch that she sustained a bullet wound to her side during this time.[207] A father of three who had carried an injured demonstrator into the hospital on his back described bullets "whizzing past my head," which caused him to fall with the injured man.[208]

Around 4:45 p.m., Special Forces (ESF), dressed in black, entered the hospital and immediately ordered everyone, including doctors, out of the hospital, witnesses said. They issued instructions not to carry any injured with them; according to one protester they said, "Whoever carries a corpse will lie next to him."[209] Two others were told, "Leave now or you'll end up like them."[210]

One doctor recounted his experience as the forces entered the hospital:

> He [the officer] came in and started shouting, "Everyone out!" He was holding an automatic machine gun. I was with a man in his fifties lying down with a gunshot wound in his chest. My wife checked his pulse, and he had a heart rate. Another doctor intubated him, and I was holding the bag. He was on the floor. His leg was on one body, and his head was on top of another body. My back was to the door. No one knew what to do, and no one wanted to leave… my wife, another doctor and I started shouting, "Take the injured!" He [the officer] kept saying, "Don't take anyone out."[211]

---

[206] Human Rights Watch Skype interview with Asma al-Khatib, Egyptian journalist, Cairo, February 1, 2014.
[207] Human Rights Watch interview with Asma Shehata, protester and activist, Cairo, January 22, 2014.
[208] Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, February 9, 2014.
[209] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 9, 2014.
[210] Human Rights Watch interviews with two protesters (names withheld), Cairo, February 6 and February 8, 2014.
[211] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital doctor (name withheld), Washington, D.C., April 29, 2014.

The doctor said he and his wife then attempted to exit with the three injured men on their floor:

> I moved deeper into the room. The biggest one [with a leg injury] needed help. The wheelchair was broken, so I put him in a regular chair, and my wife and I tried to pull… I took the guy and put him on my shoulder.... My wife did the same. The officer said, "Leave him alone!" My wife stepped in front of us and started to say, "We need to take him out! Didn't you kill enough already?" I looked at him and gave him a look to say, "Let us go." He punched me in the chest, and both of us [the speaker and the injured man] fell. The injured man said, "Just leave me." The officer started to hold his gun. He put his knuckles into my chest, dug them in and said, "Take her and leave." I grabbed my wife's hand and we left without saying anything.[212]

One demonstrator estimated that, when he left around 5:30 p.m., 10-15 injured people per hospital room remained.[213]

A few volunteers insisted on staying amidst the threats and violence. One doctor recounted that, when she refused to leave, security forces proceeded to execute the three patients she had been treating:

> The Special Forces in black spread out and went around. They came to me, and I said, "I have injured with me." One officer said, "I am ordering you to leave." I said, "I can't leave with injured here; take them out yourselves!" He didn't respond; instead, he took out his pistol and killed the three injured men in front of me, shooting them in the heart. I was hoping he would kill me. I wanted to die. The pain was too much. I was shocked. I felt they were not human beings. I grabbed him and swore. He hit me. I am not sure why he didn't kill me. [214]

---

[212] Ibid.

[213] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

[214] Human Rights Watch interview with Rab'a hospital doctor (name withheld), Cairo, January 22, 2014.

As government security forces took over the last parts of the sit-in, the field hospital, the central stage, the mosque, and first floor of the main hospital were set ablaze, burning many of the corpses held in these locations. Human Rights Watch has not established how these structures were set afire, but the accounts strongly indicate that security forces were responsible. One protester told Human Rights Watch that he saw police direct gunfire at tents and other objects in and around the mosque, which he believed led the mosque to catch fire and burn down.[215] Two other witnesses reported that security forces told them they would be burning down major structures, including the field hospital and Rab'a hospital.[216] Moreover, the torching of these structures is consistent with the destruction of tents and other structures during their gradual advance to the center of Rab'a Square. The authorities have claimed that protesters destroyed these structures.[217] While protesters set some tents and tires on fire to lessen the effect of teargas, Human Rights Watch found no credible evidence to suggest that they burned, purposefully or accidentally, any of the major structures in the square.[218]

Around 5:30-6 p.m., the ESF allowed thousands of trapped protesters to leave Rab'a Square for the first time. At this time, the operation was almost complete and shooting had largely stopped. A video-journalist who had been at the sit-in throughout the previous weeks said that the only way he could get out in the end was when the dispersal ended:

At 5:30 p.m., I heard police say over loudspeakers that there was a safe exit. At this point the shooting had stopped. That's why hundreds of protesters started to leave via Nasr Street at that point. Some also left via Tayaran Street.[219]

One protester said:

> At the end of the day, they let us leave from behind the mosque, after about 5 or 5:30 p.m. At that time, they emptied the square and thousands of people left, maybe even tens of thousands; I have no idea how many of us

---

[215] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, February 13, 2014.

[216] Human Rights Watch interviews with two witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, February 6 and February 10, 2014.

[217] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014).

[218] Human Rights Watch interviews with two protesters (names withheld), Cairo, February 11 and February 12, 2014.

[219] Human Rights Watch interview with Ibrahim al-Masry, video-journalist, Cairo, September 29, 2013.

> left then. This was at the very end of the day. They made a pathway with soldiers, and everyone who was still in the square exited through there.[220]

It was this scene that was filmed and broadcast on Egyptian television as evidence of "safe exits" provided by the authorities.[221] With many carrying corpses or injured, one protester compared the scene to refugees fleeing a war.[222] Although largely able to leave, some protesters noted that security forces shot in the air and on the ground to expedite the evacuation.[223] One high school student said he saw 10-15 protesters fall amid the group of 300 people he left with at the end of the day.[224]

Police arrested over 800 protesters over the course of the day from Rab'a alone.[225] A video reviewed by Human Rights Watch shows policemen beating a protester as they detain him.[226]

A resident whose flat overlooks one of the side entrances told Human Rights Watch that at around 6 p.m. there were only two policemen on Mohandessin al-Askariyeen Street, a side street that intersects with Tayaran Street, with a group of half a dozen prisoners:

> I heard one policeman yelling, "Hurry up; walk from here to there," and you could hear his voice trembling. There was a queue of [around six] men; they were walking with their hands on their heads. The policeman suddenly fired, and then I saw a man on the ground. He killed this man for nothing.[227]

---

[220] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

[221] "Security forces allow safe dispersal of Rab'a al-Adawiya protesters (ONTV)," video clip, YouTube, August 14, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aF5EhLv1M9U (accessed July 22, 2014).

[222] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, January 26, 2014.

[223] Human Rights Watch interviews with three protesters (names withheld), Cairo, February 8, February 10, and February 13, 2014.

[224] Human Rights Watch interview with high school student (name withheld), Cairo, February 5, 2014.

[225] Nermine Souleiman, "Investigation of 852 defendants in Rab'a al-Adawiya…prosecutors accuse them of having burnt the Rab'a al-Adawiya Mosque and joined a terrorist organization…and controversy over 37 bodies in Heliopolis Hospital, some of which are unidentified and show marks of torture," *Youm7*, August 17, 2013, http://www1.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=1207836&#.U6Lbs42SxSY (accessed July 22, 2014); Hanan Mohamed, "We publish accounts of defendants on the events of the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in dispersal," Moheet, August 17, 2013, http://moheet.com/2013/08/17/1809973/%D9%86%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5.html#.U6Lhb02SxSZ (accessed July 22, 2014).

[226] "Beating of a Rab'a protester by officer and his soldiers," video clip, YouTube, August 15, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYMOQH6Zqrc (accessed July 22, 2014).

[227] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.

With limited capacity to process detainees at the police stations near Rab'a Square, police held detainees overnight in Cairo Stadium, two witnesses, one detainee and the father of another detainee, told *The Guardian* in February.[228] The detainee, 60-year-old Hussein Abdel Aal, told *The Guardian* that the police "treated him like an animal," beating him and taking his personal possessions.[229] Mosaab al-Shamy told Human Rights Watch that his brother, Al Jazeera journalist Abdullah al-Shamy, who was detained during the Rab'a dispersal, was among the detainees held overnight in Cairo Stadium.[230]

The government declared a curfew at 7 p.m.[231] This imposed an additional burden on protesters leaving Rab'a Square, who had to navigate checkpoints manned by police, army, and local popular committees. Protesters told Human Rights Watch that authorities manning the checkpoints appeared to be searching for protesters coming from the Rab'a sit-in and that they saw individuals being beaten and arrested at these points.[232] One demonstrator, who lived near Rab'a Square and provided rides to residents from other parts of Cairo, said that, in one instance, they dressed up a dead protester to appear alive in order to pass through checkpoints on the way.[233]

Killings of Protesters

Human Rights Watch cannot establish whether initial gunshots in Rab'a Square came from the security forces or the few armed protesters. Interior Minister Ibrahim has claimed that the first casualty was a police officer, who died with five others near the center of Rab'a Square in the morning. These killings caused him he said to order his officers to halt their advance until just before sunset.[234] The National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) report on the Rab'a dispersal also maintained that protesters fired first in the morning, resulting in the deaths of five members of the security forces.[235]

---

[228] Patrick Kingsley, "How did 37 prisoners come to die at Cairo prison Abu Zaabal?," *Guardian*, February 21, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/22/cairo-prison-abu-zabaal-deaths-37-prisoners (accessed July 22, 2014).

[229] Ibid.

[230] Human Rights Watch interview with Mosaab al-Shamy, Cairo, September 23, 2013.

[231] "State of emergency announced for a month and curfew imposed to maintain security," *Al-Ahram*, August 14, 2013, http://shabab.ahram.org.eg/News/13777.aspx (accessed July 22, 2014).

[232] Human Rights Watch interviews with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, January 26, and February 11, 2014.

[233] Human Rights Watch interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, February 12, 2014.

[234] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 22, 2014).

[235] National Council for Human Rights (NCHR, Cairo),"Report of the fact-finding committee on the events of the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in," March 2013,

Ibrahim's claim, though, is at odds with the significant evidence Human Rights Watch has gathered, including over 100 interviews with witnesses, journalists, bystanders, medics, and local residents. Human Rights Watch did interview a local resident who went outside when he first heard the sound of shooting at around 7:30 a.m. and told Human Rights Watch that he saw three dead police officers being carried out of the Tiba Mall.[236] However, dozens of witnesses also told Human Rights Watch that security forces and snipers, who were in place from the outset, opened fire with live ammunition on crowds of largely peaceful protesters from the first minutes of the dispersal and continued firing for much of the day.

Few protesters heard a warning before police opened fire and, although police started by shooting teargas and less than lethal riot control guns, they resorted to live fire only minutes later, according to dozens of witnesses. The government claims that security forces played the warning for an hour and half before opening fire.[237] The National Council for Human Rights investigation concluded that there was a 25 minute warning.[238] However, these claims and conclusions are inconsistent with the accounts gathered by Human Rights Watch.

Witnesses observed plainclothes snipers firing from atop of several buildings, including the Military Intelligence and Traffic Directorate, and Defense Ministry buildings. A Human Rights Watch arms researcher concluded, based on video footage he reviewed, that the snipers were trained professionals, carrying 7.62 mm bolt action rifles equipped with

---

http://www.scribd.com/doc/212842013/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3-2014 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[236] Human Rights Watch interview with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.

[237] Mamadouh Hassan, "Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda Dispersals…Clean Operations in the Eyes of Central Security Forces," *Al-Shorouk,* August 19, 2013, http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=19082013&id=9feff768-de2d-47d8-a083-40ff93bef780 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[238] National Council for Human Rights (NCHR, Cairo),"Report of the fact-finding committee on the events of the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in," March 2013, http://www.scribd.com/doc/212842013/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3-2014 (accessed July 23, 2014).

optics and supported by armed spotters using binoculars.[239] Officials have claimed that it was Brotherhood gunmen who operated atop buildings in the Rab'a sit-in, but have provided no evidence, including any video footage, to support this charge. The fact that snipers were largely deployed on the roofs of government buildings, appeared professional, and fired at protesters makes the charge highly dubious.

Video footage also shows APCs unleashing intense gunfire at protesters; the gunfire appears to come from several gunmen inside the APCs firing a range of weapons, including large-caliber rounds in bursts, through firing points on the side of the vehicle.[240]

Thirty-one witnesses said they saw snipers fire teargas, birdshot, and even live ammunition from helicopters hovering over the square. During a segment on Egyptian state TV on the day of the dispersal, pro-government correspondent Abdullah Barakat, who was covering the dispersal, reported that "helicopters dealt with the [Brotherhood] snipers."[241] While Barakat claims that the snipers came from the ranks of demonstrators, he corroborates witness accounts that security forces fired from helicopters. Human Rights Watch, though, could not find photographic or video evidence of snipers firing from helicopters.

Human Rights Watch's investigation also found that some protesters were armed. Several witnesses told Human Rights Watch that they saw armed protesters during the dispersal, including in the Manufiya Building, some of whom fired on the police. Moreover, witness accounts and video footage indicate that dozens of protesters lobbed Molotov cocktails and rocks and set off fireworks in the direction of advancing security forces and gunmen.

Extensive witness evidence and video footage reviewed by Human Rights Watch indicates that the number of armed men among the protesters was limited, likely numbering around 15 or so, which corresponds to the number of protesters' guns the Interior Ministry claims to have found in Rab'a Square, and that arms did not form a core part of the Brotherhood's

---

[239] "Exclusive coverage: Moment of retreat for sniper shooting at protesters," video clip, YouTube, August 14, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqzQS1y3rx8 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[240] "The worst you can see on the Rab'a Massacre…live ammunition" video clip, YouTube, August 15, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCgsh5HfctQ (accessed July 21, 2014).

[241] "Egyptian television and what made Rab'a demonstrators burn Rab'a al-Adawiya Mosque before leaving it (CBC)", video clip, YouTube, August 14, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsLd6GOI7yg&feature=share (accessed July 23, 2014).

defense strategy. As such, their presence did not justify the excessive lethal force used by the authorities, or their deliberate and indiscriminate targeting of protesters.

The Forensic Medical Authority and National Council for Human Rights set the number of police officers killed in Rab'a at eight.[242] Government officials have yet to explain how and where the officers were killed or put forward any evidence linking armed protesters to these killings. Human Rights Watch interviewed one witness on the day of the dispersal who said he saw a policeman injured by fire from government snipers.[243] The Interior Ministry posted the names of some of the police officers killed during the dispersals on its official Facebook page on the morning of August 14, with the first posting coming at approximately 10:25 a.m., but it did not include any further details.[244] Human Rights Watch wrote to the Interior Ministry on June 12, 2014 and again on July 8, 2014 requesting information about how the officers were killed, but, as of August 1, 2014, did not receive a response.

In a press conference on the evening of the dispersal, Interior Minister Ibrahim announced that the police had seized a small number of weapons from the sit-in after combing the area and surrounding buildings:

> nine automatic weapons, one pistol, five homemade pistols, large quantities of bullets, quantities of bulletproof vests, bladed weapons, and rioting gear.[245]

Ibrahim has separately stated that many protesters left with arms; however, he has put forward no evidence to substantiate this.[246] The fact that security forces video-recorded protesters leaving the square, many with their hands up, at the end of the day, and detained scores of protesters casts doubt on his assertion. [247]

---

[242] Forensic Medical Authority figures on file with Human Rights Watch.

[243] Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 14, 2013.

[244] "Interior Ministry Official Page," Facebook, accessed July 24, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/MoiEgy/photos/a.181676241876047.36036.181662475210757/582830041760663/?type=3&link_share=a1b9b1c2f6&permPage=1.

[245] "Press conference of Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim on dispersal of Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda sit-in," video clip, YouTube, August 14, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nySjd82JxyY (accessed July 23, 2014).

[246] Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 22, 2014).

[247] "Safe exit for Rab'a al-Adawiya protesters," video clip, YouTube, August 15, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnQsxJ-giMU&list=PLPCoUdeof3T7xFOGsb-MoByRcDIMYzbCA (accessed July 23, 2014).

In an August 18 speech, then-Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi further hinted at the fact that there may only be a small quantity of arms in the square, proclaiming, "I am not saying everyone was firing, but it is more than enough if there are 20, 30, or 50 people firing live fire in a sit-in of that size."[248] If the figure of about 15 guns accurately reflects the number of firearms confiscated at a sit-in that held approximately 85,000 protesters at capacity, the death toll of at least 817 people indicates that the police shot dead hundreds and injured thousands who were not armed.

On July 8, 2013, Col. Ahmed Ali, referencing the killings of 61 protesters outside the Republican Guard headquarters that day, told the *Associated Press*: "What excessive force? We were dealing with people shooting at us with live ammunition. It would have been excessive if we killed 300."[249]

Police behavior during the Rab'a dispersal also indicates that the threat from firearms was limited. Two journalists said that security forces opened fire on a large group of people marching towards the sit-in from the eastern entrance protesting the forcible dispersal, wounding several protesters. Just after the shooting, the journalists observed armed policemen standing on top of their APCs.[250] A photo provided by the journalists confirms their claim. Human Rights Watch reviewed extensive video footage showing police officers facing protesters without protection and snipers operating from on top of buildings in plain view.[251] It seems unlikely that the police would be standing atop buildings and on vehicles in the open if there was a significant risk of gunfire from the protesters.

Moreover, much of the shooting by government forces appear to have been indiscriminate, as police opened fire in the general direction of crowds of protesters, instead of targeting armed protesters who posed a threat. It does not appear that police were shooting only at the small number of armed individuals within the sit-in. Moreover, some of the killings appear to have been the result of the police purposefully firing on people who posed no

---

[248] "General Sisi's full speech. Dangerous information revealed for the first time," video clip, YouTube, August 8, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOh5hi1ezqs (accessed July 28, 2014).

[249] "Egyptian military's new look challenged," *Associated Press,* July 8, 2013, http://bigstory.ap.org/article/analysis-egyptian-militarys-new-look-challenged (accessed June 28, 2014).

[250] Human Rights Watch interviews with two journalists (names withheld), Cairo, August 21, 2013.

[251] Photos and videos on file with Human Rights Watch.

imminent threat to life at the time, including significant numbers of injured protesters, ambulance workers, and persons assisting injured protesters.

The Death Toll

As with the Tiananmen Square and Andijan massacres, the precise number of protesters killed in the Rab'a dispersal will likely never be known. The government's systematic effort to obscure what took place on August 14, beginning when it sealed off the square the next day and continuing with its unrelenting repression of pro-Morsy supporters in subsequent months, have made it exceedingly difficult to establish the actual death toll. Based on its year-long investigation, Human Rights Watch found that at least 817 and likely well over 1,000 people were killed in Rab'a Square alone on August 14.

For weeks after the dispersal, state agencies refused to release an official death toll for the Rab'a dispersal. On August 15, the Health Ministry put out a death toll of 288 protester deaths at the Rab'a sit-in.[252] In an August 31 television interview, his first since the dispersal, Interior Minister Ibrahim made an astonishing announcement belied by volumes of evidence and video footage:

> The official number of bodies that came out of Rab'a was forty-something bodies. Of those, 24 were in shrouds. The Brotherhood brought bodies from the governorates to Iman Mosque to say that these were people who had died in Rab'a.[253]

It was not until three months later, on November 14, that FMA head Dr. Hisham Abdelhamid held a press conference to announce the final Rab'a death toll. He announced a figure of 627, which included 377 bodies autopsied at the official Zeinhom Morgue, in addition to 167 bodies that were in Iman Mosque, near Rab'a Square in Nasr City, and another 83 bodies that were taken to different hospitals around Cairo.[254] Dr. Abdelhamid

---

[252] Associated Press, "Death toll from Egypt violence rises to 638: Health ministry," *Ahram Online*, August 15, 2013, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentPrint/1/0/79160/Egypt/0/Death-toll-from-Egypt-violence-rises-to--Health-mi.aspx (accessed July 23, 2014).

[253] Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 22, 2014).

[254] Middle East News Agency, "Forensic Medical Authority: 726 Deaths since the dispersal of Rab'a and al-Nahda squares," *Al-Shorouk*, November 14, 2013, http://shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=14112013&id=7870071e-556c-4854-9cbd-ac9011a1da51 (accessed November 28, 2013).

went on to acknowledge though that "there may have been other cases which were buried without an autopsy or without formally informing the authorities."[255]

In March 2014, the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) released a report on Rab'a, in which it identified 624 civilians killed in the dispersal based on its review of official and unofficial death lists. Although the NCHR and FMA figures are similar, their casualty lists do not line up, with some names only listed on one of the two lists. Adding the lists together, and removing names that appear on both lists, yields a total of 650 killed.

These figures, though, ignore compelling evidence of additional uncounted bodies in morgues and hospitals across Cairo documented by Human Rights Watch staff and other Egyptian human rights lawyers in the immediate aftermath of the dispersal.

The largest single oversight was in the number of bodies said to be in Iman Mosque, on Makram Ebeid Street, where many sit-in participants flocked to after the Rab'a sit-in had been fully dispersed. The FMA identified 167 bodies in Iman Mosque. However, on the morning of August 15, a Human Rights Watch researcher at Iman Mosque counted 235 bodies that had been brought in from Rab'a hospital and other makeshift facilities in the square. Human rights lawyers from several different organizations told Human Rights Watch that more bodies arrived at the mosque later that day and provided Human Rights Watch with photos of a list of 257 names of dead that had been hung at the mosque at the end of the day. Human Rights Watch compared this list to those processed at other morgues and hospitals in Egypt to ensure no double counting. Its review found that 257 represented the accurate count of bodies in Iman Mosque and that FMA had therefore undercounted by 90 bodies.

Interior Minister Ibrahim has said there were around 240 bodies in Iman Mosque, putting him at odds with FMA's figures, though he claimed that the bodies in Iman Mosque did not come from Rab'a.[256] However, Human Rights Watch can confirm that bodies were transferred from Rab'a to Iman Mosque after security forces had finished dispersing the sit-in. Six protesters told Human Rights Watch that from around 8 p.m. on August 14 until the early morning of August 15, they transported or saw others transporting bodies from

---

[255] Ibid.

[256] Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 22, 2014).

Rab'a to Iman Mosque.[257] A local resident told Human Rights Watch that at 8:25 p.m. on August 14, she saw from her apartment a stream of men carrying bodies, and that her cousins had gone to help.[258] A resident on Makram Ebeid Street told Human Rights Watch that at around 9:30 p.m., he had seen a car with two bodies on the roof drive down the street towards the Iman Mosque.[259]

A doctor described the scene at Iman Mosque when he arrived the next day:

> I have never seen anything like what I saw when I stepped inside. The entire floor was covered in bodies. To slow down the decomposition, people in the mosque had put ice around the bodies. But by the time we arrived the next day, the ice had melted and mixed with the blood, leaving us wading in blood and water.[260]

Around 40 of the bodies at Iman Mosque were so burned that identification was not possible. The doctor believed that most of these bodies came from the field hospital, which had been burned in the late afternoon before medical personnel and patients could remove the corpses. The doctor believed that there had been 34 bodies in the clinic when they had to evacuate.[261] His account was supported by that of another doctor.[262]

In addition to the 90 uncounted bodies in Iman Mosque, Egyptian human rights lawyers and activists on the ground in hospitals across Egypt documented an additional 77 bodies not included in the FMA or NCHR lists. These bodies came from several different hospitals, including al-Taa'min al-Saahi (15) and Ma'hd Nasser (23). Altogether, human rights lawyers and researchers from organizations including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR), the Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, and the Nazra Institute for Feminist Studies documented 167 additional deaths not included in FMA or NCHR figures.

---

[257] Human Rights Watch interview with volunteers (names withheld), Iman mosque (Cairo), August 15, 2013; Human Rights Watch Skype interview with Asma Al-Khatib, journalist, Cairo, February 1, 2014; Human Rights Watch interviews with protesters (names withheld), Cairo, January 30, February 5, and February 6, 2014.

[258] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.

[259] Human Rights Watch interview with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.

[260] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

In August, 2013, Nazra met with the head of the FMA at the time, Dr. Magda Qardawy, who confirmed that there were at least 19 women among those killed on the day of the dispersal.[263] Dr. Qardawy was dismissed in September 2013.[264]

The state-run Al-Ahram newspaper also confirmed that four journalists were shot dead: Mike Deane from *Sky News*, Habiba Abdelaziz from *Gulf News*, Mosaab al-Shamy from Rassd News, and Ahmad Abdelgawad from *al-Akhbar*.[265]

Human Rights Watch cross-checked the 167 names with the 650 from the FMA and the NCHR to ensure no repetition, particularly of bodies that may have been moved between morgues and hospitals.

This figure, though, represents only a lower-bound estimate of the number of people killed in Rab'a, as human rights activists were not able to document the numbers of casualties in every Egyptian hospital and morgue. WikiThawra, an initiative of the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, has assembled a list of 246 additional names of people killed at Rab'a, sourced from online websites or social media groups such as Martyr's Stories and the Figure Them Out Campaign, established by Rab'a survivors and activists.[266] For 113 of these casualties, the additional names are supported by either handwritten lists produced by witnesses who were in hospitals in the immediate aftermath of the dispersal or by photos of the corpses themselves. The other 133 names lack equivalent documentary support.

---

[263] Nazra for Feminist Studies, "Report on the Treatment of Female Protesters by Security Forces in the Events of the Dispersal of the Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda sit-in," September 10, 2013, http://nazra.org/sites/nazra/files/attachments/report_on_police_treatment-with_women_protesters.pdf (accessed July 23, 2014).

[264] "Egypt's justice minister dismisses chairwoman of forensics over published report," *Middle East Monitor*, September 22, 2013, https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/africa/7476-egypts-justice-minister-dismisses-chairwoman-of-forensics-over-published-report (accessed July 23, 2014).

[265] "Four journalists killed, others injured, detained in Cairo clashes," *Ahram Online*, August 14, 2013, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/79055/Egypt/Politics-/Four-journalists-killed,-others-injured,-detained-.aspx (accessed July 23, 2014).

[266] "Full report: detailed index of Rab'a sit-in dispersal victims and methodology (updated)," WikiThawra, September 3, 2013, http://wikithawra.wordpress.com/2013/09/03/rabiadisperal14aug/ (accessed July 24, 2014); "Figure them out Campaign, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)," Facebook, accessed July 24, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/FigurethemOut.Campaign.Egypt?fref=photo; "Martyr's Stories," Facebook, accessed July 24, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/martyrstories?fref=photo.

Human Rights Watch spoke to the administrator of one of these sites, Asmaa Khairy of Martyr's Stories, and attempted to verify 24 randomly selected names by cross-checking data with other sources, including four for which it directly reached out to the families of the named victims. This review corroborated the veracity of data. Based on this, Human Rights Watch found strong evidence to indicate that 113 of the 246 additional bodies were indeed Rab'a casualties that do not appear in lists collected by FMA, NCHR, or human rights organizations. However, because Human Rights Watch could not verify the data with the same degree of certainty as the 817 figure, these numbers were not included in the overall casualty count. If 113 were to be added to Human Rights Watch's figure of 817 fatalities, the overall total would increase to 930. WikiThawra's final casualty figure of 932 includes these 930 bodies, in addition to two others verified through media sources.

WikiThawra has also collected evidence of a further 29 bodies whose identities are unknown, five individuals who were in Rab'a on the day of the dispersal and are now missing according to relatives, 80 from hospitals unrecognized by the Ministry of Health, and 81 rumored dead, but for whom complete information is not available.[267] WikiThawra did not include this data in its final tally, given the possibility of repetition with its data from other sources. In addition, WikiThawra's data does not include bodies taken by families directly from Rab'a Square and buried without official documentation, a possibility acknowledged by FMA, or to hospitals for which deaths were not tracked or documented. Given the likelihood that these additional sources would yield additional casualties, it is likely that the actual Rab'a death toll was well over 1,000 protesters. The Muslim Brotherhood claims a significantly higher death toll.[268]

Dispersal of the al-Nahda Square Sit-in

Located in front of Cairo University at the intersection of Murad Street and the University Bridge, the smaller sit-in at al-Nahda Square in Giza began in early July demanding the reinstatement of Morsy. Many sit-in participants hailed from the Cairo University Engineering Faculty, a body known to have many Muslim Brotherhood supporters.

---

[267] "Full report: detailed index of Rab'a sit-in dispersal victims and methodology (updated)," WikiThawra, September 3, 2013, http://wikithawra.wordpress.com/2013/09/03/rabiadisperal14aug/ (accessed July 24, 2014).

[268] In a statement to Human Rights Watch, a Muslim Brotherhood spokesman said, "There are hundreds of unidentified bodies, bodies buried without death certificates and hundreds unaccounted for…late in the morning of August 14th, before the Rab'a sit-in was completed removed, our doctors whom we were in constant communication with count over 2,200 bodies of killed protesters at the makeshift hospital." Human Rights Watch email correspondence with Muslim Brotherhood spokesman (name withheld), London, July 1, 2014.

The violent dispersal of the sit-in at al-Nahda Square followed the same pattern as the Rab'a dispersal, though it took place over a much shorter interval of time, likely as a result of its smaller size and the distinct geography of the area. Security forces demanded from loudspeakers that protesters leave at around 6 a.m. on August 14, but virtually immediately resorted to firing at protesters, including those attempting to leave from designated safe exits. Witnesses described how police fired at protesters both deliberately and indiscriminately, using teargas, birdshot and live ammunition. As protesters took shelter inside the Engineering Faculty building at nearby Cairo University, further violence ensued as security forces fired at protesters barricaded in the building. The Ministry of Health on August 15 set the death toll for the dispersal of the al-Nahda sit-in at 87.[269] The FMA documented the deaths of two police officers.[270]

Protesters at the sit-in told Human Rights Watch that between 5:45 and 6 a.m. on August 14, police APCs and bulldozers approached the sit-in from four sides, the Cairo Zoo, University Bridge, and both directions of Murad Street, a north-south boulevard that runs into the square. Helicopters began flying overhead almost immediately, witnesses said. Violence was heaviest between 6 and 9 a.m. At approximately 9 a.m., the Interior Ministry announced that "the police are in full control over al-Nahda Square," and TV footage showed the square empty of protesters.[271] However, sporadic clashes continued until the early evening at the Engineering Faculty, 200 meters southeast inside the university, where dozens of protesters barricaded themselves until about 8 p.m.

Human Rights Watch interviewed ten witnesses present during the dispersal of the sit-in, and spoke to four hospital administrators at hospitals who received casualties that day. Researchers viewed hospital records and interviewed doctors, confirming ten deaths from

---

[269] "Health Ministry: number killed in political violence in Egypt rises to 525," Reuters, August 15, 2013, http://ara.reuters.com/article/topNews/idARACAE9B2HIN20130815 (accessed July 23, 2014). The Forensic Medical Authority, though, stated in a November report that it only processed 21 bodies from al-Nahda Square. See Noha Ashur, "Forensic Medical Authority: Rab'a death toll reaches 377, including 11 burned after death," November 14, 2013, http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=14112013&id=31c5d60f-f4b8-4b2e-8757-990b53453a9e (accessed July 23, 2014); WikiThawra, a documentation project of the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, documented 88 fatalities, adding an additional protester who later died of his wounds; "Index of those killed in the Sisi/Mansour era," WikiThawra, accessed July 24, 2013, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0ApHKfHFs3JYxdGQybmtTVk42bEtxemNjZldJcWxjbnc&usp=drive_web&pli=1#gid=0.

[270] Forensic Medical Authority figures for number of officers killed on file with Human Rights Watch.

[271] "Press Release No. 2 of Ministry of Interior", Facebook, August 14, 2013, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=582777521765915&set=a.181676241876047.36036.181662475210757&type=1 (accessed July 25, 2014).

live bullets, and one death from teargas inhalation. Witnesses and hospital employees described how dozens more were wounded by live fire, birdshot and teargas inhalation.

In an August 31 interview two weeks after the dispersal, Interior Minister Ibrahim said:

> We tried as much as possible to minimize casualties, but the rate of casualties depends on the response. In al-Nahda, it only took us 20 minutes, and we didn't have a single casualty. But after protesters took over the Faculty of Engineering and started shooting at us from inside, we started to engage. Less than 20 of the protesters were killed and three police officers were killed."[272]

Bulldozers removed security barriers erected by protesters in al-Nahda Square, and police in APCs followed the bulldozers into the protest site.[273] Police immediately fired teargas, birdshot and live bullets on the people inside the sit-in, five protesters told Human Rights Watch.[274]

"They started firing teargas right away," a surgeon who was present at the al-Nahda sit-in until 7:30 a.m. told Human Rights Watch.[275] He further described how "the police used loudspeakers [to tell people to disperse] at the same time as they shot birdshot and teargas [canisters]. They said: people who want a safe exit should exit from the Giza side near Istiqama Mosque on Gama'a Street."[276] A 17-year-old protester saw bulldozers and APCs coming from the zoo and Mourad Street.[277] A doctor said that he saw police shoot teargas, birdshot and live ammunition from rifles, which he said were AK-47s, into the crowd of protesters.[278]

---

[272] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 22, 2014). Ibrahim's figure for the number of protest deaths is inconsistent with the number of 87 put out by the Health Ministry on August 15, 2013; moreover, the FMA only documented the deaths of two police officers from al-Nahda Square.

[273] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, August 14, 2013.

[274] Ibid; Human Rights Watch interviews with three protesters (names withheld), Cairo, August 15 and September 5, 2013.

[275] Human Rights Watch interview with surgeon (name withheld), Cairo, August 14, 2013.

[276] Ibid.

[277] Human Rights Watch interview with 17-year-old protester (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.

[278] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, September 5, 2013.

Starting at 6:15 a.m., protesters threw stones and clashed with security forces in bulldozers that had entered the square. "There was a belt of people; people stopped in front of the APC and bulldozer [in front of me,]" a member of the security committee in charge of the main entrance and stationed a few hundred meters back said, "Then, [the police] started firing shotguns. Two people came up from the APC opening; one was firing a shotgun, the other shot three to five bullets and then went down again."[279]

Police used live ammunition, in addition to teargas and birdshot, while dispersing protesters from al-Nahda Square. The security committee member told Human Rights Watch that security forces shot several protesters at the entrance barrier before they entered the site at approximately 6 a.m.[280] "I was positioned about 400 meters from the entrance. There were about five people at the entrance [barrier] who were shot right away, in one or one-and-a-half minutes. After they [were shot], the bulldozers entered."[281] He did not know whether police shot the protesters with birdshot or live ammunition.

Before the dispersal, participants in the al-Nahda sit-in constructed improvised barriers out of sandbags to guard the three sit-in entrances. One protester told Human Rights Watch said that a small number of protesters also carried firearms. They began using these weapons, he said, when police broke the gate leading to the Engineering Faculty compound, where dozens of protesters had barricaded themselves, and where they had taken others injured or killed in the dispersal.[282]

A doctor participating in the sit-in told Human Rights Watch that at approximately 8:15 a.m., security forces shot him in the legs as he approached them unarmed. "When [the police officer] saw me, he shot me with birdshot from ten meters away. He hit me in both my thighs and my testicles. I was wearing normal clothes and a teargas mask, with my hands in the air."[283]

---

[279] Human Rights Watch interview with member of security committee (name withheld), Cairo, September 5, 2013.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, September 2, 2013.
[283] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, September 5, 2013.

According to all accounts, most of the police fire took place between about 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., but continued in nearby areas until the evening, including the Cairo University Engineering Faculty, where police continued to fire teargas until about 7 p.m.

At around 7 a.m., after bulldozers removed obstacles to the square, police APCs entered, and forces shot teargas canisters, birdshot, and live ammunition. At this time, five witnesses heard police using loudspeakers to announce the dispersal, and three of them heard police instruct those present to move towards Giza Square in order to safely exit the sit-in.[284] A protester said that at 7 a.m., police stopped firing teargas before telling the crowd by loudspeaker they could leave through Giza Square.[285] However, two other protesters said they could not hear the police announcement because of heavy shooting.[286]

A demonstrator told Human Rights Watch, "[The police] were using loudspeakers at the same time as they were shooting birdshot and teargas, and the bulldozers were removing any obstacles. Police in APCs just behind them accompanied them. They said, 'people who want a safe exit should exit from the Giza side near Istiqama Mosque on Gamaa Street.'"[287]

Many people exited the sit-in safely, according to two witnesses. Nader Kamal saw plainclothes men he described as "thugs" beat some of the demonstrators as they fled into Giza Square.[288] A smaller number of protesters chose not to exit the protest, and instead sought refuge inside the Cairo University Engineering Faculty compound.

All of the protesters interviewed described how hundreds of sit-in participants fled to the Engineering Faculty compound. Protesters broke through the front gate to enter the compound by mid-morning, and approximately 500 took refuge in one building, including at least 60 injured protesters. Three of the protesters Human Rights Watch interviewed said they hid there as police besieged the building until 7 p.m., sporadically firing teargas into it. A doctor who participated in the sit-in said that protesters hid in the building, sharing gas masks among themselves and using clothing for makeshift bandages and tourniquets.[289]

---

[284] Human Rights Watch interviews with five witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, August 14, August 15, and September 5, 2013.
[285] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.
[286] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, September 2, 2013.
[287] Human Rights Watch interview with demonstrator (name withheld), Cairo, September 5, 2013.
[288] Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.
[289] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, September 5, 2013.

A member of the al-Nahda sit-in security committee told Human Rights Watch that several armed protesters were positioned on the upper floors of the Architecture College in the Engineering Faculty.[290] He added that clashes broke out between protesters in the building and security forces around 4 p.m. A doctor who treated injured protesters said:

> [The injured] were put in a very large room; it was closed so that the injured people would not be teargassed more. In my hall, there were 60 injured people. From 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. injured people kept coming in. After 6 p.m., the [sound] bombs and shots stopped; we didn't see any police forces.[291]

Protesters remained in the Engineering Faculty until between 8 and 9 p.m., when security forces allowed them to leave the site safely.

In a press conference the evening of the dispersal, Interior Minister Ibrahim said that police forces had found in al-Nahda Square:

> ten machine guns, 29 shotguns with birdshot, 9,622 live bullets, six hand grenades, five handmade shotguns with birdshot, 55 Molotov cocktails, wireless communication devices and electronic equipment, and large quantities of knives and grilling tools.[292]

Other accounts corroborate that there were comparatively more arms in al-Nahda Square than in Rab'a Square. Activist blogger Alaa Abdel Fattah and his mother, Cairo University professor Laila Soueif, visited al-Nahda Square in July 2013 and observed weapons inside, describing the sit-in as "armed."[293] Ultimately, though, the speed and ease with which security forces dispersed the sit-in and fact that only two policemen were killed suggest that the presence of relatively more armed protesters did not result in protesters using a significant amount of force in al-Nahda Square on August 14.

---

[290] Human Rights Watch interview with member of al-Nahda sit-in security committee (name withheld), Cairo, September 2, 2013.

[291] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, September 5, 2013.

[292] "Press Conference of Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim on Dispersal of Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda sit-in," video clip, YouTube, August 14, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nySjd82JxyY (accessed July 23, 2014).

[293] "Alaa Abdel Fattah and his mother ask for the dispersal by force of the al-Nahda sit-in because it is an armed one," video clip, YouTube, November 18, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MleNgLdXGk (accessed July 23, 2014).

On September 9, Giza's Public Prosecution Office claimed that violence from al-Nahda protesters resulted in the burning of 29 police vehicles, and that fires started as a result of live bullets, birdshot, and Molotov cocktails.[294] They also said protesters stole 50 guns from security forces.[295] Finally, they accused protesters of burning the Engineering Faculty buildings.[296] Human Rights Watch could not independently confirm or disprove these accusations.

Dispersal at Mustafa Mahmoud Square

After security forces dispersed the al-Nahda sit-in on August 14, Brotherhood supporters organized a march towards nearby Mustafa Mahmoud Square in Mohandiseen, a neighborhood southwest of al-Nahda Square in Giza. This protest was among the many held across Egypt on August 14 to protest the violent dispersals of Rab'a and al-Nahda squares. Police again used excessive force, including live ammunition, to disperse the Mustafa Mahmoud protesters soon after that protest began.

Human Rights Watch interviewed five men who participated in the Mustafa Mahmoud protest, as well as two doctors at the field hospital in the Mustafa Mahmoud Mosque. Two protesters interviewed sustained gunshot wounds.[297]

A doctor who worked in the field hospital in the square told Human Rights Watch that the first casualty arrived at 8:30 a.m. with a bullet wound to the leg.[298] Mid-morning, he said, "The serious cases started coming. I saw a case with his brain out [of his skull], this one died on the table though we didn't actually have a table; we were working on the floor. I saw at least five such cases [of people with their brains shot out,] but they were still breathing."

"We also saw cases with ruptured abdomens, all the intestines out, cases of protesters shot in the eye, in the neck," he said.[299] He added that hundreds of injured also sought

---

[294] Mohamed al-Qomash, "Prosecution on the dispersal of Al-Nahda and burning of the engineering faculty: the Brotherhood burned 29 police cars and armored vehicles and stole 50 rifles," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, September 8, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=396119 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[295] Ibid.

[296] Ibid.

[297] Human Rights Watch interviews with two protesters (names withheld), Cairo, August 14 and September 3, 2013.

[298] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, September 3, 2013.

[299] Ibid.

treatment at the field hospital for gunshot wounds, birdshot wounds, teargas inhalation, and bone fractures.[300]

Witnesses said both Central Security Forces (CSF) and plainclothes men carrying weapons fired on protesters. A protester who was shot by a CSF officer that day told Human Rights Watch that he arrived at the protest around 11:30 a.m. on August 14 and found the scene relatively calm, though teargas remained in the air.[301] Around 12:30 p.m., he said:

> I heard the sound of gunfire. I went to that entrance [where I heard gunfire] and hid behind a concrete pillar near a store. I saw an armored car in front, one of the new ones, dark grey. It was moving back and forth, blocking the road. We [about five people] were hiding and heard the sound of machine guns. I was wearing a gas mask and holding a rock. There was the sound of a lot of shooting. I went out from behind the pillar to look at the asphalt to see if there was a reaction, or if it was just blanks. I was wearing a gas mask and holding a rock. I was carrying a bag so maybe they thought there was a weapon in it. I heard several gunshot bursts. When I went back in, people said, "You're injured." I didn't feel anything. Two people grabbed me and carried me back; a motorcycle took me to an ambulance.[302]

The man had sustained a gunshot wound to his thigh. Another protester told Human Rights Watch that some of the participants also carried arms, and that between approximately 1 and 2:30 p.m., clashes broke out between protesters and police.[303]

> A guy in a yellow T-shirt was shot in the chest, and anyone who was trying to help him get up and carry him was targeted as well. The protesters set tires on fire, so four other young men and I managed to carry this guy to a nearby garage. He died.[304]

---

[300] Ibid.
[301] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, September 3, 2013.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with protester (name withheld), September 3, 2013.
[304] Ibid.

He added that protesters engaged in smaller clashes with men he described as "residents" later in the afternoon.[305]

Two doctors working inside the Mustafa Mahmoud Mosque told Human Rights Watch that protesters brought between 30 and 35 people to the field hospital in the mosque throughout the day, with the first arriving at 8:30 a.m. and the last arriving at around 7 p.m.[306] A doctor working at the nearby al-Salam Hospital that day said the hospital received about 30 wounded people from the square and two dead, shot in the head.[307] Of the thirty injured, ten were badly hurt with bullet or birdshot wounds to the chest or abdomen.[308]

The State's Justification for the Dispersals

Over the six weeks of the sit-ins prior to August 14, the Muslim Brotherhood used the stages in Rab'a and al-Nahda squares as a political pulpit to call for opposition to the military takeover and resistance to the "roadmap" announced by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. Senior Brotherhood figures gave fiery speeches, all of which were broadcast on Al Jazeera, which provided 24-hour coverage of the sit-ins, particularly after the authorities shut down the Muslim Brotherhood TV station *Misr 25* on July 3, 2013.[309]

In the weeks leading up to the August dispersal of the sit-ins, the government used a variety of arguments to justify dispersing the sit-ins, ranging from the need to halt the detention and abuse of detainees by sit-in protesters, to disruption of traffic and disturbance to residents of the sit-in areas, to accusations that Brotherhood leaders were inciting violence and sectarianism from the sit-in stages. For example, in a July 27 press conference, Interior Minister Ibrahim said:

> I'm sure you all know the torture that happens there, the corpses that have come out. Al-Nahda has seen six bodies come out of it in the recent period, in addition to three cases of torture present in hospital…they are tortured to death, and they throw them out of the sit-in or ask the ambulance to come

---

[305] Ibid.

[306] Human Rights Watch interview with two doctors (names withheld), August 14 and September 3, 2013.

[307] Human Rights Watch interview with al-Salam Hospital doctor (name withheld), August 15, 2013.

[308] Ibid.

[309] "Egypt: Halt Arbitrary Action Against Brotherhood, Media," Human Rights Watch news release, July 8, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/08/egypt-halt-arbitrary-action-against-brotherhood-media.

> and take the bodies. [This is] in addition to the suffering that the people who live in the area of Rab'a face every day. This is a traffic intersection for several large traffic axes for Cairo, Yousef Abbas, Tayaran Street, and the Autostrad, and [the sit-in] has caused a traffic nightmare that has lasted 30 days. Many of the residents of both al-Nahda and Rab'a al-Adawiya have made legal complaints. The prosecutor's office is seeing that they are investigated, and we're awaiting the results on these calls… Hopefully, soon, in accordance with the prosecutor's decision, we will deal with the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins.[310]

One resident told Human Rights Watch he had been unable to take his mother, who was in a wheelchair, to the doctor the entire time of the sit-in because people were so tightly packed together under his building.[311] His neighbor, a young woman, said she found it particularly disconcerting to have to have protesters check her bags every time she had to go through their checkpoints, and that in the evening there were sometimes no women available at the checkpoints, so men searched her bag.[312] Both residents said that the constant noise from the stage, in particular throughout the evenings, made it impossible for them to sleep. Some residents of buildings surrounding the sit-in in Rab'a filed formal complaints because of their inability to easily access their building entrances.[313]

As noted, authorities claimed that protesters were detaining and abusing Brotherhood opponents at the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins. On Tuesday, July 30, the Interior Ministry announced that it had found 11 bodies of apparent victims of torture from Rab'a and al-Nahda squares.[314]

Human Rights Watch examined evidence to suggest that some protesters within the sit-ins detained and abused a number of people regarded as suspected infiltrators, possibly

---

[310] "Minister of Interior Press conference on current events," video clip, YouTube, July 27, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KS_7_grsPW4 (accessed November 22, 2013).

[311] Human Rights Watch interview with resident on intersection with Tayaran Street (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.

[312] Human Rights Watch interview with other resident on intersection with Tayaran Street (name withheld), Cairo, August 15, 2013.

[313] Al-Masry al-Youm, "Rabea al-Adaweya residents give ultimatum to pro-Morsy rally," *Egypt Independent*, July 17, 2013, http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/rabea-al-adaweya-residents-give-ultimatum-pro-morsy-rally (accessed July 23, 2014).

[314] Yousry al-Badry, "Interior Ministry: 11 bodies showing torture marks transported from Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, July 29, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/242316 (accessed July 23, 2014).

resulting in deaths. Two participants in the al-Nahda sit-in, for example, told Human Rights Watch that the protesters had formed "security committees."[315] One 33-year-old member of a security committee told Human Rights Watch that these committees had three purposes: to enforce order in the sit-in (tasks included making sure people did not get on stage without permission); to protect people when security forces attacked; and to question individuals suspected of being police or intelligence informants and detain them.[316] The man said that he saw al-Nahda protesters beat and detain a small number of suspected infiltrators.[317]

A 38-year-old member of a security committee told Human Rights Watch that in early July, after he had been injured in clashes with local residents, his group captured and beat three residents opposed to the Brotherhood rule, breaking one's arm. They detained the men, along with five others, under the stage in al-Nahda Square.[318] A third security committee member told Human Rights Watch that at his post they arrested 20 protesters and physically abused a number of them; he believed similar conduct took place at other posts and alleged that some suspected police and army officers may have been killed as a result. He did not provide further details to corroborate his allegation.[319]

Four neighborhood residents interviewed said that they had seen people capture and abuse detainees during the al-Nahda sit-in in July and August.[320] A 17-year-old boy told Human Rights Watch how sit-in participants severely beat him and cut his neck with a box-cutter, while detaining him under the al-Nahda sit-in stage on July 2.[321] Two witnesses told Human Rights Watch that the same day they saw pro-Morsy demonstrators grab and drag away Karam Hassan, a 48-year-old resident of Bain al-Sarayat neighborhood near al-Nahda Square. Hassan's mother said she did not see him until ten days later, when she identified his beaten and bruised corpse at Cairo's Zeinhom morgue.[322] She believes that he died as a result of torture inflicted by pro-Morsy protesters.

---

[315] Human Rights Watch interviews with two al-Nahda sit-in participants (names withheld), Cairo, September 2 and September 5, 2013.

[316] Human Rights Watch interview with 33-year-old member of security committee (name withheld), Cairo, September 2, 2013.

[317] Human Rights Watch interviews with 33-year-old and 38-year-old members of security committee (names withheld), Cairo, July 3 and September 2, 2013.

[318] Human Rights Watch interview with 38-year-old member of security committee (name withheld), Cairo, July 3, 2013.

[319] Human Rights Watch interview with third security committee member (name withheld), Cairo, September 5, 2013.

[320] Human Rights Watch interviews with four local residents (names withheld), Cairo, July 18, 2013.

[321] Human Rights Watch interview with 17-year-old boy (name withheld), Cairo, July 18, 2013.

[322] Human Rights Watch interview with Hag Abisa, mother of Karam Hassan, Cairo, July 18, 2013.

These accounts indicate that some protesters may have perpetrated serious crimes during the sit-ins. Security forces, though, should have responded to these allegations by investigating and detaining individuals suspected of being involved in the abuses and prosecuting those they believed responsible for any violations in fair trials. Such violations did not justify treating the entire sit-in as criminal and therefore warranting the use of excessive use of force and intentional use of lethal force against demonstrators.

In the immediate aftermath of the dispersals, police detained over 1,100 protesters from the Rab'a and Nahda sit-ins alone.[323] Prosecutors ordered their pretrial detention pending interrogation on charges including inciting or participating in violence and torturing opponents. Many of those rounded up on August 14 remain in detention. Some cases have gone to trial, including one case that charges 51 alleged pro-Morsy supporters, including Muslim Brotherhood Supreme Guide Mohamed Badie, Brotherhood leaders Mohamed Beltagy and Salah Sultan, and Mohamed Sultan, a dual Egyptian-American citizen injured during the Rab'a dispersal who at the time of writing is on hunger strike since January 26, 2014 to protest his detention, with running an "operations room" in Rab'a Square.[324] Others remain in pretrial detention. Abdullah al-Shamy, the Al Jazeera Arabic reporter detained during the Rab'a sit-in, spent over 300 days in pre-trial detention and over 140 days on hunger strike before he was granted medical release in June 2014.[325]

---

[323] Mohamed al-Qumash, "Prosecution in al-Nahda investigations: 11 defendants took refuge in the college of engineering and set it on fire," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, September 18, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/320264 (accessed July 23, 2014); Nermine Souleiman, "Investigation into 852 defendants in the dispersal of the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in," Youm7, http://www1.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=1207836&#.U6Lbs42SxSY (accessed July 22, 2014); Hanan Mohamed, "We publish accounts of defendants on the events of the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in dispersal," *Moheet*, http://moheet.com/2013/08/17/1809973/%D9%86%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5.html#.U6Lhb02SxSZ (accessed July 22, 2014).

[324] "Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR), "136 Days Of Hunger Strike: Save Mohamed Sultan's Life," Cairo, June 10, 2014, http://ecesr.org/en/?p=421918 (accessed July 23, 2014); Samia Nakhoul, "Egypt Muslim Brotherhood chief calls Sisi a 'tyrant'," *Reuters*, April 1, 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/01/us-egypt-brotherhood-court-idUSBREA301HR20140401?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter&dlvrit=992637 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[325] Al-Sayed Gamal al-Deen "Al Jazeera hunger-striking journalist al-Shamy granted medical release," *Ahram Online*, June 16, 2014, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/103794/Egypt/Politics-/AlJazeera-hungerstriking-journalist-ElShamy-grante.aspx (accessed July 23, 2014).

Government Planning

The brutal manner in which security forces carried out the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals appears to reflect policies that Egyptian authorities at the highest levels implemented after weeks of planning.

From the first days of the sit-ins, the government raised the specter of dispersal. As communal violence gripped many parts of Egypt, often pitting Morsy supporters against supporters of the interim government, and security forces first opened fire on pro-Morsy demonstrators at the Republican Guard headquarters in early-mid July, officials and leading media figures engaged in a concerted campaign to demonize the Brotherhood, accusing them of seeking to undermine the state and harboring heavy weapons at the sit-ins.[326]

This rhetoric culminated in a July 24 speech by then-Defense Minister al-Sisi, who called on Egyptians to take to the streets "to give me a mandate and an order to confront potential violence and terrorism."[327] Tens of thousands of Egyptians answered his call on July 26 and filled Tahrir Square and other streets throughout the country. Hours later, in the early morning of July 27, police opened fire on a march of pro-Morsy supporters, killing 95.[328]

In a televised interview with *Al-Hayat* channel on July 26, Interim President Mansour said that the government "cannot accept security disorder, cutting roads and bridges, attacking public buildings. The state has to impose order by all force and decisiveness."[329]
On July 27, Interior Minister Ibrahim said in a press conference:

> Regarding the timing, specifically, of clearing the two sit-ins, there is full coordination between us and the army, and there will be hopefully discussions in order to set a time to do so. This according to, as I said, the

---

[326] "Remember Tamer from Ghamra? This time, it's Samir from Rab'a—weapons of mass destruction in Rab'a," video clip, YouTube, July 16, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1UPlWrdcIE (accessed July 28, 2014).

[327] "Al-Sisi's speech in front of the students of the Air Defense and Naval Academies-July 24," video clip, YouTube, July 24, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpuuCqXhhFw (accessed July 24, 2014).

[328] See section III: Other Mass Killings of Protesters, subsection: July 27: Ninety-five Protesters Killed outside the Manassa Memorial.

[329] "Call from Interim President Adly Mansour on al-Hayat channel," video clip, Dailymotion, July 26, 2013, http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x12c4la_%D9%85%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%82%D8%AA-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A9-26-7-2013_auto (accessed July 29, 2014).

> complaints that have been filed with the public prosecutor, so that there will be legal cover for the operation. I said that the sit-ins would be cleared according to law, and based on the complaints that were investigated by the public prosecutor regarding the damages to those living in the area and damage to them from the activities that take place in Rab'a.[330]

On July 31, citing a popular mandate to "fight violence and terrorism," the Egyptian cabinet headed by Prime Minister Hazem al-Beblawy authorized the interior minister to "take all necessary measures to face these dangers and put an end to them within the framework of the constitution and the law."[331] On August 4, the National Defense Council, chaired by then Interim President Mansour and consisting of leading civilian and security officials, signed off on the dispersal plan, affirming support for "all steps and measures that [the government] has already begun to take in the framework of instituting security across the nation and confronting threats and security breaches by the assemblies at Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda."[332]

There were serious mediation efforts by Egyptian and international actors to prevent a forcible dispersal of the sit-in. On August 2, al-Sisi met with Salafi leaders, who said that al-Sisi had promised not to disperse the sit-ins by force as long as they remained peaceful, in exchange for a de-escalation of rhetoric from the stages in Rab'a and al-Nahda squares.[333] At that time, an international mediation effort led by European Union Special Envoy Bernardino Leon and US Deputy Secretary of State William Burns was underway, seeking to broker a political deal between the Muslim Brotherhood and the interim government to avoid the violence anticipated in any forcible dispersal of the sit-ins. The African Union High-Level Panel for Egypt, appointed on July 8, 2013 after the ouster of Morsy, also conducted a fact-finding and consultative mission in Cairo from July 27-August 4, where they met high-ranking

---

[330] "Minister of Interior Press conference on current events," video clip, YouTube, July 27, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KS_7_grsPW4 (accessed November 22, 2013).

[331] Cabinet of Ministers Press Release, July 31, 2013, on file with Human Rights Watch; Associated Press, "Egypt's government orders police to end sit-in protests by supporters of ousted president," *FoxNews*, July 31, 2013, http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/31/egypt-government-orders-police-to-end-sit-in-protests-by-supporters-ousted/(accessed November 26, 2013).

[332] Hisham al-Miany, "National Defense Council: We support government efforts to confront the violations in the sit-ins of Rab'a and al-Nahda, and we offer an opportunity for mediations," *Al-Hayat*, August 8, 2013, http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/379453.aspx (accessed July 24, 2014).

[333] "Sheikh Mohamed Hassan: al-Sisi promises not to disperse the Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda sit-ins in Egypt (Al Jazeera Arabic)", video clip, YouTube, August 4, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2a9vYVLqFY (accessed November 26, 2013.)

government officials, including Mansour and al-Sisi, and engaged the Muslim Brotherhood, meeting detained former President Morsy and visiting the Rab'a sit-in.[334]

Throughout the first week of August, until August 7, it appeared that there was agreement to undertake initial confidence-building measures that involved the release of Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) head Saad al-Katatny and head of the al-Wasat party Abd al-Ullah al-Madi in exchange for a 50 percent reduction in the number of protesters at the sit-ins.[335]

However, in a press conference on August 7, Prime Minister al-Beblawy said that the decision to disperse the sit-ins was final and irreversible, and would take place after the Eid al-Fitr holiday commemorating the end of Ramadan, which would end on August 8.[336] Later that day, President Mansour issued a statement saying that:

> Diplomatic efforts ended today. The state gave room for all necessary efforts to be exhausted in order to urge the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters to reject violence, prevent bloodshed and cease the disruption of Egyptian society by holding its future hostage.[337]

Security officials, though, continued to promise, as they had been for weeks, that the dispersals would be gradual, starting with a cordon around the sit-in, possibly designed to limit the ability of new protesters to join the sit-in, warnings, and safe exits, in particular for women and children. On July 31, Interior Minister Ibrahim told the Associated Press that the ministry would take gradual steps such as "a warning to leave the area, use of teargas if protesters don't leave, and finally legitimate self-defense."[338]

---

[334] "The African Union High-Level Panel for Egypt completes a fact-finding and consultative mission in Cairo," *African Union*, August 5, 2013, http://www.au.int/en/content/african-union-high-level-panel-egypt-completes-fact-finding-and-consultative-mission-cairo (accessed July 24, 2014).

[335] Paul Taylor, "Exclusive - West warned Egypt's Sisi to the end: don't do it," *Reuters*, August 14, 2013, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/08/14/uk-egypt-protests-west-idUKBRE97D16E20130814 (accessed July 24, 2014); David D. Kirkpatrick, Peter Baker, and Michael R. Gordon, "How American hopes for a deal in Egypt were undercut," *New York Times*, August 17, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/18/world/middleeast/pressure-by-us-failed-to-sway-egypts-leaders.html?pagewanted=3 (accessed July 24, 2014).

[336] Mansour Kamel, "Al-Beblawy: No reversal of decision to disperse Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins," *Al-Masry al-Youm,* August 7, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/2014641 (accessed November 26, 2013).

[337] "Egypt interim presidency blames Muslim Brotherhood for failed mediation attempts to end political deadlock," *Ahram Online,* August 7, 2013, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/78491/Egypt/Politics-/Foreign-talks-with-Brotherhood-failed-Presidency.aspx (accessed November 26, 2013).

[338] Hamza Hendawi "Egypt orders police to clear protest camps," *Associated Press*, July 31, 2013, http://bigstory.ap.org/article/african-delegation-meets-egypts-morsi (accessed November 26, 2013).

In the aftermath of the dispersals, Ibrahim claimed that:

> I started meeting with my assistants, and we laid a plan for the dispersal of the two sit-ins, which we submitted to the cabinet so that there would be political and legal cover for it. We obtained a permit from the public prosecution and submitted the plan to the National Defence Council to which they agreed. At the time there were European efforts, and [EU High Representative Catherine] Ashton was in Cairo, so we postponed [the dispersal] until European efforts were over and then we also postponed until after the Eid [holiday]. We started the first phase with a peaceful dispersal. [339]

On August 1, the Interior Ministry issued a statement calling on all protesters to "prioritize the public good and immediately leave the sit-in areas with a commitment to a safe exit and full protection for any of those who respond to this call."[340] In a second statement, on August 3, the ministry reiterated its promise of a safe exit and urged protesters to leave.[341] In an interview with *Al-Masry al-Youm* on August 2, Ibrahim said that police would surround the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins "within hours" and that the Interior Ministry would implement its plan in stages: they would start by calling on protesters to leave with assurances that they would not arrest them, stationing security forces in the area, and then surrounding the sit-ins.[342]

While authorities spoke of a gradual dispersal, the evidence indicates that they planned to use overwhelming force and anticipated killing several thousand protesters. On August 5, the Interior Ministry invited a group of human rights organizations to a meeting to discuss the dispersals. The head of one human rights organization at the meeting told Human Rights Watch that Abu Bakr Abdel-Kareem, Assistant Interior Minister for Human Rights, led the meeting along with other senior officials. Interior Ministry officials asked the

---

[339] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014).

[340] Ministry of Interior Statement, Ministry of Interior Official Facebook Page," Facebook, August 1, 2013, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=577159528994381&set=a.181676241876047.36036.181662475210757&type=1&theater (last accessed July 24, 2014).

[341] "Second statement to Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda square protesters," video clip, Youtube, August 3, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODfsZTfLXDA (accessed July 29, 2014).

[342] "Minister of Interior: We will surround sit-ins within hours," *Al-Masry al-Youm,* August 2, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/2002276 (accessed November 26, 2013).

organizations for their views on how to minimize casualties and said the ministry's estimated death toll for the dispersal was 3,500.[343]

On August 10, the London-based Arabic newspaper *Al-Sharq al-Aswat* published a piece based on interviews with unnamed Egyptian officials detailing the government's plan to disperse the sit-ins. In it, they cited a source who said the Interior Ministry's plans for the dispersal, which had been approved by the cabinet, estimated that "forced dispersal to quickly end the sit-in would result in the deaths of between 3,000 to 5,000 protesters."[344] An August 12 *Al-Masry al-Youm* article cited security sources as saying that the Interior Ministry estimated a casualty rate of 10-25 percent of those present in the sit-ins and included this figure in the dispersal plan approved by the National Defense Council.[345]

In a televised interview on August 31, 2013, Ibrahim confirmed that the Interior Ministry had expected losses of "10 percent of the people," acknowledging that the sit-in involved "more than 20,000" people and that "you will find thousands lost from their side."[346] In a September interview, then Prime Minister al-Beblawy told the Egyptian daily *Al-Masry al-Youm* that the death toll from the Rab'a and al-Nahda square dispersals on August 14 was "close to 1,000." He added, "We expected much more than what actually happened on the ground. The final outcome was less than we expected."[347]

The evidence indicates that the authorities did not, in fact, follow a plan of gradual dispersal and using force as a last resort. At no point before the dispersal did the authorities announce a specific date and time by which they would forcibly disperse the sit-ins, or call on protesters to leave before that time. They did not cordon off the sit-ins, nor provide safe exits for much of the day. Instead, security intentionally opened fire on crowds of largely peaceful protesters, in the case of the Rab'a sit-in for nearly twelve hours.

---

[343] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with head of human rights organization (name withheld), Cairo, August 9, 2013.

[344] "'Al-Sharq al-Awsat' reveals the Egyptian plan for the dispersal of the Brotherhood sit-in in Rab'a al-Adawiya," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 10, 2013, http://classic.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12674&article=739527#.U7J_6JSSySp (accessed July 25, 2014).

[345] Hassan Ahmed Hussein, "Ministry of Interior asks Rab'a area residents to vacate apartments in preparation for dispersal," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, August 12, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/248131 (accessed July 1, 2014).

[346] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014).

[347] Yasser Rizk and Mansour Kamel, "Dr. Hazem Beblawy in an interview with Al-Masry al-Youm–the emergency law is the 'least of evils' and will likely be extended for two months," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, September 11, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=396463&IssueID=2985 (accessed August 5, 2014).

In a subsequent review of the dispersal, *The New York Times* cited Western diplomats who said that Interior Minister Ibrahim scrapped the initial gradual plan, fearing that it would expose the police to Brotherhood retaliation, and instead opted for a plan of "maximum force to get it over with quickly."[348] The article did not provide a source for this claim.

The day after the dispersal, Interior Minister Ibrahim told *Al-Masry al-Youm* that "the dispersal plan succeeded 100 percent," indicating that the manner in which it was carried out was centrally planned in advance and reflected a clear governmental policy. [349]

In his resignation statement addressed to Mansour on August 14, in the midst of the dispersals, then Vice President for International Relations Mohamed al-Baradei discussed the lost opportunity to reach a peaceful outcome:

> As you know, I saw that there were peaceful alternatives to dispersing this social clash, and there were acceptable solutions proposed to lead us towards national reconciliation. However, things have reached what they are now. And from similar experiences, reconciliation will eventually come but after exacting a major cost that I believe would've been avoidable. It is now difficult for me to continue to bear responsibility for decisions that I do not agree with and to which I fear their consequences and I cannot bear responsibility for a single drop of blood before God, before my conscience, and before my citizens, especially as I believe that the bloodshed could've been avoided. Thus unfortunately those who gain from what happened today are those who call for violence, terror, and the more radical groups. And you will remember what I have told you and I delegate my matter to God.[350]

---

[348] David D. Kirkpatrick, Peter Baker, and Michael R. Gordon, "How American hopes for a deal in Egypt were undercut," *New York Times*, August 17, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/18/world/middleeast/pressure-by-us-failed-to-sway-egypts-leaders.html (accessed November 26, 2013).

[349] Yousry al-Badry, "Interior Ministry: the dispersal plan succeeded 100%," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, August 15, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=393445&IssueID=2958 (accessed July 24, 2014).

[350] Email from Dr. al-Baradei Press Office, "Resignation statement of Mohamed al-Baradei, August 14 2013," to Human Rights Watch, August 14, 2013.

August 14 Attacks on Churches and Police Stations

In the aftermath of the dispersal of the sit-ins, the authorities regularly referred to the attacks on churches and police stations that took place on August 14 and thereafter and general insecurity in the country as further evidence of organized violence on the part of the Muslim Brotherhood, which they said justified the violent dispersal of the sit-ins. While these criminal attacks were a response to the dispersals and may have in part been inspired by speeches given during the sit-ins, they have no bearing on the unlawful killings by security forces that preceded these attacks. The proper response to incitement to violence or violence on the part of some would have been to prosecute those responsible for those acts, not to pre-emptively open fire in an indiscriminate manner on crowds of demonstrators that may have included some predisposed to violence.

Immediately following the dispersals of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins, crowds of men attacked at least 42 churches, burning or damaging 37, as well as dozens of other Christian religious institutions in the governorates of Minya, Asyut, Fayoum, Giza, Suez, Sohag, Bani Suef, and North Sinai.[351] Family members and a lawyer told Human Rights Watch that at least three Coptic Christians and one Muslim were killed as a result of sectarian attacks in Dalga, Minya, and Cairo. A 21-year-old resident of Minya, 250 kilometers south of Cairo, told Human Rights Watch that at 10 a.m. on August 14, he saw crowds of thousands of men on trucks and on foot approaching his neighborhood chanting anti-Christian slogans directly aimed at the Egyptian Coptic community. "Tawadros, you are a coward for the Americans" and "Tawadros, you coward, get your dogs out of the square," they chanted, referring to Pope Tawadros II, the head of the Coptic Church and the participation of Christians in June 30, 2013 protests calling for Morsy's removal from power, according to the man.[352]

In almost all of the 42 attacks on religious institutions that Human Rights Watch documented, neither the police nor the military were present at the start of or during the attack. A priest in Malawi, a town south of Minya city, told Human Rights Watch that he called emergency services and police multiple times while mobs burned his church, but

---

[351] "Egypt Mass Attacks on Churches," Human Rights Watch news release, August 22, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/08/21/egypt-mass-attacks-churches.

[352] Human Rights Watch interview with 21-year old resident of Minya (name withheld), Minya, August 15, 2013.

no one came.[353] Another Dalga resident said that on August 16, the governor promised to send APCs to protect Copts from ongoing violence, but that none came.[354]

The attacks on churches came after weeks of statements from pro-Morsy supporters blaming Christians for the overthrow of Morsy. On July 24, Assem Abdel Magid, a senior leader in the Construction and Development Party, affiliated with Gamaa al-Islamiyya, said on the Rab'a stage, "Copts and communists are supporting Sisi in the killing of Muslims."[355] Al-Magid had declared on June 29, 2013 that "extremist Copts" as on a "crusade against the Islamic project, the idea of liberating Egypt from the Islamic occupation."[356] Safwat Hegazy, an Islamist preacher and Morsy supporter, had declared in an interview on June 18, 2013 in advance of June 30 protests, "If anyone splashes water over Morsy, we splash him with blood."[357] He used the same line in a speech in December 2012 and again on the Rab'a stage on June 21, 2013, both times shortly after directing messages to Christians.[358]

In the early hours of August 15, and in the midst of the attacks on several churches nationwide, the Freedom and Justice Party Helwan Branch posted a statement on the group's Facebook page saying, "the church's pope is involved in deposing the first elected, Islamic president… And for the church to declare war against Islam and Muslims is the worst offense. For every action there is a reaction."[359] On June 29, prominent Brotherhood leader Essam al-Erian appeared on Al Jazeera Arabic and said, "The vast majority of normal Christians in Egypt respect the Islamic culture and co-exist with Muslims, but there are two

---

[353] Human Rights Watch interview with priest in Malawi (name withheld), Malawi, August 17, 2013.

[354] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with resident in Dalga (name withheld), Dalga, August 17, 2013.

[355] "Live: fiery speech of Assem Abd al-Magid in response to Sisi's speech from the Rab'a stage," video clip, YouTube, July 24, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpPLY2j47Gc&feature=youtu.be (accessed July 23, 2014).

[356] "Rassd: Assem Abd al-Magid…what's happening now in Egypt is a crusade being led by Coptic extremists," video clip, YouTube, June 29, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnUPgtkK5QI (accessed July 23, 2014).

[357] "Safwat Hegazy on 30 June: if anyone splashes water over Morsy, we splash him with blood," video clip, YouTube, June 18, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xnk2KKBgoOQ (accessed July 23, 2014).

[358] "Speech by Dr. Safwat Hegazy from the stage of Media Production City exclusively on Murayed al-Jena channel," video clip, YouTube, December 12, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-z7FESuwdI (accessed July 23, 2014); "Safwat Hegazy from the Massive/million-person demonstration titled, 'no to violence': says 'Whoever splashes mere water on Morsi, We will splash him/her with blood'." video clip, YouTube, June 21, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ij98Wcp9C3s (accessed July 28, 2014).

[359] "Freedom & Justice Party Helwan," Facebook, August 14, 2013, https://www.facebook.com/FJ.Helwan/posts/516124478472316 (accessed July 23, 2014).

other types who abuse this rule, the extremists and the opportunists who claim that Egypt is under Islamic occupation."[360]

Muslim Brotherhood leaders gave other fiery speeches from the stage over the course of the Rab'a sit-in, calling for fierce resistance to the military-backed interim government.[361]

The Interior Ministry gave an initial overall death toll for the number of police killed on August 14 of 43, leading to the erroneous impression that they had been killed during the dispersal of the sit-ins.[362] The FMA subsequently set the number of police killed at Rab'a and al-Nahda on August 14 at 10.[363] The FMA put the overall nation-wide toll for police that day at 55, which includes violence from pro-Morsy supporters in other parts of Egypt in response to the dispersals.[364]

On August 14, in Kerdassa, Giza, west of Cairo, mobs attacked the local police station, killing police before moving on to loot and burn al-Mallak church. *The Associated Press*, which interviewed the sole police officer who survived the attack, reported that the mob killed 15 officers and then mutilated their bodies.[365] A YouTube video purportedly filmed after the attack shows a group of officers lying on the ground in pools of blood.[366]

In Minya, Maj. Gen. Abdelaziz Qura, head of the Minya security directorate, told Human Rights Watch that on August 14, when news of the sit-in dispersals reach Minya, "groups simultaneously attacked police stations and some churches. They were shooting live fire at security forces." He said that groups attacked 12 police stations in Minya governorate, six

---

[360] "Exclusive interview with Essam al-Erian on the current political crisis and how to solve it (Al Jazeera Arabic Mubashir Misr)," video clip, YouTube, June 29, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypQjZupqBNM (accessed July 23, 2014).

[361] See e.g. "A speech by Dr. Mohamed Badie in Rab'a," video clip, YouTube, July 5, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jY3HXvHHR9k (accessed July 23, 2014).

[362] "Press Conference of Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim on Dispersal of Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda sit-in," video clip, YouTube, August 14, 2013, (accessed July 23, 2014).

[363] Forensic Medical Authority figures on file with Human Rights Watch.

[364] Hussein Ramzy, "Forensic Medical Authority: 726 killed since the Rab'a dispersal…[including] 206 police victims," Al-Masry al-Youm, November 14, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/339919 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[365] Maggie, Michael, "Village bloodbath highlights Egypt's new agony," *Associated Press*, August 19, 2013, http://bigstory.ap.org/article/village-bloodbath-highlights-egypts-new-agony (accessed July 29, 2014).

[366] "Muslim Brotherhood killed police officers in Kerdasa police station," video clip, Youtube, August 18, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGRcyzIKXDY (accessed July 29, 2014).

of which they burned to the ground, and that attackers killed 13 police officers and wounded another 30 with live fire.[367]

Security forces rounded up thousands of perceived Muslim Brotherhood sympathizers across Egypt on charges of being involved in attacks on churches and polices stations in the aftermath of the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals. In Minya, in two cases involving egregiously flawed trials, a judge recommended the death penalty in preliminary verdicts for over 1,200 protesters convicted of attacking police stations in Minya and killing two police officers.[368] Many of these sentences were commuted, many to long prison terms, in the final verdict.[369]

---

[367] Human Rights Watch interview with Major General Abdelaziz Qura, head of Minya security directorate, Minya, August 20, 2013.

[368] "Egypt: Fresh Assault on Justice," Human Rights Watch news release, April 29, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/29/egypt-fresh-assault-justice.

[369] "Egypt: 183 Death Sentence Confirmed in Minya," Human Rights Watch news release, June 21, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/21/egypt-183-death-sentences-confirmed-minya.

III. Other Mass Killings of Protesters

The Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals were not isolated developments, but rather a part of a systematic campaign by the Egyptian government to violently suppress dissent. In July and August 2013, as demonstrators staged rallies and marches across in Egypt to protest the military's overthrow of Morsy, security forces repeatedly used lethal force against protesters –most prominently outside the Republican Guard headquarters on July 5 and July 8, at the Manassa Memorial, marking the spot where former president Anwar Sadat was assassinated, on July 27, and in Ramses Square on August 16 – resulting in at least 281 protester fatalities in these events alone.

July 5: Five Protesters Killed outside the Republican Guard Headquarters

The first major incident where security forces opened fire on protesters following the overthrow of Morsy took place on July 5, less than 48 hours after his ouster. Within a couple of hours, the military had killed five demonstrators. Human Rights Watch visited Taa'min al-Saahi, the government hospital where many injured and dead protesters were taken, and interviewed seven witnesses, including demonstrators, an independent journalist on the scene, a local resident, and relatives of the deceased protesters.

At around 2 p.m. on July 5, 2013, thousands of pro-Morsy supporters marched along Salah Salem Street to the Republican Guard headquarters, home to a division-level command within the Egyptian army and where protesters believed the army was detaining Morsy and his senior aides. According to Mohamed Abdallah Ahmed, a 26-year-old pro-Morsy protester at the scene of the killings, the building was protected by barbed wire, ten army armored vehicles, three police APCs, and scores of army, Republican Guard, and police forces. Seven witnesses interviewed at Taa'min al-Saahi Hospital on July 5 told Human Rights Watch that at around 2:30 p.m., security forces stationed behind a barbed-wire barricade outside the officers' club at the Republican Guard headquarters repeatedly fired on unarmed, peaceful pro-Morsy protesters, killing five. In one case, the evidence indicates that a soldier at the scene shot and killed a protester in the head as he sought to hang a Morsy poster on a fence outside the Republican Guard headquarters.

Ahmed described what he saw to Human Rights Watch:

> We gathered on the sidewalk on the opposite side of Salah Salem. Most of us sat down. One man walked across the highway, put a poster of Morsy on the barbed wire in front of the officer's club, and walked back to where we were sitting. The police turned the poster upside down, which upset us a lot. The same man walked back across the highway to fix it. Then an officer – we couldn't see how many stars he had or whether he was army or police – shot him in the head with an assault rifle, and then began firing, rapid fire. All of us started running. Some of us were running down Salah Salem Street and some down the airport road. The rest of the officers started firing teargas and birdshot at us.[370]

A photographer who was positioned on the side of the military also observed what happened. His photographs and a video posted on Youtube by the news channel Yaqeen, documented the killing of Mohamed Subhi Mohamed Ali, the protester who attempted to affix the poster.[371] The images show how at one point, while most of the pro-Morsy protesters are gathered on the other side of the road, Ali walks towards the military headquarters carrying a picture of Morsy. Suddenly, when he is around one meter away from the military cordon, he falls dead to the ground, shot in the face and chest.

In a news article, a Reuters reporter on site described a similar but apparently different incident. He saw "a handful of men" place a poster of Morsy on the barbed wire barrier, and said a soldier "tore it up." After the crowd shouted insults at the security forces, troops fired in the air, then he heard shotgun fire and saw at least eight protesters wounded.[372]

Human Rights Watch spoke to relatives and witnesses to confirm the identities of Ali and three others killed at the protest: Hussein Mohamed Hussein, a 25-year-old English teacher from Cairo's Imbaba neighborhood, whom military officers shot twice in the chest

---

[370] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Abdallah Ahmed, 26 year-old pro-Morsy protester, Cairo, July 5, 2013.

[371] "Yaqeen exclusive: gravest scene of the first fatality among Morsy supporters fall in front of the Republican Guard," video clip, YouTube, July 5, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKoRKaqA70E&feature=youtu.be (accessed June 28, 2014). Photographs on file with Human Rights Watch.

[372] Mahmoud Ali and Alexander Dziadosz, "Gunfire kills three Morsy supporters in Cairo," *Reuters,* July 5, 2013, http://live.reuters.com/Event/World_News/81178541 (accessed June 28, 2014).

and killed, Mahmoud Mohamed Rabie Taha, 22, a law school graduate from Beni Sueif in the Delta area, whom officers killed with a gunshot wound to the head,[373] and Mohamed Iman Khalifa, who was shot in the head. The chief of security at Taa'min al-Saahi confirmed that he had seen four dead protesters.[374] In October 2013, the FMA, a part of the Ministry of Health, published a report that indicated that the death toll for the July 5 incident at the Republican Guard headquarters had reached five.[375]

The first image shows protester Mohamed Subhi Mohamed Ali as he crosses the road to hang a picture of ousted president Mohamed Morsy on a fence outside the Republican Guard headquarters in eastern Cairo on July 5, 2013 during a demonstration there; the second image shows his crumpled body seconds later, as soldiers shot him in the head and killed him. Ali was among five protesters killed that day when army forces, less than 48 hours after ousting Morsy, opened fire on the demonstrators who had assembled at the Guard headquarters, where they believed the former president and his senior aides to be held. © 2013 Private

Following the killing of the initial demonstrator, the pro-Morsy crowd regrouped and returned to the side of the highway opposite the officers' club. At around 3 p.m. security forces opened fire again, three witnesses told Human Rights Watch.[376] Journalist Justin Wilkes told Human Rights Watch that he arrived on the scene at 3:04 p.m., and saw the body of a man who had been fatally shot. "People in the crowd told me that the army told

---

[373] Human Rights Watch interview with relatives and eyewitnesses (names withheld), Cairo, July 5, 2013.

[374] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, July 5, 2013.

[375] Hussein Ramzy, "Forensic Medical Authority: no children and no women among those killed in the events of the 'Republican Guard'," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, October 16, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/329380 (accessed July 23, 2014); WikiThawra, an initiative to track statistics on protester deaths and arrests since January 211 run by the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, documented 5 causalities. "Index of those killed in the Sisi/Mansour era," WikiThawra, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0ApHKfHFs3JYxdGQybmtTVk42bEtxemNjZldJcWxjbnc&usp=drive_web&pli=1#gid=0 (accessed July 23, 2014); The Front for Defending Egyptian Protesters, a group of lawyers and activists providing legal support for protesters, also documented 4 fatalities; "Ten days of blood," Front for Defense of Egyptian Protesters (FDEP), July 9, 2013, http://fdep-egypt.org/?p=1981 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[376] Human Rights Watch interview with Justin Wilkes, Cairo, July 5; Human Rights Watch phone interviews with resident of Obour buildings (name withheld), July 5, 2013; Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, July 5, 2013.

the protesters not to cross an invisible line, and this guy walked over it, so they killed him," he said. He saw demonstrators carrying away "at least four or five [demonstrators who] were badly injured with blood stains on their shirts." Wilkes said the Brotherhood supporters were "peacefully demonstrating the whole time" and that he did not see them "do anything to provoke the army to shoot at them."[377]

A woman who lives in an apartment overlooking the scene told Human Rights Watch during a brief phone call at 3 p.m. on the day of the killings that she had just seen security forces shooting teargas and live rounds at the crowd in front of her building. In a second phone call, at 3:10 p.m., she said that one of the demonstrators had been killed.[378]

A 37-year-old pro-Brotherhood demonstrator from Mansoura said he arrived at the Republican Guard headquarters at around 3:15 p.m.:

> We were saying, "Peaceful, peaceful," but they shot at us, first with birdshot, and then they used teargas. Normally they shoot teargas first, but not this time. My friend was hit in the face with birdshot. We carried him about 600 or 700 meters away, on our shoulders, to the field hospital in the Rab'a mosque, and they said his case was serious so they sent him to the Taa'min al-Saahi Hospital.[379]

Hozaifa Ali Abd al-Zahir, from Imbaba, who was present at the demonstration, said security forces fatally shot his cousin, Hussein Mohamed Hussein, shortly before 5 p.m.:

> There were thousands of us in the march from Rab'a mosque to the Republican Guard. We reached it at around 4:45 p.m. and started to chant, "We want our legitimate president; release him." We were about 20 meters from the Republican Guard officer's club when I saw a police tank [APC]; it was parked behind the barbed wire of the officer's club, start to drive towards us. [One of the security forces], holding a rifle, began to shoot at us. He shot at us bullet by bullet, not with automatic fire. Hussein was standing

---

[377] Human Rights Watch interview with Justin Wilkes, journalist, Cairo, July 5, 2013.
[378] Human Rights Watch phone interview with resident of Obour building (name withheld), Cairo, July 5, 2013.
[379] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, July 5, 2013.

next to me. I saw him get shot twice in his chest. The ambulance was only three meters away from us, so we put Hussein in the ambulance and took him to the field hospital at the mosque. We got there at 5 p.m. At 5:30 p.m., we transferred him to the Taa'min al-Saahi Hospital. They operated on him, but it was too late; he was already dead.[380]

July 8: Sixty-one Protesters Killed outside the Republican Guard Headquarters

Two days after the July 5 protest, the Muslim Brotherhood called for a sit-in outside the Republican Guard headquarters on Salah Salem Street, saying they would not leave until the army released Morsy and reinstated him as president.[381] By the evening, about 2,000 Brotherhood supporters had commenced a peaceful sit-in, occupying the road between the Republican Guard headquarters at one end and the Mustafa Mosque at the other end. Salah Salem is a main road in Cairo, lined with military and government buildings, which runs from the airport and connects the neighborhood of Heliopolis to the rest of Cairo. Protesters took over the road, some milling around or praying, others sitting or sleeping.[382]

Protesters remained congregated at the Mustafa Mosque as the time for morning prayers approached. Witnesses at the scene told Human Rights Watch that military and Central Security Forces (CSF) forces moved just before dawn on July 8 to break-up the sit-in. The forces simultaneously approached from the Republican Guard headquarters and Mustafa Mosque.[383]

Witnesses described how police and army units opened fire on both ends, targeting both those assembled outside the Republican Guard headquarters, and those emerging from prayers at the mosque. CSF forces initially fired teargas and birdshot at protesters, while army soldiers used live ammunition, both to disperse those who had assembled, and apparently to prevent those leaving the mosque from joining the sit-in.[384] At the conclusion

---

[380] Human Rights Watch interview with Hozaifa Ali Abd al-Zahir, Imbaba resident, Cairo, July 5, 2013.

[381] "Four dead in Republican Guard clashes... scores Injured in al-Nahda," *Al-Masry al-Youm,* July 6, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=388839&IssueID=2918 (accessed June 28, 2014).

[382] Human Rights Watch interview with Wael Badr, protest eyewitness, Cairo, July 8, 2013.

[383] Human Rights Watch interview with Karam Mahmoud, 29 year-old sit-in participant from Bani Soueif, Cairo, July 8, 2013; Human Rights Watch interview with Ahmed al-Sayed, 21 year-old pro-Morsy protester, Cairo, July 12, 2013.

[384] Human Rights Watch interview with Karam Mahmoud, Cairo, July 8, 2013.

of the attack, security forces had killed 61 protesters and injured 435, according to the FMA.[385] Most suffered gunshots to the head, neck and chest, several doctors told Human Rights Watch. The Egyptian newspaper *Al-Masry al-Youm* obtained copies of 58 of the 61 death certificates and noted that 16 had fatal wounds to the head, 22 to the chest, 8 to the stomach, 2 to the lower limbs, and 10 to multiple places on the body. It further noted that all casualties were men and over the age of 20.[386] In addition, one military and one police officer were killed in the violence.[387]

The military claimed that the clashes started when an "armed terrorist group" attempted to break into the Republican Guard headquarters in the early hours of July 8, and "attacked security forces."[388] But the military has not made public any evidence supporting its claim and Human Rights Watch found no evidence that this occurred, finding instead that protesters were peacefully praying or gathering when military and police moved in to break up the sit-in. Once security forces opened fire on protesters, witnesses described how some pro-Morsy supporters threw stones and Molotov cocktails and, in a few cases, fired guns back at the security forces.[389] Footage reviewed by Human Rights Watch showed three pro-Morsy supporters firing guns later in the morning after the army had already opened fire on protesters.[390]

The death toll and witness evidence make clear that the army and police responded with lethal force that far exceeded any apparent threat to the lives of military personnel.

---

[385] Hussein Ramzy, "Forensic Medical Authority: 215 killed in the events at the Guidance Bureau, the Republican Guard, Manassa, al-Nahda, and October 6 Bridge," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, October 23, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/331671#; "Index of those killed in the Sisi/Mansour era," WikiThawra, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0ApHKfHFs3JYxdGQybmtTVk42bEtxemNjZldJcWxjbnc&usp=drive_web&pli=1#gid=0 (accessed July 23, 2014); The Front for Defending Egyptian Protesters documented 92 fatalities, not including military and police officers. "Ten days of blood," Front for Defense of Egyptian Protesters (FDEP), July 9, 2013, http://fdep-egypt.org/?p=1981 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[386] Hussein Ramzy, "Forensic Medical Authority: No children and no women among those killed in the events of the 'Republican Guard'," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, October 16, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/329380 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[387] "Ministry of Interior: police officer and conscript killed during Republican Guard events in Cairo," *Reuters Arabic*, July 8, 2013, http://ara.reuters.com/article/topNews/idARACAE9B239220130708 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[388] Military Spokesman: protesters incited to wreak violence, State Information Services, July 9, 2013, http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?ArtID=68897 (accessed June 28, 2014).

[389] Human Rights Watch interview with Hazem Mamdouh, pro-Morsy protester, Cairo, July 12, 2013; Human Rights Watch interview with Hossam al-Qadi, Obour resident, Cairo, July 12, 2013. The video shows the sun clearly out, indicating that the scene followed the first reports of army fire on demonstrators around dawn.

[390] "Gunmen fire at Republican Guard headquarters," video clip, YouTube, July 8, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=rueDBgRsXro (accessed July 25, 2014). The video shows the sun clearly out, indicating that the scene followed the first reports of army fire on demonstrators around down.

Witnesses described how military snipers perched on the rooftops of the headquarters targeted protesters with live ammunition, while military and police officers shot indiscriminately into crowds of protesters using live ammunition.[391]

Witness accounts indicate that security forces began to move in on demonstrators around 3:20 a.m. Some protesters appeared to have noticed the approach of security forces at the end of the street near the Mustafa Mosque and warned others. At least one witness, Mohamed Shehata, a driver who was standing in front of a residential building next to the Republican Guard headquarters protecting cars, said that army units warned the protesters through loudspeakers to leave before firing teargas. Then, he said, "the army shot teargas at them, and the Muslim Brotherhood threw stones back at them."[392]

Ahmed Hussein, who lives high up in Obour building 9 overlooking the mosque, told Human Rights Watch:

> I heard the noise of banging on metal downstairs, which was the rallying call during the [2011] revolution when there was danger, so I went on the balcony. Hundreds of Brotherhood members had just finished prayer and were coming out of the mosque when I saw the military and riot police moving in on them. I could see they weren't expecting this because they started hurriedly breaking up stones. There were around 12 military APCs and two CSF trucks. They started shooting teargas at the Brotherhood.[393]

His account corroborated that of a pro-Morsy protester, Hazem Mamdouh, who told Human Rights Watch that police began moving in at approximately 3:20 a.m., before the dawn prayer ended, which he had been praying at the Mustafa Mosque:

> We heard the protesters guarding the sit-in, hitting rocks on metal, which is always a warning. We saw what seemed like police trucks–it was still dark so I couldn't really tell–coming from Salah Salem toward the Republican Guard headquarters; all of a sudden there was teargas everywhere. Straight

---

[391] Human Rights Watch interview with Wael Badr, Cairo, July 8, 2013.

[392] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Shehata, driver, Cairo, July 10, 2013.

[393] Human Rights Watch interview with Ahmad Hussein, Cairo, July 10, 2013.

> away we heard the loud sound of automatic weapons. I ran in the direction of the Republican Guard headquarters to hide in the side streets. We were not prepared at all.[394]

Hossam al-Qadi, a resident of Obour building 10, across the street from the mosque, said he woke up at 4 a.m. to the sound of automatic rifles and teargas canisters being shot.

> From my window I saw the police firing [tear]gas, and right behind them, the military was standing firing in the air, because obviously, if they had targeted the Muslim Brotherhood [supporters], they would have shot the police [who was standing in front of them]. But they weren't, they were firing in the air.[395]

Meanwhile, at other end of Salah Salem Street, pro-Morsy protesters were praying the dawn prayer directly in front of the Republican Guard headquarters when they heard shots in the distance. A resident in the building overlooking the headquarters told Human Rights Watch she saw security forces firing teargas over several hours and army soldiers breaking up the sit-in.[396]

Karam Mahmoud, 29, from Bani Soueif, a participant in the sit-in, said that after the dawn prayer, he heard the sound of teargas being fired and followed the noise:

> At the beginning, we heard the sound of banging on lampposts. Then we saw the Republican Guard coming from the left of the building. They were firing birdshot. Then security forces came from the left and from the right. The gas was so heavy. We fell back. The moment they came toward us, they fired birdshot at us immediately. It was a horrible scene: dense and continuous fire. This was in front of the Ministry of Planning. I was wounded by birdshot. I went to the field hospital.[397]

---

[394] Human Rights Watch interview with Hazem Mamdouh, Cairo, July 12, 2013.
[395] Human Rights Watch interview with Hossam al-Qadi, Cairo, July 12, 2013.
[396] Human Rights Watch interview with local resident (name withheld), Cairo, July 10, 2013.
[397] Human Rights Watch interview with Karam Mahmoud, Cairo, July 8, 2013.

Ahmed Hussein, the resident who witnessed the clashes from his apartment overlooking the mosque, said that heavy shooting, including automatic gunfire, began at 3:53 a.m., and that most of the shots came from the army side, but he heard some coming from the protesters' direction as well. A pro-Morsy supporter, Mohsen Sudan, 43, from Kafr al-Sheikh, told Human Rights Watch how snipers firing live ammunition followed the teargas and birdshot:

> [At dawn] we were finishing up our prayers. We heard the sound of gunshots, and the imam rushed the end of the prayer. Then there was the sound of shooting from the left side [from the direction of Mustafa Mosque]. After 15, maybe 20 minutes, people started to fall. I ran back, away from the Republican Guard headquarters. There were snipers on one of the military buildings. I was in the middle of the road [perpendicular to Salah Salem and leading to the Republican Guard headquarters], and I saw two youth filming from their balcony. The snipers [across the road] shot at them. They continued shooting until 10:30 a.m.[398]

Video footage released by the military and footage from mobile phones of witnesses supports these accounts, showing military snipers stationed on rooftops with automatic rifles shooting into the crowd.[399]

Reports by the FMA confirm that all 61 of the killed protesters were shot with live ammunition. Dr. Ahmed Abdulbar, emergency room doctor at the Taa'min al-Saahi Hospital, told Human Rights Watch that the hospital received 400 cases, including 30 dead bodies, between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. on July 8. He said: "Most of the cases here were gunshots to the abdomen. Most were shot with live bullets or birdshot."[400] Dr. Ayman al-Baghdadi, the director of the Demerdash Hospital, which specializes in surgery, told Human Rights Watch on July 8 that:

> We received 40 cases from those in front of the Republican Guard. The first death we received today was Farag Mohamed Mohamed Abdullah, 35, dead

---

[398] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohsen Sudan, pro-Morsy supporter, Cairo, July 8, 2013.

[399] "Army snipers kill peaceful protesters by the Republican Guard," July 8, 2013, video clip, YouTube, add date http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uu1XD_98DTc (accessed July 24, 2014).

[400] Human Rights Watch interview with Ahmed Abdulbar, Cairo, July 9, 2013.

> when he arrived at the hospital. He died of a bullet wound to the chest. All of the cases that came in were injured with live bullets.[401]

Hossam al-Qadi, who witnessed the clashes from his building opposite the mosque, said he saw Muslim Brotherhood supporters throwing rocks at the army and that he saw "at least one person [among the protesters] firing birdshot. I saw the spark."[402]

Human Rights Watch reviewed several incidents in which security force fire clearly appears to have killed peaceful demonstrators. In one video viewed by Human Rights Watch, a group of men are standing watching the clashes in the distance without appearing to have participated in them, when one man on the left suddenly falls to the ground. As the others pick up his body, which appears lifeless, blood seeps through the back of his shirt.[403] In another incident, photographer Ahmed Assa, 26, was killed by a sniper while filming the events. In video footage posted online, he films a military sniper on the roof of the defense ministry building who fires shots in another direction, then turns and fires directly at the cameraman.[404]

Ashraf Sayed, a wounded protester with whom Human Rights Watch spoke in the hospital, said that security forces shot him though he had no weapon:

> There were two lines of army and police. The black-clothed men [Central Security Forces] shot me with birdshot. There was nothing in my hands.[405]

At least four more protesters interviewed said they were unarmed and wounded by gunfire, in some cases while retreating from the clashes. Wael Badr said that just before 4 a.m. he had heard that the sit-in was being attacked and ran down with others from the Rab'a sit-in, a 15 minute walk from Salah Salem Street, and found that there was constant shooting:

---

[401] Human Rights Watch interview with Ayman al-Baghdadi, Cairo, July 8, 2013.

[402] Human Rights Watch interview with Hossam al-Qadi, resident of Obour, Cairo, July 12, 2013.

[403] "Army snipers kill peaceful protesters by the Republican Guard," video clip, YouTube, July 8, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uu1XD_98DTc (accessed July 24, 2014).

[404] "Details disclosed on the Republican Guard Massacre," video clip, YouTube, July 8, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLo6H89kxKk&feature=player_embedded (accessed July 24, 2014).

[405] Human Rights Watch interview with Ashraf Sayed, wounded protester, Cairo, July 8, 2013.

> They [security forces] had snipers on the rooftops. Teargas was being fired; we could hardly see, as there was continuous gunfire. I ducked down to avoid the teargas at one point. Thank God I got up because at that point a bullet entered my leg. It is still there and hasn't been removed.[406]

Mohamed Hassan, a pro-Morsy supporter, said:

> There were two armored vehicles firing a lot of teargas so we couldn't really see. At that point the army started shooting live gunfire. I saw two people shot in the head who were standing in front of me at the barricades. We started to retreat, but were surprised to see dozens of people wounded on the ground. We don't know where they were hit. We kept retreating. One of my friends was shot through the leg. When I went to pick him up, I was shot [with birdshot] in the chest.[407]

Ahmad Salah, a pharmacist and Muslim Brotherhood member, told Human Rights Watch:

> They were shooting teargas non-stop. There was a big armored vehicle moving backward and forward. They were shooting birdshot at the ground in front of us. I was standing alone on the pavement in front of the Sonesta hotel trying to decide which way to go when I suddenly was shot in the lower calf of my left leg.[408]

Ahmed al-Sayed, 21, a pro-Morsy protester, said:

> It was around 4:45 a.m. We were running from Tayaran Street to Mohamed Talaat Street, and they were shooting live ammunition, teargas, and birdshot. I only got shot in the nose, thanks to the helmet I was wearing. The youth were fighting back with fireworks and flares and by pelting rocks. [By] 7 a.m. the snipers were deliberately killing people. I carried seven bodies, all shot in the upper body. The last one I carried was shot in the head.

---

[406] Human Rights Watch interview with Wael Badr, Cairo, July 8, 2013.
[407] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamed Hassan, Cairo, July 8, 2013.
[408] Human Rights Watch interview with Ahmad Salah, pharmacist, Cairo, July 11, 2013.

Al-Sayed told Human Rights Watch that his friend Ammar Hassan, from Luxor, had been shot in the neck: "I saw his body as they pulled it out of the ambulance and saw the bullet wound in the left side of his neck."[409]

A pro-Morsy protester, Hazem Mamdouh, said he had prayed at the Mustafa Mosque:

> We saw a number of both police trucks and military APCs behind lines of military police and CSF conscripts carrying plastic shields. We started throwing rocks at them at this point. They were very organized. They started shooting teargas, birdshot, and everything. Near the Sonesta Hotel, some people started making a metal fence from whatever they found in the area to protect everyone. We were also throwing rocks. A couple of people climbed the roof of one of the Obour buildings, a tall one, and they were throwing Molotov cocktails, a couple of them, not a lot. The security forces started approaching us from Tayaran Street, and that's also when I noticed the snipers on top of the building opposite to one that was on fire. I even saw a cameraman [belonging to the security forces] standing with his camera for like two minutes without hiding, which proves that we weren't armed or else he would have protected himself.[410]

In a press conference on the afternoon of July 8, armed forces spokesman, Col. Ahmed Ali, said that the protesters were armed and had initiated the attack on security forces.[411] A July 8 military press release claimed that the clashes had started when protesters tried to break into the Republican Guard headquarters at dawn and attack military officers there.[412] One journalist told Human Rights Watch that, during a private army briefing for foreign correspondents on July 9, a military spokesman alleged that protesters had been aided by armed men on motorcycles who converged on the Republican Guard headquarters.[413] The army said it arrested at least 200 people who had "large quantities of firearms,

---

[409] Human Rights Watch interview with Ahmed al-Sayed, Cairo, July 12, 2013.

[410] Human Rights Watch interview with Hazem Mamdouh, Cairo, July 12, 2013.

[411] "Press Conference with Armed Forces and Ministry of Interior on the events of the Republican Guard," video clip, YouTube, July 8, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaQfo7lMqFE (accessed July 24, 2014).

[412] "Blood on the Brotherhood's neck," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, July 9, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=389174&IssueID=2921, accessed November 4, 2013.

[413] Human Rights Watch email correspondence with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, July 15, 2014.

ammunition, and Molotov cocktails."[414] It also said that it reopened Salah Salem Street, which pro-Morsy protesters had blocked for several days.

Colonel Ali defended the military's actions as necessary to protect the Republican Guard headquarters, denied any wrongdoing on the part of the military, and made no mention of any potential investigations:

> The army is a target of psychological warfare and a campaign of lies. The Egyptian army only kills its enemies, never its children. This is part of the psychological war they are waging… Every country would allow soldiers to protect a military installation.[415]

Later that day Colonel Ali told the *Associated Press*: "What excessive force? We were dealing with people shooting at us with live ammunition. It would have been excessive if we killed 300."[416]

Lawyers from the Egyptian human rights group, the National Community for Human Rights, obtained a copy of the July 8 police report, number 9134/2013, by the Cairo General Investigative Bureau. The report states:

> Security services learned that protesters at the sit-in in front of the Republican Guard on Salah Salem Street attacked the premises, shooting live ammunition and birdshot, throwing stones from neighboring buildings toward the Republican Guard base…. In response to this, the armed forces units protecting the base shot sound bullets, and the Central Security Forces shot teargas to disperse the groups responsible.[417]

---

414 "Military Spokesman: Protesters incited to wreak violence," State Information Services, July 9, 2013, http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?ArtID=68897 (accessed November 4, 2013); "Egypt unrest: Interim leader Adly Mansour calls for calm," BBC News Online, July 8, 2013, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23230221 (accessed November 4, 2013).

415 "Press Conference with Armed Forces and Ministry of Interior on the events of the Republican Guard," video clip, YouTube, July 8, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaQfo7lMqFE (accessed July 24, 2013).

416 Hamza Hendawi, "Egyptian military's new look challenged," *Associated Press,* July 8, 2013, http://bigstory.ap.org/article/analysis-egyptian-militarys-new-look-challenged (accessed June 28, 2014).

417 National Council for Human Rights (NCHR, Cairo), "July 8 Police Report," June 7, 2014, http://www.nchrl.org/sites/default/files/Police%20preparator.pdf, (accessed July 28, 2014).

July 27: Ninety-five Protesters Killed outside the Manassa Memorial

On July 27, riot police and plainclothes police officers again fired at demonstrators marching towards the October 6 Bridge in Cairo, near the Manassa Memorial, from the Rab'a al-Adawiya Square sit-in, killing at least 95, according to the FMA.[418] One policeman was also killed that day, according to the Interior Ministry.[419]

Witness accounts and video footage indicate that the security forces deliberately targeted protesters, at first firing teargas and birdshot, and then live ammunition. Some officers directly confronted protesters on the street with live ammunition, while other government snipers shot at them while perched on nearby rooftops. Many of the 95 protesters who were killed appear to have died due to bullets to the head, chest or neck, according to doctors who treated the dead and wounded at the Rab'a field hospital. Accounts also indicate that some protesters lobbed Molotov cocktails and fired birdshot at security forces as well, resulting in one policeman dying from birdshot wounds. This limited violence on the part of some protesters did not justify the massive and targeted assault on protesters with live fire.

On Wednesday, July 24, 2013, then-Defense Minister al-Sisi called for Egyptians to gather "to give [him] a mandate and an order to confront potential violence and terrorism."[420] On July 26, tens of thousands of Egyptian protesters gathered in Cairo's main squares to answer al-Sisi's call. Just before 1 a.m. on July 27, Interior Minister Ibrahim announced that the ministry would clear pro-Morsy protests at al-Nahda Square in Giza and at the Rab'a al-Adawiya Mosque in Nasr City "soon" and "in a legal way," according to *Al-Ahram* daily newspaper.[421] In a televised interview with *Al-Hayat* channel on July 26, Interim President Mansour said that

---

[418] Hussein Ramzy, "Forensic Medical Authority: 215 killed in the events of the Guidance Bureau, Republican Guard, Manassa, al-Nahda, and October 6th Bridge," Al-Masry al-Youm, October 23, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/331671# (accessed July 24, 2014). "Index of those killed in the Sisi/Mansour era," WikiThawra, accessed July 24, 2013, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0ApHKfHFs3JYxdGQybmtTVk42bEtxemNjZldJcWxjbnc&usp=drive_web&pli=1#gid=0.

[419] Yasser al-Badry, "Interior Ministry: Death of Captain Sharif al-Sabae from a gunshot wound during the Manassa clashes."*Al-Masry al-Youm*, July 29, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/242263 (accessed July 24, 2014).

[420] "Al-Sisi's speech in front of the students of the Air Defense and Naval Academies-July 24," July 24, 2013, video clip, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpuuCqXhhFw (accessed July 24, 2014).

[421] "Minister of Interior: al-Nahda and Rab'a protests will end soon within a legal framework… and the people of Egypt will hear good news about Sinai," July 27, 2013, *Al-Ahram* http://gate.ahram.org.eg/UI/Front/inner.aspx?NewsContentID=376784&Title=%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D9%86%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A- (accessed July 24, 2014).

the government "cannot accept security disorder, cutting roads and bridges, attacking public buildings. The state has to impose order by all force and decisiveness."[422]

At around 10.30 p.m. on July 26, just hours after the mass demonstration orchestrated by al-Sisi, the Central Security Forces (CSF) blocked a march of pro-Morsy supporters coming from the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in, where pro-Morsy supporters had been for the past month, from reaching the ramp to the October 6 Bridge. One protester said that he was at the front of the march when at around 11.30 p.m. they were about 100 meters away from the October 6 Bridge; at that point, the police started shooting teargas to force protesters to retreat, he said.[423] A video reviewed by Human Rights Watch appears to show the beginning of the march: a large crowd of protesters is walking peacefully along a road when police positioned on the ramp of the October 6 bridge start to shoot teargas; protesters retreat as the sound of gunshots is heard and police APCs start to advance towards protesters.[424] Shortly thereafter, clashes broke out between protesters and CSF forces, who were accompanied by plainclothes men, three witnesses told Human Rights Watch.[425] Protesters set cars on fire and threw rocks at the police, while police fired birdshot and more teargas from their position near the bridge.

A doctor who was accompanying the protesters said that police, accompanied by plainclothes men and APCs, initially fired teargas at the crowd for the first hour or two.[426] A medic who participated in the demonstration said protesters were approaching the bridge when CSF police wearing black uniforms blocked them.[427] A protester described how, while the police fired teargas, he and others around him threw rocks at the police and plainclothes men standing opposite them.[428] Another protester told Human Rights Watch

---

[422] "Call from Interim President Adly Mansour on al-Hayat channel," July 26, 2013, video clip, The Daily Motion, http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x12c4la_%D9%85%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%82%D8%AA-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A9-26-7-2013_auto (accessed July 24, 2014).

[423] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013. Many other protesters recalled firing started up to 30 minutes earlier, around 11 p.m.

[424] "The beginning of Nasr Street clashes," video clip, YouTube, July 27, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWiEFLbcAvM (accessed July 24, 2014).

[425] Human Rights Watch interview with three witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[426] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[427] Human Rights Watch interview with medic (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[428] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

that he and others picked up teargas canisters shot into the crowd and lobbed them back towards the opposite side.[429]

Within two hours, beginning after 1 a.m., three witnesses said that police fired live bullets into the crowd, followed by more teargas.[430] Three other witnesses who were with the protesters described the sounds of successive gun shots and men in the crowd falling to the ground.[431] A doctor treating protesters at the site told Human Rights Watch, "the teargas continued, and then the live fire started. It was aimed single-fire."[432] Another protester said:

> At around 1:30 or 2 a.m., they started shooting us with bullets. We didn't see it when they started shooting bullets. But all of a sudden our brothers started dropping around us. There were snipers on top of the building across from us.[433]

Witnesses repeatedly told Human Rights Watch that the scene was dark and the air heavy with teargas, limiting their visibility, but that armed police were firing on them from an elevated position and from in front of them.[434] Beginning at approximately 1:30 a.m., a protester told Human Rights Watch, "I picked up five men all [hit] with a single shot to the head."[435]

Doctors working in the field hospital told Human Rights Watch said that based on the waves of injuries coming into the hospital, they estimated that it was around 11 p.m. when the police started using teargas and birdshot.[436] Half an hour later and onwards, however, the fatalities and injuries showed that the police started using live ammunition, together

---

[429] Human Rights Watch interview with other protester (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[430] Human Rights Watch interviews with three witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[431] "Aida Seif Eldawla," Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/aidaseif/posts/10153071690100497 (accessed July 27, 2014); Joe Elostar, "My testimony of the events of Manassa," *Storify*, http://storify.com/MrJoeElostar/story?utm_campaign=&utm_source=t.co&awesm=sfy.co_pBT8&utm_medium=sfy.co-twitter&utm_content=storify-pingback (accessed July 24, 2014); Human Rights Watch interviews with three witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[432] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[433] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[434] Human Rights Watch interview with protester (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[435] Human Rights Watch interview with other protester (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[436] Human Rights Watch interview with two doctors (names withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

> "From 2 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. it was a steady stream; the bodies kept coming."
>
> —Field Hospital Doctor, July 27, 2013

with birdshot and teargas.[437] Two doctors who treated the injured as they came in told Human Rights Watch that birdshot largely hit those on the front lines, whereas live ammunition hit the middle section of the crowd.[438]

At approximately 1:45 a.m., the first dead body arrived at the Rab'a field hospital, according to one of the hospital doctors.[439] A cardiologist told Human Rights Watch that he had arrived at the field hospital at 2 a.m., around an hour after the first case of live ammunition:

> From 2 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. it was a steady stream; the bodies kept coming. Most had gunshot wounds in the head, neck or chest. The hospital was overflowing; we were completely over capacity.[440]

Another doctor who treated protesters with emergency first-response care, told Human Rights Watch that at around 2:45 a.m., he was treating one protester after another who had either been shot in the head and chest, or wounded by birdshot.[441] Another field hospital doctor, an anesthesiologist, told Human Rights Watch:

> All the dead were either dead on arrival or died immediately after they arrived, because of where they were hit; if you're hit in the head or chest, you won't last very long. The entire hospital floor was covered with injured people. It was beyond imagination. Some of the wounded people told me [that police] were using plainclothes men to shoot at them, that groups of men in plainclothes were coming at them from behind the police lines.[442]

Volunteers and ambulances took critical cases to the hospital closest to the sit-in, the Taa'min al-Saahi Hospital. An admissions doctor there told Human Rights Watch that morning:

---

[437] Ibid.

[438] Human Rights Watch interview with two doctors (names withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[439] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[440] Human Rights Watch interview with cardiologist (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[441] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[442] Human Rights Watch interview with wounded patients (names withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

> One hundred and seventy one people entered the hospital; of these 106 were admitted as serious cases. Twenty-five of them died, either dead on arrival or after arrival. They all died of bullet wounds to the head or chest. Of the injured, there were about 10–15 hit with rubber bullets and a couple injured from gas inhalation; the rest were birdshot or gunshots.[443]

At the same hospital that morning, a senior doctor in the emergency room told Human Rights Watch:

> Most of the 20 cases here in the ICU now were hit either with rubber bullets or birdshot in the upper part of the body, on the front of their bodies. Most of the bullet wounds were not through and through. In the ICU we had four people die: one was shot in the head; he was in his early 20s. The other three were shot in the chest; of these two were men in their early 20s, and one was in his 50s. One patient was shot in the forehead, and the bullet is lodged in his brain. He will die soon. The rest are rubber bullets or birdshot. We extracted a rubber bullet from the chest of one patient. Ninety percent of them were hit in the chest and head, most from straight on, but we do have one man who was shot in the neck with birdshot; it penetrated his neck straight through to the abdomen. He has a lung injury. To be honest, probably half of the people we have here now will die. The ones who were hit in the head will probably die. Fifty percent of the ones hit in the chest will probably survive.[444]

Human Rights Watch researchers arrived at the Rab'a al-Adawiya field hospital at approximately 4:30 a.m. on July 27, while the clashes were ongoing. They saw a steady stream of wounded being carried into the hospital. During a 30-minute period, eight men with bullet injuries were brought into the hospital, of whom five had been shot with live bullets in the head, neck, or chest. During the next two and a half hours, Human Rights Watch researchers saw six dead bodies being brought directly from the protest frontline into the makeshift field hospital.

---

[443] Human Rights Watch interview with admissions doctor (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[444] Human Rights Watch interview with senior ER doctor (name withheld), Cairo, July 27, 2013.

Among the bodies they examined at the field hospital, the two researchers identified at least eight with single shot sounds. They saw one man who had been killed by a single shot between the eyes, another in the neck, a third in the side of the head, a fourth in what doctors described as "in the heart." The four other fatalities witnessed by Human Rights Watch sustained single gunshot wounds to the chest and torso. Medical staff treating the protesters told researchers that at least two of the dead, including a 22-year-old man and a 17-year-old boy, had received single gunshot wounds to the forehead. Doctors at the field hospital told Human Rights Watch that they had moved at least two other bodies with identical wounds to the nearby Taa'min al-Saahi Hospital.[445]

A Human Rights Watch arms researcher viewed video footage and photographs from the scene and concluded that the nature and consistency of the fatal shots to the eyes and temple indicated the use of snipers or at least targeted shooting from above. Based on an analysis of witness evidence and photographs of injuries, the researcher found that precise, fatal wounds to the head such as those sustained by several of the dead indicated that they had been deliberately targeted, with stabilized fire and the assistance of optical sights, both of which require expertise.[446] They further noted that head shots are the mark of specially trained snipers; ordinary soldiers are trained to aim at the center mass of the target, which leads to mostly chest and torso wounds.[447]

In conjunction with apparently targeted killings, there was also evidence of other security personnel firing into the crowd at chest or head height, in a way that would likely cause serious injury or death. A video posted online and reviewed by Human Rights Watch shows a man in plainclothes shooting from what appears to be an MP-5 machine pistol, which fires 9mm bullets at a range of 100-150 meters and later on shows CSF officers in black shooting towards protesters who crouch behind a hastily constructed wall of bricks.[448]

Photojournalist Mosaab al-Shamy told Human Rights Watch that he first arrived at the clashes at 2:15 a.m. behind police lines. He said that the police were continuously

---

[445] Human Rights Watch interviews (names withheld), and observations during visit, Rab'a al-Adawiya field hospital, Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[446] Human Rights Watch arms researcher analysis of observations and photographs taken by HRW researchers in the field hospital at Rab'a al-Adawiya, Cairo, July 27, 2013.

[447] Ibid.

[448] "Interior Ministry fires on protesters," video clip, Youtube, July 28, 2013 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k3GBoEocoE (accessed July 30, 2014).

shooting teargas, birdshot and live bullets, and were standing alongside civilians carrying handguns on their side.[449] In a written account, he later described the scene:

> Injuries at the front lines were regular. Almost every couple of minutes, a man fell. Nasr Street is a very wide street, making it impossible to know where the bullets would come from. The shooting was indiscriminate, and the police showed little, if any, self-restraint. I saw a man get shot in the back of his head and drop dead, immediately, on the pavement he was standing. He wasn't even close to the front lines. It was frightening. Armed civilians, I noticed, accompanied the police, on their side. These civilians seemed like a mix of residents, whom I saw when I was at the police cordon at the start of the night, as well as what appeared to be paid thugs. Both the civilians and police fired at Morsy supporters while I was there. Helpless, Morsy supporters mostly just took cover and threw rocks and fireworks at the police before one was shot and carried away. This image repeated itself countless times.[450]

During a press conference on July 27, Interior Minister Ibrahim declared that pro-Morsy protesters attacked security forces with both birdshot and live ammunition:

> [Protesters] were trying to block the bridge. We were successful in driving them back to the military parade grounds using only teargas. At this point we were surprised to find them firing live ammunition, birdshot, and throwing stones on security forces. This continued for some time, when some residents from nearby neighborhoods came to fight with them [the pro-Morsy protesters], and the back and forth continued, with us attempting to separate between the two sides through the early hours of the morning. We never, as police, pointed any firearms at the chest of any demonstrator…[from the] security forces, I have a large number of wounded with birdshot and live rounds from among the conscripts; maybe the worst of these are two officers currently in the Nasr City hospital. One has a bullet

---

[449] Human Rights Watch interview with Mosaab al-Shamy, Cairo, September 23, 2013.

[450] Mosaab al-Shamy, Written Account, July 28, 2013, http://eaworldview.com/2013/07/egypt-1st-hand-one-sided-unwarranted-assault-by-police-accompanied-by-armed-civilians/ (accessed December 1, 2013).

> wound to the head, entering through his left eye and exiting through the right, in addition to birdshot pellets in his [inaudible] and stomach.[451]

Video footage of the July 27 events released by the government shows protesters throwing rocks, but no use of firearms. An Interior Ministry-produced video compilation of the events shows protesters throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at the police, surrounding and appearing to attack a car, shooting flares, and appearing to set a car on fire. At minute 4:29 in the video, a masked non-uniformed gunman shoots and then runs away; it is unclear whether he is a pro-Morsy supporter or one of the plainclothes gunmen who were standing with the police and shooting that evening.[452]

Al-Shamy described what he saw when he headed to the front lines at around 6 a.m.:

> I noticed Morsy supporters had set three lines of defense with brick walls. They crouched behind these walls as the bullets flew. In the time that I spent in Rab'a, I saw that Morsy supporters were unarmed, except with rocks and fireworks, in addition to the occasional teargas canister they would throw back at the police, from where it came. I feel compelled, however, not to doubt the possibility of them being armed earlier at night when things were more vicious and chaotic, making observing things more difficult.[453]

Witnesses, including doctors and independent journalists, who spoke to Human Rights Watch said that the vast majority of protesters did not use firearms or other weapons and that violence on the protester side largely consisted of throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails, with the limited use of shotguns with birdshot. These sorts of actions did not justify the security forces firing at protesters with live ammunition or birdshot targeted at the head, neck and chest.

---

[451] "Press conference with interior minister on current events," video clip, YouTube, July 27 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KS_7_grsPW4 (accessed November 22, 2013).

[452] "Muslim Brotherhood members block the road, fire birdshot at the police, and vandalize the properties of citizens," video clip, YouTube, July 27 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9mX109DlWQ&feature=youtube_gdata_player (accessed November 24, 2013).

[453] Mosaab al-Shamy, Written Account, July 28, 2013, http://eaworldview.com/2013/07/egypt-1st-hand-one-sided-unwarranted-assault-by-police-accompanied-by-armed-civilians/ (accessed December 1, 2013).

Human Rights Watch reviewed video footage both posted online and obtained from protesters, much of it taken on cellphones, which were consistent with Human Rights Watch's observations that evening. A video filmed by the Egyptian daily *Al-Masry al-Youm* shows protesters throwing stones and a few Molotov cocktails towards the police and constantly running for cover or carrying away people who appear to have been shot by the police.[454] Police can be seen shooting from above and next to police APCs and do not appear to be taking cover in a manner that would suggest they feared the use of firearms on the protester side. In another video, at least two uniformed policemen, one of them masked, are seen shooting at protesters.[455]

One 11-minute video filmed by video journalist Ibrahim al-Masry shows an unarmed protester carrying a flag limping to safety and trying to dodge bullets until he collapses clutching his thigh. Protesters crouch behind a metal wall with APCs on the other side and throw stones at the police to the regular sound of gunfire. Another unarmed protester limps away after being shot in the leg, a third unarmed protester falls lifeless to the ground.[456] An 11-minute video filmed by activist Mohamed al-Zahaby shows part of the clashes and then the injuries of dead and wounded protesters in the field hospital. Two of those shown in the video had been shot in the head and two in the chest.[457] A video by the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated news network *Rassd* clearly shows CSF officers, some masked and some in bullet proof vests, shooting at protesters, with dozens of plainclothes men standing in the open throwing stones towards pro-Morsy protesters a few meters from them, behavior that suggests that they did not expect gunfire from protesters.[458]

The police arrested 72 protesters during the clashes. The East Cairo prosecution office ordered their pretrial detention on charges of murder, possession of unlicensed firearms and ammunition, possession of explosives, destruction of private and public property, "use of force in order to terrify citizens," and "illegal assembly with the purpose of

---

[454] "Clashes between the Interior Ministry and Morsy supporters at the Manassa Memorial Protest," video clip, YouTube, July 26, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-Glq6dbZz4 (accessed July 24, 2014).

[455] "Ministry of Interior firing at Rab'a al-Adawiya protesters," video clip, YouTube, July 27, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxHqgTqS44I&feature=youtu.be (accessed July 25, 2014).

[456] Ibrahim al-Masry, "The Mandate Day Massacre: Interior Ministry and thugs use live fire," video clip, YouTube, July 27, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDDJBl9h-nA (accessed July 25, 2014).

[457] Mohamed al-Zahaby, "Injured and dead in the July 27, 2013 dawn clashes on Nasr Street - 18+," video clip, YouTube, July 27, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjDnII3m9B4 (accessed July 25, 2014).

[458] "Rassd camera captures Interior Ministry birdshot fire in the Rab'a massacre," July 27, 2013, video clip, YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RK6LpCbJJaI#at=298 (accessed July 25, 2014).

impeding the work of state authorities."[459] District prosecutor Mustafa Khater ordered autopsies of those killed, and by July 29 prosecutors had questioned over 100 of the injured in hospitals about the incident.[460]

On August 5, according to Al-*Masry al- Youm*, Assistant Interior Minister for CSF Ashraf Abdullah and head of the Cairo Security Directorate Osama al-Saghir testified before prosecutors that "the police had not shot at Morsy supporters and that the shooting took place between the supporters and residents."[461] Interior Minister Ibrahim claimed in a televised interview on August 31, 2013 that police who dispersed the Manassa sit-in were not armed.[462] To Human Rights Watch's knowledge, prosecutors have not so far interrogated any security officers for unlawfully killing protesters, despite ample video evidence showing the police shooting at protesters.

August 16: One Hundred Twenty Protesters Killed in the Ramses Square Area

On August 16, a large number of protesters, many of whom had participated in the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins, marched after Friday prayers to the Ramses Square area in the Abbassiya neighborhood of Cairo to protest the dispersal of the sit-ins two days earlier and the army's ouster of Morsy. Police from the nearby Azbakiya police station opened fire on the demonstration soon after protesters gathered, allegedly in response to gunshots fired at the station. In the course of the next six hours, at least 120 protesters were killed, according to the FMA.[463] Prosecutors also identified two policemen as having been killed that day.[464]

---

[459] Ibrahim al-Qura'a, "Renewal of detention of 72 Morsy supporters for 15 days in the memorial Incident," *Al-Masry al-Youm,* August 6, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/2012611 (accessed November 7, 2013); Ibrahim Qura'a and Mohamed al-Qomash, "Detention of 76 Morsy supporters in connection with Nasr street and Giza clashes," *Al-Masry al-Youm,* July 30, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/printerfriendly.aspx?ArticleID=391650 (accessed November 7, 2013).

[460] Nagy al-Gargawy, "Prosecutor investigations in the Manassa clashes: 100 injured interviewed and burial permits for 79 corpses and 73 accused questioned," *Al-Ahram*, July 29, 2013, http://bit.ly/1cstc9s (accessed May 21, 2014).

[461] Ibrahim al-Qura'a, "Prosecutors order Forensic Medical Authority to speed up delivery of autopsy reports for Nasr street clashes," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, August 6, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/2011846 (accessed November 7, 2013).

[462] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014).

[463] Noha Ashur, "Forensic Medical Authority: Rab'a death toll reaches 377, including 11 'burnt' after their death," *Al-Shorouk*, http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=14112013&id=31c5d60f-f4b8-4b2e-8757-990b53453a9e (accessed July 23, 2014); "Index of those killed in the Sisi/Mansour era," WikiThawra, accessed July 24, 2013, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0ApHKfHFs3JYxdGQybmtTVk42bEtxemNjZldJcWxjbnc&usp=drive_web&pli=1#gid=0.

[464] Mustafa Mohamed, "Prosecutors receive National Security's report of Ramses and Azbakiya Events," *Al-Shorouk*, September 19, 2013, http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=18092013&id=77d847b1-bbf5-462d-8fcc-b37232ec4c25 (accessed July 23, 2014).

Witness accounts and video footage indicate that police fired indiscriminately and deliberately at the protesters outside the police station, although it is not clear if they fired first or in response to protesters who fired at the police station. Gunmen attacking the police station might have justified the use of lethal force by the police to save lives, but the disproportionate number of protesters killed, accounts of victims and witnesses, including independent observers, and *YouTube* footage clearly show that the police used excessive force. This conclusion is further supported by evidence suggesting that there were likely very few, if any, armed men among the protesters before, during and immediately after police opened fire. Witnesses said that many killed and wounded had injuries to their head, necks and chest, raising the question of whether some policemen had been shooting to kill.

The Brotherhood had declared a "Day of Anger" on August 16, calling on members to organize marches converging on several places around the city. In Ramses Square, one of the main gathering points, several thousand people started gathering after the Friday mid-day prayer, at around 1:30 p.m. According to witnesses, the crowd, which consisted of pro-Morsy supporters, including women and children, was in a festive mood, with people beating on drums and chanting slogans for freedom and democracy.[465]

Around 2:30 p.m., tensions increased around the Azbakiya police station, just south of Ramses Square under the October 6 overpass. One journalist told Human Rights Watch that she saw about 50 youth marching toward the police station, shouting chants often used by Ultra football club fans, notorious for their violent behavior.[466] According to witnesses, including a senior police officer, the growing crowd in front of the police station also started to chant slogans against the police.[467] A few policemen and a group of plainclothes men were standing near the police station entrance. At least four people, some with weapons, were stationed on the roof of the police station, three witnesses told Human Rights Watch.[468]

---

[465] Human Rights Watch interview with witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, August 18, and August 19, 2013.

[466] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 17, 2013.

[467] Human Rights Watch interview with senior police officer (name withheld), Cairo, August 22, 2013.

[468] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld) and two witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, August 17, August 21, and August 22, 2013.

At some point, both protesters and local residents standing near the police entrance started throwing rocks at each other. Some protesters tried to stop the violence. One journalist told Human Rights Watch:

> More people arrived to see what was going on. Some of the youth started throwing rocks. Other people standing around were trying to stop them, at some point chanting, "Go back, go back." But then somebody threw rocks from the side of the police, and it all deteriorated very quickly.[469]

Interviewed separately, another journalist who also witnessed the situation gave a similar account.[470]

At some point the police fired one or more teargas canisters to disperse the crowd, according to six witnesses and the police officer.[471] Witnesses said that gunfire erupted almost immediately afterwards. The authorities allege that the first shot came from gunmen attacking the police station, but Human Rights Watch has not been able to independently establish this.

Whoever fired the first shot, police quickly opened fire on the protesters in several directions, leading to an increasing number of casualties who were brought to field hospitals in the al-Fateh Mosque, the Tawheed Mosque, or to hospitals nearby. Within 15 minutes of the first gunshot, there were 15 or 20 wounded people in the al-Fateh Mosque, one of whom was already dead, according to a journalist who went there shortly after gunfire erupted.[472]

The gunfire from the police station halted protesters marching on the October 6 overpass towards Ramses Square, a journalist on the scene told Human Rights Watch.[473] Squeezed between the gunfire from the police station and gunfire, possibly into the air, from two or three CSF trucks trying to clear the overpass from the south, some

---

[469] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 17, 2013.
[470] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.
[471] Human Rights Watch interview with police officer (name withheld) and witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, August 17, August 18, August 19, August 21, and August 22, 2013.
[472] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013;
[473] Ibid.

protesters decided to jump down from the bridge sustaining serious injuries, a journalist from an Egyptian newspaper said.[474] Others decided to try to escape forward through the gunfire.[475] A journalist on the ramp down from the overpass north of the police station said that at one point she suddenly saw a lot of people, including women, come running through the smoke.[476]

One witness said that shortly after the gunfire erupted, he saw an armored personnel carrier (APC) standing in front of the police station, and policemen shooting from it.[477] A video posted on YouTube also shows an APC, allegedly in front of the police station, firing a vehicle-mounted large-caliber gun.[478] Three doctors and an international journalist separately told Human Rights Watch that they also saw a gunman shooting at protesters from a helicopter hovering over the Azbakiya police station.[479]

The gunfire lasted for several hours.[480] By 9-9:30 p.m., the army arrived to separate angry anti-Brotherhood crowds that had gathered outside al-Fateh Mosque from demonstrators inside.

Several hundred protesters remained inside the mosque until the next day, at which time many of the remaining protesters were detained, including 17-year-old Irish-Egyptian Ibrahim Halawa, who, at the time of writing, remains in custody.[481] A lawyer who represents many of the detainees told Human Rights Watch that around 1000 demonstrators were detained from Ramses Square and al-Fateh Mosque, including 494 who are being tried as part of a single mass trial.[482] One witness told Human Rights Watch that people in the

---

474 Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), August 17, 2013.

475 Ibid.

476 Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

477 Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 17, 2013.

478 "What's this? Is it possible that this is Egypt's army? Is it possible that one has been deceived by them all this time?" video clip, YouTube, September 5, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2avGWp1Lzc&feature=youtube_gdata_player (accessed July 23, 2014). This video has been made private by the user, see screenshot: "Mantkaty Now Official Facebook Page," Facebook, September 5, 2012, https://www.facebook.com/mantkatynow/posts/629800253732154 (accessed July 29, 2014).

479 Human Rights Watch interview with journalist and three doctors (names withheld), Cairo, August 17 and August 18, 2013.

480 Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

481 Peter Beaumont and Henry McDonald, "Cairo Forces Detain Siblings from Ireland After Raid on al-Fath Mosque," *Guardian*, August 27, 2013. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/27/cairo-detains-siblings-ireland-raid-mosque (accessed July 23, 2014).

482 Human Rights Watch interview with lawyer (name withheld), Cairo, July 8, 2014; "494 MB Supporters on Trial in Al-Fath Mosque Incident," Mada Masr, July 16, 2014, http://www.madamasr.com/content/494-mb-supporters-trial-al-fath-mosque-incident (accessed July 23, 2014).

mosque had negotiated the evacuation of some protesters with the army and that he had been escorted to a nearby metro station and protected from angry crowds outside.[483]

According to the FMA, 120 people were killed in and around Ramses square in the afternoon and evening of August 16.[484] A senior police officer at Azbakiya police station said that policemen at the station sustained only minor injuries during the attack.[485] Prosecutors subsequently identified two policemen as having been killed that day.[486]

A doctor at al-Fateh Mosque, located off Ramses Square, told Human Rights Watch that by 8 p.m., they had transported 59 bodies to Sednaya hospital.[487] The doctor said that some of the wounded refused to move to the hospital out of fear of being arrested by the police.[488] According to witnesses, 31 or 32 bodies were also brought to the Tawheed Mosque, located just off Ramses Square.[489] A doctor at the Helal Hospital, very close to the site of the clashes, told Human Rights Watch that eleven people were either dead when they arrived to the hospital or died in the hospital.[490] According to a doctor at the Demerdash Hospital, the hospital received 16 dead protesters and 153 injured from Ramses Square on August 16.[491]

A senior police officer at the Azbakiya police station who was present during the incident told Human Rights Watch that their orders were to gradually use non-lethal force if the

---

[483] Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

[484] Middle East News Agency, "Forensic Medical Authority: 726 Deaths since the Dispersal of Rab'a and al-Nahda," *Al-Shorouk*, November 14, 2013, http://shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=14112013&id=7870071e-556c-4854-9cbd-ac9011a1da51 (accessed November 28, 2013).

[485] Human Rights Watch interview with senior police officer (name withheld), Cairo, August 22, 2013.

[486] Mustafa Mohamed, "Prosecutors receive National Security's report of Ramses and Azbakiya events," *Al-Shorouk*, September 19, 2013, http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=18092013&id=77d847b1-bbf5-462d-8fcc-b37232ec4c25 (accessed July 23, 2014).

[487] Human Rights Watch interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

[488] Ibid.

[489] One doctor who helped treat patients in the mosque from around 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. said that he had counted 31 bodies arriving at the mosque; Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013. Another witness, who went to the mosque because his brother's body had been taken there, said that he counted, photographed, and recorded 32 bodies in the mosque; Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013. The witness took his brother to the morgue in the al-Zahra University hospital, where he saw one more body, which he recognized as also being from the Tawheed Mosque.

[490] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 20, 2013.

[491] Human Rights Watch telephone interview with doctor (name withheld), Cairo, August 17, 2013.

police station came under attack, and to use lethal force only against people attacking with firearms.[492]

The officer said that the police had not reacted to the insults chanted by some protesters, but that they fired teargas canisters to disperse people clashing in front of the police station. At that point, he said, armed gunmen simultaneously opened fire on the police station from three sides, forcing the police to respond with gunfire. The officer further noted that the attackers were stationed in a building to the north of the police station, on the October 6 overpass. A fourth attacker located in a building on the other side of the overpass was too far away to reach them, he said.[493]

In the early afternoon a group of 20-30 people tried to storm the police station with firearms, but the police were able to fight them off, he said. He insisted that his forces had only targeted people carrying firearms, and even in those cases, aimed for their legs.[494] A sniper who was stationed on the roof also said that his orders had been to only fire at armed attackers and that this is what he did.[495]

While Human Rights Watch's investigation shows that the police station was attacked, including by gunfire, it also indicates that the violence by protesters was more limited than alleged by the authorities, particularly at the outset of the demonstration.

During a visit to the Azbakiya police station on August 23, Human Rights Watch documented dozens of bullet marks on the northern and eastern walls of the police station, clear indications that shots were fired at the police station. Human Rights Watch was not able to independently establish how many of the bullet marks stemmed from shots fired at the police station during the initial hours of the clashes and how many stemmed from the alleged later mass attack on the station.

Information provided by some witnesses is also consistent with some elements in the authorities' version. One journalist standing on the ramp to the October 6 overpass north of the police station told Human Rights Watch that she heard gunfire coming not only from

---

[492] Human Rights Watch interview with senior police officer (name withheld), Cairo, August 22, 2013.
[493] Ibid.
[494] Ibid.
[495] Human Rights Watch interview with sniper (name withheld), Cairo, August 22, 2013.

the police station to the south, but also from a position closer to her, which is consistent with the authorities' claim that there were gunmen in a building north of the police station.[496] Another journalist said that he saw one person walking up to the ramp with what appeared to be an assault rifle about one hour after the gunfire started, which is consistent with the authorities' claim that they were attacked from the overpass.[497]

Three witnesses also said that protesters threw rocks and Molotov cocktails.[498] One journalist told Human Rights Watch that she saw people with a box of Molotov cocktails near the metro entrance under the overpass about an hour after gunfire erupted.[499] A Brotherhood supporter interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that he saw protesters throwing Molotov cocktails at the police station.[500]

According to witnesses and YouTube footage, some people walking towards Ramses Square were armed and fired at surrounding buildings. One video posted on YouTube shows a man walking on the May 15 Bridge, firing what appears to be an assault rifle to the side of the bridge.[501] An article in *The National*, a newspaper based in Abu Dhabi, cited an employee working nearby as saying that he saw half a dozen people among the protesters firing automatic weapons, and that local residents also shot at the protesters from surrounding buildings with pistols.[502] Witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that these gunmen were far away from the police station when the gunfire erupted there, indicating that their fire did not cause the police to start firing.[503]

Human Rights Watch has not been able to establish whether the gunmen on the bridge eventually reached and fired at the Azbakiya police station.

---

[496] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

[497] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 17, 2013.

[498] Human Rights Watch interview with witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, August 17, August 21, and August 22, 2013.

[499] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

[500] Human Rights Watch interview with two pro-Morsy supporters (names withheld), Cairo, August 17, 2013 and August 21, 2014.

[501] "Brotherhood on May 15 Bridge fire live ammunition on locals," video clip, Youtube, August 16, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XT1HD9Vpxzk (accessed July 28, 2014).

[502] Alice Fordham, "Guns in the hands of civilians compound Egypt's crisis," *National*, http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/guns-in-the-hands-of-civilians-compound-egypts-crisis (accessed July 29, 2014).

[503] Human Rights Watch interview with witness (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

Information collected by Human Rights Watch casts doubt on the allegation that the police station was attacked from several sides simultaneously. Two international journalists standing on the overpass when gunfire erupted told Human Rights Watch that they saw no weapons on the overpass at that time.[504] Likewise, two journalists who were close to the intersection when gunfire erupted also said that they saw no weapons there.[505] In fact, with the exception of those mentioned above, witnesses said that they saw no firearms among the protesters before, during, or in the immediate aftermath of the police opening fire. This indicates ithat there were likely no more than a few armed protesters, and that the initial attack on the police station may have come only from gunmen stationed in surrounding buildings and not from armed individuals among the protesters.

Witness statements and YouTube footage indicate that the police did not shoot only at armed protesters, as the authorities claim. The firing of live ammunition into crowds, in addition to the high number of people with gunshot wounds to the head, neck and upper bodies, also contradicts the assertion that the police were not trying to inflict deadly wounds.

In several cases, witness statements and video footage indicate that the police shot at unarmed protesters. The police seem to have concentrated their fire on at least two locations: the overpass north of the police station and the intersection south of the station.

On the overpass, one journalist standing with his back to police station when gunfire erupted said that he did not see who shot first, but when he turned towards the police station to look, a policeman was aiming in his direction. He also said he heard several bullets slam into the wall behind him. One bullet was so close that he could hear it whizzing by him and his driver, he said.[506] Another journalist provided a similar account.[507] Neither of them saw any weapons among people on the overpass at that point.

A third journalist who walked up the exit ramp to the October 6 overpass north of the police station shortly after gunfire erupted told Human Rights Watch:

---

[504] Human Rights Watch interviews with journalists (names withheld), Cairo, August 18 and August 21, 2013.
[505] Human Rights Watch interviews with journalists (names withheld), Cairo, August 19 and August 22, 2013.
[506] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 21, 2013.
[507] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

> A lot of people were going up and down the ramp. The ramp was partially protected by a tall residential building. They brought tree branches, which they set on fire, and erected barricades on the ramp. During the 30-40 minutes I stood there, I saw about five or six people getting wounded by gunfire from the police station. One man who was shot in the neck appeared to have died immediately.[508]

The journalist said that she saw no weapons on the overpass.[509] A video dispatch posted on Vice.com, which appears to have been filmed in the same location, shows an unarmed man getting shot as he is setting up a barricade.[510]

The two initial casualties seem to have happened on the corner south of the police station. Several witnesses said that they saw motorbikes carrying two wounded to the al-Fateh Mosque shortly after gunfire erupted.[511] One journalist told Human Rights Watch:

> Almost immediately after the gunfire started, I saw two motorbikes racing towards the al-Fateh Mosque with wounded people on the back. One man had a white t-shirt, and I could see that his entire shoulder and back was covered in blood, maybe from a wound to his head or shoulder. [512]

Two journalists said that they had seen no weapons when gunfire erupted, just before the two people were wounded there.

Given that there were likely few if any armed men among the protesters on the ground before, during and immediately after police opened fire, the large number of injured is a strong indication that the police used excessive force. One journalist, who went to the al-Fateh Mosque when the shooting began, said that within 15 minutes there were 15 or 20 wounded there, one of whom was already dead.[513] Several witnesses, including foreign

---

[508] Human Rights Watch interview with another journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

[509] Ibid.

[510] "Video from the Muslim Brotherhood's 'day of anger'," *Vice*, August 17, 2013, http://www.vice.com/read/video-from-egypts-day-of-anger (accessed July 23, 2014).

[511] Human Rights Watch interviews with witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, August 19 and August 22, 2013.

[512] Human Rights Watch interview with journalist (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

[513] Ibid.

correspondents interviewed by Human Rights Watch, said that they counted 20 dead bodies in the al-Fateh Mosque within an hour of the start of shooting.[514] One foreign correspondent said that a young boy, approximately 14 years old, was among the dead.[515]

Seven witnesses who saw bodies and injured in the hospitals and mosques, including medical personnel and journalists, told Human Rights Watch that the vast majority of the wounded and dead had what appeared to be gunshot wounds.[516] Witnesses also said that many killed and wounded had injuries to their head, necks and chest. A foreign correspondent experienced in covering armed conflicts told Human Rights Watch:

> It seemed like a full spread [of wounds]. Most were from bullet wounds. Some had wounds to their extremities. Many had wounds to their torso, but also to head and neck. Some of the wounds were really bad. Some wounds were from birdshot ammunition, possibly fired at close range. One had a nasty concentrated wound from birdshot that had penetrated deeply into his thigh. The wounds were really what you would expect to see when the police shoot indiscriminately into a crowd.[517]

While the information collected by Human Rights Watch is not conclusive with regards to whether the police were shooting to kill, the presence of a significant number of head and neck injuries contradicts the authorities' claim that they were only aiming for the legs of the attackers.

---

[514] Human Rights Watch interviews with witnesses and a foreign correspondent (names withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

[515] Human Rights Watch interview with foreign correspondent (name withheld), Cairo, August 18, 2013.

[516] Human Rights Watch interviews with witnesses including medical personnel (names withheld), Cairo, August 17, August 18, August 19, and August 22, 2013.

[517] Human Rights Watch interview with foreign correspondent (name withheld), Cairo, August 19, 2013.

IV. Legal Standards and Accountability

Freedom of Assembly and Use of Force

While the right to assemble in a sit-in at a major traffic juncture is not unlimited, and governments have a legitimate right to limit to the right to assembly when it disrupts the lives of residents, Egyptian security forces went far beyond the bounds permitted by international human rights law.

The right of peaceful assembly is enshrined in article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and article 11 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, to which Egypt is a party.[518]

Peaceful assembly may only be restricted through laws that are "necessary in a democratic society in the interest of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre publique*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."[519] Any restriction on the right of peaceful assembly on national security or public order grounds must be strictly construed, and necessary and proportionate to address a legitimate threat. Such laws must be imposed on a case-by-case basis and cannot put the right itself in jeopardy.[520]

Law enforcement authorities, who include police and armed forces personnel acting in a law enforcement capacity, may regulate assemblies in accordance with international policing standards. The UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials states that "law enforcement officials may use force only when strictly necessary" in the line of duty.[521]

The UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms (the "Basic Principles") provide that law enforcement officials "shall, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before

---

[518] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted December 16, 1966, G.A. Res. 2200A (XXI), 21 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 16) at 52, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 999 U.N.T.S. 171, entered into force March 23, 1976, art. 21.

[519] Ibid.

[520] Manfred Nowak, *UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: CCPR Commentary* (Kehl am Rhein: N.P. Engel, 1993), pp. 386-87.

[521] United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, adopted December 17, 1979, G.A. res. 34/169, annex, 34 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 46) at 186, U.N. Doc. A/34/46 (1979), art. 3.

resorting to the use of force" and may use force "only if other means remain ineffective."[522] When the use of force is necessary, law enforcement officials should "exercise restraint in such use and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offense."[523]

The Basic Principles also place limits on the use of force in dispersing "unlawful assemblies." Principle 13 states that, "In the dispersal of assemblies that are unlawful but non-violent, law enforcement officials shall avoid the use of force or, where that is not practicable, shall restrict such force to the minimum extent necessary."[524] The use of non-lethal means of force in crowd control, including the use of teargas, may also contravene international standards, especially when such means are used to disperse nonviolent assemblies where force can be avoided or restricted to the minimum extent necessary.

The Basic Principles provide that "intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life." Principle 9 states that "[l]aw enforcement officials shall not use firearms against persons except in self-defence or defence of others against the imminent threat of death or serious injury, to prevent the perpetration of a particularly serious crime involving grave threat to life, to arrest a person presenting such a danger and resisting their authority, or to prevent his or her escape, and only when less extreme means are insufficient to achieve these objectives."[525]

Principle 10 provides that law enforcement officials should "give clear warning of their intent to use firearms."[526] The Basic Principles make clear that there can be no departure from these provisions on the basis of "exceptional circumstances such as internal political stability or any other public emergency."[527]

---

[522] Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, 27 August to 7 September 1990, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.144/28/Rev.1 at 112 (1990), principle 4.

[523] Ibid., principle 5(a).

[524] Ibid., principle 13.

[525] Ibid., principle 9.

[526] Ibid., principle 10.

[527] Ibid., principle 8.

Crimes against Humanity

The unprecedented violence used by Egyptian security forces in July and August of 2013, particularly in the Rab'a dispersal, constitutes serious violations of international human rights law. While international legal standards allow the intentional use of lethal force by security forces engaged in policing, when strictly necessary to protect life, authorities comprehensively failed to use proportionate force or take feasible measures to ensure that operations posed a minimal risk to life.

The commission of systematic or widespread intentional unlawful killings of protesters and other inhumane acts in successive dispersals as part of a government policy to attack unarmed persons would constitute crimes against humanity. Crimes against humanity can be committed during peace or armed conflict and consist of specific acts committed on a widespread or systematic basis as part of an "attack on a civilian population," meaning there is some degree of planning or policy to commit the crime. Such acts include murder, persecution of a group on political grounds, and "other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health."[528]

Liability for the commission of crimes against humanity is not limited to those who carry out the acts, but also those who order, assist, or are otherwise complicit in the crimes. Under the principle of command responsibility, military and civilian officials up to the top of the chain of command can be held criminally responsible for crimes committed by their subordinates when they knew or should have known that such crimes were being committed, but failed to take reasonable measures to stop them.

Human Rights Watch's investigation has found that security forces systematically and deliberately killed largely unarmed protesters on political grounds—those perceived to be affiliated or sympathetic with the Muslim Brotherhood and opposed to the July 3 ouster of Morsy—in a widespread manner, resulting in the deaths of over 1,150 protesters, in July and August of 2013 following Morsy's ouster.

---

[528] International Criminal Court, "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court," United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 2187, No. 38544, http://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/PIDS/publications/RomeStatutEng.pdf (accessed July 25, 2014).

The manner in which security forces used force to disperse protests appears to reflect policies set by the Egyptian government. The July 8 dispersal at the Republican Guard headquarters that killed 61 protesters came just three days after the army had opened fire on protesters in the same location and killed five protesters, including a man hanging a Morsy poster on a fence. Army forces, including snipers positioned on rooftops, began firing on protesters as they finished morning prayers without apparent provocation. The July 27 Manassa killings began hours after thousands of Egyptians had gathered at the behest of then-Defense Minister al-Sisi, who, in a speech three days before, lambasted the Brotherhood and then called on all Egyptians to "take to the streets to delegate to me the mandate and power to confront potential violence and terrorism."[529]

The Rab'a and al-Nahda square dispersals in particular were executed pursuant to a plan formulated by the Interior Ministry and approved by the Cabinet and National Defense Council after weeks of preparation. As set out above, there is strong evidence that the plan foresaw the killing of several thousand protesters.[530] This evidence includes statements from Interior Minister Ibrahim and then Prime Minister al-Beblawy acknowledging that they anticipated that the dispersal would kill well over 1000 demonstrators.[531]

The day after the dispersal, Interior Minister Ibrahim told *Al-Masry Al-Youm* that "the dispersal plan succeeded 100 percent."[532] This indicates that the execution of the dispersal adhered to a plan that had been put in place. Officials further lauded the conduct of the security forces in the aftermath of the August 14 dispersals.[533] They erected a monument to the police and army and gave bonuses to forces that participated in the day's events.[534]

---

[529] "Full Sisi speech addressing the Egyptian people reveals secrets of the last moments in the life of the former regime," video clip, YouTube, July 24, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXYOq47fvAs (accessed Jul 24, 2014).

[530] See section II: The Dispersals at Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda Squares, subsection: Government Planning.

[531] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014); Yasser Rizk and Mansour Kamel, "Dr. Hazem Beblawy in an interview with Al-Masry al-Youm–the emergency law is the 'least of evils' and will likely be extended for two months," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, September 11, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=396463&IssueID=2985 (accessed August 5, 2014).

[532] Yousry al-Badry, "Interior Minister: The dispersal plan succeeded 100%," *Al-Masry al-Youm* August 15, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=393445&IssueID=2958 (accessed July 24, 2014).

[533] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014).

[534] Kareem Fahim and May al-Sheikh, "Memory of a mass killing becomes another casualty of Egyptian protests," *New York Times*, November 13, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/14/world/middleeast/memory-egypt-mass-killing.html?_r=1& (accessed December 8, 2013); Kristin Chick, "Egyptian authorities pave over Rab'a massacre," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 14, 2013, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2013/1114/Egyptian-authorities-pave-over-Rab'a-massacre (accessed December 8, 2013); Ashraf Gayth, Hassan Ahmed Hussein, "Interior Ministry awards its members 245

Command Responsibility

Given the seriousness of the crimes committed, the most senior security officials and key leaders in the chain of command should be held individually accountable for the widespread and systematic killings of protesters during July-August 2013. Investigations should focus on three individuals in particular:

(1) **Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim**, who formulated the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersal plan and oversaw its implementation. In an August 31 interview, Ibrahim spoke frankly about his role; in discussing the late afternoon push into the heart of Rab'a Square, he declared:

> I then ordered the Special Forces to advance and purify the two buildings. They started to attack…and really the heroes, I say heroes, of the Special Forces were able to take control of the two buildings."[535]

(2) **Then-Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**, the other principal architect of the July-August 2013 violence. Al-Sisi held several positions in July-August 2013 which gave him a command role over security forces, including Defense Minister, General Commander of the Armed Forces, chair of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and Deputy Prime Minister for Security Affairs. In these capacities, he stood at the top of the chain of command for the Egyptian army, which opened fire on protesters outside the Republican Guard headquarters on July 5 and 8, and oversaw the country's security policies. In an August 18 speech, al-Sisi directly acknowledged his role in planning the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, saying "we spent very many long days to discuss all the details to arrive where the dispersal will not result in any losses."[536]

"I then ordered the Special Forces to advance and purify the two buildings."

—Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim, referencing Rab'a dispersal

---

million pounds for the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals," *Al-Masry al Youm*, August 31, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/256950 (accessed July 28, 2014).

[535] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014).

[536] "General Sisi's full speech and grave words uttered for the first time," video clip, YouTube, August 8, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOh5hi1ezqs (accessed July 29, 2014).

(3) **Medhat Menshawy**, then head of the Egyptian Special Forces (ESF), the body responsible for many of the abuses that took place, and commanded the Rab'a operation. During an October 12 interview with the Egyptian newspaper *Youm7*, Menshawy acknowledged receiving calls from Minister Ibrahim after entering the Rab'a sit-in on the morning of August 14 and assuring him that "we will attack whatever it cost us."[537] Menshawy was promoted by Interim President Mansour to Assistant Interior Minister in November 2013.[538]

Investigations should also explore the involvement of other police and army officials. Within the Interior Ministry, investigations into the planning and execution of the killings should explore the role of the following officials who served in each respective capacity during July-August 2013, six of whom Human Rights Watch has been able to identify by name: Assistant Interior Minister for the Central Security Forces (CSF) Sector Ashraf Abdullah; Assistant Interior Minister for the Public Security Services Ahmed Helmy; Assistant Interior Minister for State Security Khaled Tharwat; head of Cairo Security Directorate Osama al-Saghir; head of Giza Security Directorate Hussein al-Qadi; Giza CSF Director Mustafa Ragaie; the then-Assistant Interior Minister for the Security Forces Sector; and the then-Cairo CSF Director.

The mandate of each of these officials would have encompassed responding to the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins. The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) has concluded based on a review of reports from the public prosecutor regarding the killing of protesters during the January 2011 uprisings that these officials, with the exception of National Security which was known as State Security at the time, coordinated the governmental response to those events.[539] Given that there has been no significant restructuring of the Interior Ministry since, it is likely these officials played significant roles in the July-August 2013 mass protester killings. Press accounts have identified the involvement of some of these officials in the planning or execution of attacks on demonstrators and Interior

---

[537] Mahmoud Abdalrady, "Special Forces Commander: Morsy ordered the arrest of 70 political and media figures and the Interior Minister refused, telling him "I will resign from the ministry," *Youm7*, October 12, 2013, http://www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=1293512#.U9J142w08dW (accessed July 29, 2014).

[538] "President of the Republic decides to promote six Interior Ministry high-level officials," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, November 15, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/340425# (accessed July 25, 2014).

[539] Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), "The weeks of killing: state violence, communal fighting, and sectarian attacks in the summer of 2013," June 2014, http://eipr.org/sites/default/files/reports/pdf/weeks_of_killing_en.pdf, (accessed July 21, 2014).

Minister Ibrahim has acknowledged formulating the dispersal plan alongside his assistants.[540]

Investigations should also look at the role of Maj. Gen. Mohamed Farid Tohamy, the head of the General Intelligence Service, widely reputed to have been among the lead architects of the forceful response to demonstrations.[541] According to July 28 piece in *Al-Masry al-Youm*, Tohamy made a presentation to the National Defense Council about the situations in Rab'a and al-Nahda squares ahead of the decision to forcefully disperse the sit-ins.[542]

Investigations should also evaluate senior officials in the military chain of command, including head of the Republican Guard Maj. Gel. Mohamed Zaky, then army chief of staff and current Defense Minister Sidki Subhi, and then head of Military Intelligence and current army chief of staff Mahmoud Hegazy. In his role, Zaky had command responsibility over the Republican Guard forces that attacked peaceful protesters on July 5 and July 8. Subhi and Hegazy both attended high-level security meetings to plan the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals.[543] Snipers during the Rab'a dispersal also fired from atop of a Military Intelligence building, which would have fallen under the supervision of Hegazy.

Investigations should also look at the lower-ranking police and army officers who carried out the orders and fired on demonstrators. Those found to have carried out unlawful killings should be held to account.

---

[540] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014). For example, an August 12, *Al-Masry al-Youm* piece mentioned the presence of Osama al-Saghir, head of the Cairo Security Directorate, in a planning meeting to discuss the sit-ins and dispersal strategy; Hasn Ahmed Hussein, "Ministry of Interior: calls for all residents to vacate their apartments in Rab'a in preparation of the dispersal of the sit-in," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, August 12, 2013, http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/248131 (accessed July 25, 2014); Ashraf Abdullah, Assistant Interior Minister for the Central Security Forces sector, discussed the Rab'a dispersal during an August 22, 2013 interview on Al-Arabiya channel; "Egyptian Talk Official Facebook Page", Facebook, August 24, 2013, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=424481001003065, (accessed July 30, 2014).

[541] David D. Kirkpatrick, "Ousted general in Egypt is back, as Islamists' foe," *New York Times,* October 30, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/30/world/middleeast/ousted-general-in-egypt-is-back-as-islamists-foe.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (accessed July 25, 2014).

[542] Mohamed al-Bahrawi, "A security source: "National Defense Council confirms the necessity to disperse the 'Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins,'" *Al-Masry al-Youm*, July 28, 2013, http://m.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/242129 (accessed July 25, 2014).

[543] Ibid.

Then-Prime Minister Hazem al-Beblawy, Interim President Mansour, and other leading civilian figures should also be investigated. The cabinet headed by al-Beblawy and National Defense Council chaired by Mansour reviewed and approved the Interior Ministry's Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersal plan. Both officials also have strongly endorsed the operations. Mansour pronounced on September 3 that "the [Rab'a] dispersal was executed in accordance with international law," while al-Beblawy, in speaking about the July 27 Manassa clahses, described the killings as being "needed to move the country forward," even though "it was also clear that there would be victims."[544] Al-Beblawy further has conceded that he anticipated before the fact that well over 1,000 protesters would be killed during the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals.[545]

Investigations and Accountability

Articles 2(1) and 2(3) of the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is party, requires State Parties to "undertake to respect and ensure" and provide an effective remedy for violations of the rights in the Covenant.[546] The Human Rights Committee interprets Article 2(3) as including an obligation to investigate alleged violations of the covenant.[547] In that respect, the committee has emphasized that the remedies must be "accessible and effective remedies" and take into account "the special vulnerability of certain categories of person."[548] The committee has in the past also urged state parties to "to allow the victims of human rights violations to find out the truth in regards to acts committed, to know who the perpetrators of such acts are and to obtain appropriate compensation.[549]"

Further, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a set of principles relating to states' obligations to the victims of serious violations of international human rights law

---

[544] "For the first time, the prime minister reveals the reason behind dispersing the Rab'a sit-in," video clip, YouTube, August 27, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnQeeBPI3Uk (accessed July 25, 2014).

[545] "Yasser Rizk and Mansour Kamel, "Dr Hazem Beblawy in an interview with Al-Masry al-Youm–the emergency law is the 'least of evils' and will likely be extended for two months," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, September 11, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=396463&IssueID=2985 (accessed August 5, 2014).

[546] ICCPR, art. 2, Dec. 19, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 172.

[547] ESCOR, Human Rights Committee, The Nature of the General Legal Obligations Imposed on State Parties to the Covenant, para 15, U.N.Doc. CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, May 26, 2004, http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/58f5d4646e861359c1256ff600533f5f?Opendocument (accessed July 25, 2014).

[548] UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 31, The Nature of the General Legal Obligation on States Parties to the Covenant, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add/13 (2004), para. 15

[549] UN Human Rights Committee, "Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee Under Article 44 of the Covenant, Guatemala," CCPR/C/79/Add.63, April 3, 1996.

that makes clear that states are obligated to "[i]nvestigate violations" of international human rights law "thoroughly and impartially, and where appropriate, take action against those allegedly responsible in accordance with domestic and international law."[550] States also have "the duty to investigate and, if there is sufficient evidence, the duty to submit to prosecution the person allegedly responsible for violations."[551]

The Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity, endorsed by the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights in 2005, state that "[e]very people has the inalienable right to know the truth about past events concerning the perpetration of heinous crimes and about the circumstances and reasons that led, through massive or systematic violations, to the perpetration of those crimes."[552]

The principles also provide that state shall "undertake prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and take appropriate measures in respect of the perpetrators, particularly in the area of criminal justice, by ensuring that those responsible for serious crimes under international law are prosecuted, tried and duly punished."[553] These principles not only emphasize the right of victims to "reparation" and "redress from the perpetrator," but also that states give effect to "victims and their families['] . . . imprescriptible right to know the truth about the circumstances in which violations took place" and to "undertake institutional reforms and other measures necessary to ensure respect for the rule of law" and the "non-recurrence" of the violations at issue.[554]

---

[550] Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, G.A. Res. 60/147, para 3 U.N. Doc. A/RES/60/147, adopted and proclaimed December 16, 2005.

[551] Ibid, para 4.

[552] UN Commission on Human Rights, Report of the independent expert to update the set of principles to combat impunity, Diane Orentlicher, Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity, E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1, February 8, 2005,

http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/109/00/PDF/G0510900.pdf?OpenElement (accessed July 25, 2014).

[553] UN Commission on Human Rights, Report of the independent expert to update the set of principles to combat impunity, Diane Orentlicher, Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity, E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1, February 8, 2005, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/109/00/PDF/G0510900.pdf?OpenElement (accessed July 25, 2014).

[554] Ibid.

The UN's special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, published his first general report in May 2012 highlighting best practices in the protection of rights of assembly in the context of some violence and disturbances caused by prolonged demonstrations. In it he cited a European Court of Human Rights case that states that, "an individual does not cease to enjoy the right to peaceful assembly as a result of sporadic violence or other punishable acts committed by others in the course of the demonstration, if the individual in question remains peaceful in his or her own intentions or behavior." He stressed the overwhelming importance of the right to life in policing assemblies and "the utmost importance of genuine dialogue, including through negotiation, between law enforcement authorities and organizers in order to ensure the smooth conduct of the public assembly." [555]

Access to Medical Care

The authorities' denial of medical assistance to injured protesters violates the right to health and the right against non-discrimination under international human rights law. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, to which Egypt is party, guarantees the "right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health."[556] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which interprets the covenant, in its General Comment 14, stated that "denial of access to health facilities" violated the obligation of states to respect the right to health.[557] Prohibiting access to medical care because of participation in anti-government demonstrations would also violate the covenant's prohibition against discrimination on the basis of political opinion.[558]

Authorities who deny individuals emergency medical assistance may be violating their rights to life and to be protected from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[559]

---

[555] Maina Kai, Special Rapporteur for freedom of peaceful assembly and association, "Best practices that promote and protect the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association," United Nations A/HRC/20/27, October 29, 2013.

[556] ICESCR, art.12.

[557] UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, "Substantive issues arising in the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," General Comment No. 14, The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health, E/C.12/2000/4 (2000), para. 50, http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/40d009901358b0e2c1256915005090be?Opendocument (accessed October 1, 2011).

[558] ICESCR, art. 2(2); see also, UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment 14, para. 12(b).

[559] ICCPR, arts. 6 and 7.

Consistent with the covenant, the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms provide that even in circumstances in which the use of force and firearms is lawful and unavoidable, "law enforcement officials shall…ensure that assistance and medical aid are rendered to any injured or affected persons at the earliest possible moment."[560]

Egyptian Law on the Use of Force and Firearms

Interior Ministry regulations and the police law grant the police overly broad discretion in the use of live gunfire during the policing of demonstrations. The use of force is regulated by Article 102 of the 1971 Police Law No. 109, which reads:

> Article 102: Police officers may use necessary force to perform their duties if this is the only means available. The use of firearms is restricted to the following:
>
> > First, the arrest of:
> > > All those sentenced to imprisonment for more than three months if they resist or try to escape; and
> > > All those accused of a crime or against whom an arrest warrant has been issued if they resist or try to escape.
> >
> > Secondly: for the protection of prisoners as stipulated in the prisons law.
> >
> > Thirdly: to disperse crowds or demonstrations of at least five people if this threatens public security after issuing a warning to demonstrators to disperse. The order to use firearms shall be issued by a commander who must be obeyed.
>
> In all three circumstances, the use of the firearm must be the only means of achieving the stated aims. The policeman must start by warning that he is about to fire and may then resort to the use of the firearm. The minister of interior shall determine the regulations that shall be followed and how to issue the warning and use the firearm.[561]

---

[560] Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, 27 August to 7 September 1990, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.144/28/Rev.1 at 112 (1990), principles 5(c) and 8.

[561] Article 102 of the 1971 Police Law No. 109.

This provision provides overly broad powers to police to use firearms that go beyond what international law permits.

In contrast to the Basic Principles, the Egyptian code allows the use of firearms beyond the narrow limits of self-defense and defense of others; for example, it permits the police to fire on "crowds" of more than five people if they "threaten [sic] public security," a much broader standard than is allowed under international law, which requires a "particularly serious crime involving grave threat to life."

Interior Ministry decree 139 of 1955 on Public Gatherings and Demonstrations in Public Thoroughfares requires that the authorities audibly warn persons who have gathered, specifying a reasonable time to disperse from the scene and directions and roads to be used to leave.[562] The decree states that if those who have gathered to do not disperse, a second warning "has to be given" which warns that the security forces may use teargas and truncheons to implement the order to disperse.[563] However, this regulation itself appears to be at variance with international law enforcement standards by also authorizing the use of light firearms "aimed at the legs" if the crowd "refuses to disperse."[564]

Interior Ministry Decree 156 of 1964 on the Use of Firearms, which is supported by Interior Ministry Decree 286 of 1972, states that firearms must be used only as necessary to disperse those assembled and only if this is the only means, after exhausting all other methods. It also states that the police must aim at the legs.[565]

In November 2013, President Mansour issued an assembly law, Law 107 of 2013, which contained provisions pertaining to the use of force to disperse demonstrations.[566] These regulations, though, were not governing law during the period of focus of this report, July-August 2013.

---

[562] Ministerial Order 193/1955, article 2, para. 3, *Egyptian Official Gazette,* June 6, 1955, issue number 44.

[563] Ibid.

[564] Ibid.

[565] Ministerial Order 156/1964, *Egyptian Official Gazette,* March 29, 1964, issue number 72.

[566] "Egypt: Deeply Restrictive New Assembly Law," Human Rights Watch news release, November 26, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/11/26/egypt-deeply-restrictive-new-assembly-law.

V. Authorities' Response: Denial and Impunity

Instead of investigating potential violations, the government has refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing on the part of security services in their attacks on protesters, or to publicly disclose almost any information on the dispersals. While the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR), Egypt's quasi-official human rights commission, released a report criticizing the excessive use of force by the police, and an official fact-finding commission has been set-up to investigate abuses, prosecutors have yet to credibly investigate or bring charges against any member of the security forces for their unlawful use of force in protests since July 3. Thus, one year after the dispersals, not a single police and army officer and other official has been held accountable for the systematic premeditated killings of largely peaceful protesters.

Denial of Wrongdoing

To date, the Egyptian authorities have yet to recognize any wrongdoing on the part of the police in the dispersal of the Rab'a or al-Nahda sit-ins on August 14 or the attacks on protesters before and after the dispersals. Instead, they repaved the streets at Rab'a Square, repainted the buildings damaged by the dispersal at Rab'a, and erected a monument to honor the police and army.[567]

One year after the dispersals, not a single police and army officer and other official has been held accountable for the intentional use of excessive lethal force.

In the August 14 press conference the evening of the dispersal, Interior Minister Ibrahim said that the police had acted "with professionalism and without losses."[568] Government officials repeated this narrative. Then-Prime Minister al-Beblawy, who in October 2011 had resigned his post as deputy prime minister and minister of finance in the cabinet of then-Prime Minster Essam Sharaf after the military killed 27 demonstrators at Maspero, said:

---

[567] Kareem Fahim and May al-Sheikh, "Memory of a mass killing becomes another casualty of Egyptian protests," *New York Times*, November 13, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/14/world/middleeast/memory-egypt-mass-killing.html?_r=1& (accessed December 8, 2013); Kristin Chick, "Egyptian authorities pave over Rab'a massacre," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 14, 2013, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2013/1114/Egyptian-authorities-pave-over-Rab'a-massacre (accessed December 8, 2013).

[568] "Minister of Interior press conference," video press conference, *RadarMasr Tube*, August 14, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nySjd82JxyY (accessed July 23, 2014).

> There is a big difference [between Rab'a and Maspero] because at the time the security situation in the country was stable, and there was a demonstration and the response of the police or the army is what created this situation. But in Rab'a al-Adawiya, the government wanted to impose security and was not the reason for the killing. In the events of Maspero, two hours earlier the security situation was stable. There was an overwhelmingly peaceful demonstration by Coptic citizens, and they never lifted a weapon; there was a violent response which led to insecurity. As for Rab'a, the government intervened to restore security to citizens all across the country. Citizens started to ask how the government can provide security when it can't disperse the demonstration. So the government intervened to restore security.[569]

On August 14, Assistant Interior Minister for Media and Public Relations Abdel Fattah Othman announced that security forces had not used live ammunition on protesters.[570] The Interior Ministry, though, modified its account in February 2014, telling the *Global Post* that they had opened fire on protesters, but on a "limited scale" and "only against those carrying automatic weapons."[571] The Interior Ministry itself, though, has only claimed it found nine automatic weapons at the Rab'a sit-in.[572]

Interior Ministry officials regularly downplayed the casualty figures, claiming it was "normal" to have killed hundreds of people, such as in an August 31 interview with Interior Minister Ibrahim, who stated that non-existent "international standards set a 10 percent loss rate of those protesting."[573]

---

[569] "Yasser Rizk and Mansour Kamel, "Dr. Hazem Beblawy in an interview with Al-Masry al-Youm–the emergency law is the 'least of evils' and will likely be extended for two months," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, September 11, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=396463&IssueID=2985 (accessed August 5, 2014).

[570] Yousry al-Badry, "Interior Ministry: We did not fire live ammunition and only used teargas…6 killed and 66 injured," *Al-Masry al-Youm*, August 15, 2013, http://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=393448 (accessed July 21, 2014).

[571] Louisa Loveluck, "What really happened on the day more than 900 people died in Egypt," February 26, 2014, http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/140221/what-happened-Rab'a-square, (accessed July 25, 2014).

[572] "Minister of Interior press conference," video press conference, *RadarMasr Tube*, August 14, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nySjd82JxyY (accessed July 25, 2014).

[573] "Khairy Ramadan, Huna al-'Asema: Full interview with Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim (CBC)," video clip, YouTube, August 31, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5OEFoyrif8 (accessed July 21, 2014).

These claims have been accompanied and to a great extent empowered by a consistent narrative across Egyptian state and private media that demonized the Brotherhood and held all members collectively responsible for any individual incidents of violence and killing by demonstrators.

The Egyptian government has been keen to control the narrative outside of Egypt, in particular since foreign correspondents reporting on the ground were presenting an alternative narrative to that of the authorities. Officials launched a campaign accusing foreign media of biased coverage and offering their own narrative; they blamed pro-Morsy demonstrators and Muslim Brotherhood members for the violence, calling them terrorists and Islamic radicals, and praised the security forces for what they falsely characterized as their adequate and measured response. On August 17, Egypt's State Information Service (SIS) released a statement criticizing some foreign correspondents for "steer[ing] away from objectivity and neutrality." The statement listed examples of the protesters' use of violence, and emphasized that Egyptian "policemen, in cooperation with the Armed Forces men and through popular assistance, managed to carry out all missions assigned to them and were able to control the security situation in face of the terrorist attempts by the Muslim Brotherhood."[574]

On August 18, then-Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy held a press conference where journalists were handed a packet titled "Egypt Fighting Terrorism: 14th - 16th August."[575] The packet contained images of what it claimed to be Muslim Brotherhood supporters carrying semi-automatic weapons, waving an "official Al-Qaeda flag," attacking police vehicles, and killing policemen. The packet provided no details regarding the origin of the photos and videos or any process by which they had been authenticated. At the press conference, the foreign minister stressed that the events in Egypt were not a political disagreement between two sides but a "war with terrorism ... and Egypt will defend its sovereignty."[576] Through the Egyptian embassy in Washington D.C., the military distributed a 36-minute video to US government officials and journalists. The video, recorded in English, claimed that the sit-ins were camps for "militants in training," and showed footage of people destroying property

---

[574] Email communication from State Information Service on current affairs to Human Rights Watch, August 17, 2013.

[575] Foreign Ministry of Egypt, "*Egypt Fighting Terrorism*", Power point presentation, August 14-16, 2014, https://docs.google.com/file/d/17wEKimdMwQevECDhjP33r9Drl7iHY7aQ8nJr5tVc-odDg4TcFOs48sWpq9QS/edit?pli=1 (accessed July 25, 2014).

[576] "Egyptian foreign minister Nabil Fahmy presser about the Egyptian crisis," video clip, Youtube, August 18, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQJ59uMrZwk (accessed July 18, 2014).

and shooting at buildings.[577] In an August 15 news conference in London, Egypt's ambassador to the UK Ashraf al-Kholy said that the protesters had "got what they wanted, they showed they were the victims" and that they had shot one another.[578]

On April 29, 2014, the Interior Ministry invited foreign correspondents in Cairo to a dinner to discuss Egypt's "War on Terror," where it distributed videos of violence by Brotherhood supporters during the Rab'a dispersal.[579] Furthermore on June 23, 2014, an Egyptian court sentenced three Al Jazeera English journalists to multi-year sentences on charges that include editing content to falsely "give the appearance that Egypt is in a civil war," and membership and support for a "terrorist organization" based largely on the content of their news coverage, which has been relatively more critical of the Egyptian government over the last year.[580]

Failure to Provide Information on the Dispersal

Witnesses to the August 14 dispersals told Human Rights Watch that they saw security forces video recording many aspects of the dispersals, including from helicopters and from on top of governmental buildings in Nasr City.[581] Human Rights Watch reviewed video footage and photographers it obtained from demonstrators showing police and army helicopters video recording the dispersal from above.[582] Bahaa al-Sherif of CSF told the newspaper *Al-Shorouk* on August 19, 2013 that the CSF had recorded at least some of what took place during the dispersal.[583]

---

[577] Jay Newton-Small, "Egypt's military defends public image abroad after fighting protests at home", August 20, 2013, http://world.time.com/2013/08/20/egypts-military-defends-public-image-abroad-after-fighting-protests-at-home/ (accessed July 25, 2014); Joshua Hersh, "Egyptian government slams foreign press as journalists come under assault," August 18, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/18/egypt-foreign-press_n_3775634.html (accessed July 25, 2014); Foreign Ministry of Egypt, "*Egypt Fighting Terrorism,"* Power point presentation, August 14-16, 2014, https://docs.google.com/file/d/17wEKimdMwQevECDhjP33r9Drl7iHY7aQ8nJr5tVc-odDg4TcFOs48sWpq9QS/edit?pli=1 (accessed July 25, 2014).

[578] "Egypt's UK Envoy said protesters got what they wanted," *Reuters,* August 15, 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/15/us-egypt-protests-britain-idUSBRE97E11I20130815 (accessed November 29, 2013).

[579] Patrick Kingsley, *Twitter*, https://twitter.com/PatrickKingsley (accessed July 24, 2014).

[580] "Egypt: Jazeera Convictions Miscarriage of Justice," Human Rights Watch press release, June 23, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/23/egypt-jazeera-convictions-miscarriage-justice.

[581] Human Rights Watch interview with witnesses (names withheld), Cairo, January 28, and February 2, 2014.

[582] Photographs and video on file with Human Rights Watch.

[583]Mamdouh Hassan, "Dispersal of Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda…a 'clean operation in the eyes of the Central Security Forces'," *Al-Shorouk,* http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=19082013&id=9feff768-de2d-47d8-a083-40ff93bef780 (accessed July 23, 2014).

However, the Interior Ministry has not released these videos, instead only selectively releasing videos of protester violence and of the "safe exit" it permitted protesters at the very end of the dispersal to bolster its narrative. Police and military cordoned off Rab'a Square and its entrances on August 15 and 16 and prevented outsiders from entering, providing themselves with full control over physical evidence.[584]

The Interior Ministry also did not cooperate with the quasi-governmental NCHR. The NCHR's Nasser Amin criticized the Interior Ministry for its failure to cooperate, saying in an interview on a private Egyptian television channel on March 6:

> We didn't deal with the Interior Ministry as a referee, but rather as a party to the conflict. When investigating such events, the parties to the conflict always prefer to hide the information or present insufficient information… the difficulty is sending researchers to investigate with parties whose main aim is to hide the truth.585

The head of the June 30 fact-finding committee has described government cooperation during their investigations into rights abuses as "uneven."[586]

Human Rights Watch wrote to the Interior Ministry, Office of the Public Prosecutor, Defense Ministry, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 12, 2014 in an effort to engage the Egyptian government and understand their perspectives on the issues covered in this report.[587] The letters laid out preliminary findings and requested answers to detailed questions and information not available to Human Rights Watch, including details on officers killed by

---

[584] Middle East News Agency, "Military forces block all entrances leading to Rab'a Square," *Al-Shorouk*, August 17, 2013, http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=17082013&id=30248879-dd70-4131-be7f-8a54cf3c99b7 (accessed July 25, 2014).

[585] "The full picture: The National Council for Human Rights' report on dispersing the Rab'a sit-in-- between neutrality and bias." video clip, Youtube, March 6, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14MYosT6SMo (accessed July 28, 2014).

[586] "Fact-Finding commission sends report to president and hears from Abdel Quddous on Rab'a al-Adawiya Events," *Ahram Online*, July 16, 2014, http://gate.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/13/70/515754/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A/%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B5%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%82-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%84-%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82.aspx (accessed July 29, 2014).

[587] See Appendix.

armed demonstrators or instructions given to security forces regarding the use of live ammunition. Human Rights Watch sent follow-up letters on July 8, 2014. While Foreign Ministry officials responded by indicating they were in touch with other ministries regarding Human Rights Watch's request, as of August 1, 2014, Human Rights Watch had not received responses to its questions.

Fact-Finding Commission

The presidency's initial response to the killing of protesters outside the Republican Guard headquarters on July 8, at a time when Vice President Mohamed al-Baradei was still in office, stands in stark contrast to subsequent responses. In a press release issued at 2 p.m. on July 8 by the state news agency MENA, the presidency expressed "its deep sorrow at the killing of Egyptian citizens," called on "all sides to exercise restraint" and stressed that "the right to freedom of assembly is guaranteed to everyone and shall be protected by the state with all of its different agencies and without discrimination."[588] The statement went on to say that President Mansour had ordered the establishment of a "judicial panel to look into the events of the incident and to investigate it and make the results public."[589] Apart from that initial announcement, the authorities took no steps to constitute this committee and made no further information available about its composition and powers.

On September 17, 2013, the cabinet website announced that the latest cabinet meeting had agreed to establish a fact-finding committee to look into the "events that have occurred since June 30."[590] In December 2013, President Mansour issued presidential decree 698/2013 establishing a "national independent fact-finding commission to gather information and evidence that accompanied the June 30, 2013 revolution and its repercussions." The decree granted the commission, headed by judge Fouad Abdel Moneim Riyad, six months to conduct its work and present its final report and

---

[588] "The president forms a judicial committee to investigate the Republican Guard headquarters events," video clip, Youtube, July 8, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flOWaY2i8WM (accessed July 25, 2014).

[589] Middle East News Agency, "The President establishes a judicial committee to investigate the Republican Guard events," *EgyNews*, August 7, 2013, http://www.egynews.net/wps/portal/news?params=241916 (accessed November 26, 2013).

[590] "Cabinet of Ministers Official Facebook Page," Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/Egyptian.Cabinet.Of.Ministers?hc_location=timeline (accessed November 26, 2013)

recommendations to the president no later than June 2014. President Mansour in May extended the deadline for submission of its final report from June to September 2014.[591]

While civil society had requested the formation of such a fact-finding commission, the commission has thus far operated with little transparency.[592] While it has called on individuals and organizations to come forward with evidence and members have met with Human Rights Watch and other civil society organizations, it has largely operated outside the public eye.[593] Given the polarization in Egypt, it should have more transparently engaged with a fuller cross section of civil society and actively sought victim participation, including by allaying legitimate doubts about its independence, articulating the need for a public accounting of the crimes that took place, and providing assurances of victim confidentiality.

The government decree establishing the commission does not specify that its findings and recommendations will be made public.[594] Members of the commission, though, told Human Rights Watch that they intend to recommend that the president makes its final report public.[595] The findings and recommendations of the two previous national fact-finding commissions created in 2011 and 2012 were not made public, which has contributed to Egypt's lack of progress in recent years towards transitional justice, reconciliation and accountability.[596]

---

591 Al-Masry al-Youm, "Interim president extends deadline of June 30th fact-finding committee report", *Egypt Independent*, http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/interim-president-extends-deadline-30-june-fact-finding-committee-report (accessed on July 24, 2014).

592 "Egypt: No Acknowledgement or Justice for Mass Protester Killings", Human Rights Watch press release, December 10, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/10/egypt-no-acknowledgment-or-justice-mass-protester-killings.

593 "The June 30th fact-finding investigation calls on civil society to provide any information it might have," *EgyNews,* last modified July 5, 2014, http://www.egynews.net/wps/portal/news?params=301124 (accessed July 28, 2014); Human Rights Watch Meeting with members of the Fact-Finding Commission, Cairo, May 22, 2014.

594 Decree by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Official Bulletin, No 698 of 2013, http://eipr.org/sites/default/files/pressreleases/pdf/30junecommissiondecision.pdf (accessed July 30, 2014).

595 Human Rights Watch meeting with members of the post-June 30th fact-finding commission, Cairo, May 22, 2014.

596 Reports by previous fact-finding commissions, even though not public, have been used in criminal investigations. In May 2013, the public prosecutor submitted an additional evidence brief in the retrial of Mubarak and Habib al-Adly, a former interior minister, based on the supplementary investigations it conducted after it received the report of the Morsy-appointed fact-finding commission. This additional brief identified evidence that the police used lethal force in January 2011 against peaceful protesters and that the Interior Ministry subsequently tampered with ammunition log-books to conceal this. The trials of Mubarak and al-Adly, though, continue. "Egypt: No Acknowledgement or Justice for Mass Protester Killings", Human Rights Watch press release, December 10, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/10/egypt-no-acknowledgment-or-justice-mass-protester-killings.

The decree only authorizes the commission to request the assistance of government officials and non-governmental organizations. While the decree declares that "all state institutions and specialized forces should cooperate with the committee and give it all the needed information, documents, and proofs that have to do with the work the committee is doing," it contains no requirement that they do so, much less an enforcement mechanism.[597] Without the authority to compel witnesses to testify, including former and incumbent state officials, irrespective of their official capacity, and powers of subpoena, search and seizure, the commission is unlikely to obtain access to all the information it needs to conduct a proper investigation. According to the state-run *Al-Ahram* newspaper, commission head Riyad called for further cooperation from the state in a July 2014 procedural report submitted to President al-Sisi, describing cooperation during the commission's first seven months as "uneven."[598]

National Council for Human Rights (NCHR)

The National Council for Human Rights (NCHR), Egypt's government-appointed national human rights commission, announced on September 20 that it had set up four fact-finding teams to produce reports about the events of August 14: the killings during the dispersal of the sit-ins, the attacks on police stations and killing of police officers in Cairo and in Minya, and the attacks on churches in at least eight governorates across Egypt.[599]

The NCHR released its report on the Rab'a dispersal on March 16, 2014. Although based on limited access to evidence and information from officials, the report concluded that security forces used excessive force in the Rab'a dispersal, killing more than 600 protesters. It

---

[597] Decree by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Official Bulletin, No 698 of 2013, http://eipr.org/sites/default/files/pressreleases/pdf/30junecommissiondecision.pdf (accessed July 30, 2014).

[598] "Fact-Finding commission sends report to president and hears from Abdel Quddous on Rab'a al-Adawiya events," *Ahram Online*, July 16, 2014, http://gate.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/13/70/515754/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A/%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B5%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%82-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%84-%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82.aspx (accessed July 29, 2014).

[599] Emad Hijab, "Four committees within the fact-finding commission for major incidents of violence," [n.d], http://www.ahram.org.eg/News/949/60/232979/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A/%E2%80%8F-%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B5%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%82-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A.aspx (accessed July 28, 2014).

further documented the failure of security forces to provide a safe exit for much of the day and highlighted the insufficiency of warnings given to protesters. It called for the opening of a full, independent, judicial inquiry into the dispersal, noted the need to hold perpetrators to account, and recommended that the government provide victims with compensation.[600]

However, significant methodological weaknesses undermined the committee's report. Most significantly, committee members failed to speak with a meaningful number of participants of the sit-in themselves, the primary witnesses and victims to the day's events. While NCHR have said they attempted to reach out to the Muslim Brotherhood and allied groups, NCHR member and lead author of the Rab'a report Nasser Amin has said that the groups refused to cooperate in the midst of the government's brutal crackdown against them.[601] As a result, the NCHR not only failed to obtain testimony from protesters and victims, but also video footage, pictures, and physical evidence in their possession.

Instead, the body relied significantly on surveys and testimonials of local residents and shop owners, groups largely antipathetic to the Brotherhood given the disruption the sit-ins had on their everyday lives. The NCHR also obtained extremely little of the information it requested from the Interior Ministry, since it had no authority to access documents or to summon security officers for questioning. The NCHR also did not start its investigation until weeks after the dispersal when they decided to look into post June 30 violence, inhibiting investigators from seeing things firsthand or obtaining physical evidence.[602] One prominent committee member resigned in protest over what he felt was an unnecessary rush to release the findings, which he felt was not based on solid documentation.[603]

---

[600] National Council for Human Rights (NCHR, Cairo),"Report of the fact-finding committee on the events of the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in," March 2013, http://www.scribd.com/doc/212842013/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B3-2014 (accessed July 25, 2014).

[601] Human Rights Watch interview with Nasser Amin, Cairo, May 24, 2014.

[602] "The full picture: The National Council for Human Rights' report on dispersing the Rab'a sit-in–between neutrality and bias." video clip, Youtube, March 6, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14MYosT6SMo (accessed July 28, 2014).

[603] "Hafez Abu Saeda: National Council for Human Rights report on the Rab'a dispersal is 'not based on any sources'… and members of the council 'put a knife to my neck,'" *Al-Shorouk*, March 6, 2014, http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=06032014&id=f28895ab-36a4-40a2-bb2b-73a70e401011 (accessed July 29, 2014).

These serious methodological shortcomings undermine the NCHR's findings in several ways. In particular, the report:

(1) failed to note the deep insufficiency of the warning issued by security forces at the Rab'a dispersal. The report discussed a 25-minute warning before security forces began the dispersal and said shooting did not begin until 6:45 a.m., but dozens of witnesses told Human Rights Watch that there was no such prolonged warning and that shooting began at least 15 minutes earlier. Two doctors interviewed separately who were volunteering at the field hospital told Human Rights Watch on the day of the dispersal that they received their first injuries from live ammunition around 6:30 a.m. The vast majority of protesters interviewed by Human Rights Watch said they did not hear the warning in advance. Many of those who did hear it noted that firing began minutes, in some cases simultaneous, to the warning;[604]
(2) did not mention the presence of snipers firing at protesters from on top of surrounding government buildings;
(3) did not lay sufficient responsibility with the Interior Ministry for the failure to provide safe exits and to allow ambulances to enter the square, instead blaming "clashes;"
(4) undercounted causalities, relying only on official documentation and ignoring compelling evidence of additional uncounted bodies in Iman Mosque and in hospitals across Cairo, among other places;
(5) overlooked the involvement of the army, which secured the perimeter of the sit-in in order to allow police forces to advance, operated helicopters hovering above Rab'a Square and bulldozers which led the advance into the center of the square, and allowed snipers to use an army base adjacent to eastern Nasr Street to fire on protesters;
(6) overstated protester violence, relying on videos selectively released by the Interior Ministry;
(7) gave disproportionate attention to protester abuses in the sit-ins, which paled in comparison to the significant violations committed by security forces during the dispersal;
(8) did not investigate particular acts of individual misconduct during the dispersal, including the beatings, torture, and even execution of some detainees; and

[604] See Section II: The Dispersals at Rab'a al-Adawiya and al-Nahda Squares

(9) accepted the government's argument regarding the need to forcefully disperse the sit-ins and failed to critically investigate government planning for the sit-in and whether there was a policy to kill thousands of demonstrators.

The Need for Accountability

To date, both civilian and military prosecutors have failed to hold police and army officers and other officials accountable for the unlawful killing of demonstrators. On March 19, 2014, President Mansour requested the Justice Ministry to open a judicial investigation into the Rab'a dispersal, but the Justice Ministry promptly announced that it would not investigate these events, according to the official news agency, claiming investigations fall under the prerogative of the public prosecutor.[605] One Egyptian newspaper reported that prosecutors have begun investigating these events.[606] Lawyers for victims, some of whom have requested prosecutors indict senior officials for their roles in the killings, told Human Rights Watch that they are not aware of prosecutors having summoned any police or military officers to investigate their role in the killings.[607]

The public prosecutor should open an impartial and credible investigation into allegations of unlawful killings by security forces, while ensuring that sensitive information is not tampered with and that the officials suspected of wrongdoing are suspended of their duties for the duration of the investigation.

International Response

While many governments publicly criticized the mass killings in Egypt, some states have continued to provide military support to Egypt and failed to use their leverage to pressure Egypt to end its abuses and impunity for serious violations of international law.

In the aftermath of the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals in August 2013, the European Union suspended the export of military equipment to Egypt in August 2013, but left in place flexibility that permits individual states to continue supplying arms and other equipment

---

[605] Noha Ashur, "Forensic Medical Authority: Rab'a death toll reaches 377, including 11 burned after death," November 14, 2014, *Al-Shorouk,* http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=14112013&id=31c5d60f-f4b8-4b2e-8757-990b53453a9e, (accessed July 29, 2014).

[606] "Prosecution summons 100 victims and Interior Ministry leaders regarding the dispersal of the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in," April 13, 2014, *Al-Balad*, http://www.el-balad.com/900864 (accessed July 29, 2014).

[607] Human Rights Watch interview with lawyer (name withheld), Cairo, January. 21, 2014.

to the government.[608] EU High Representative Catherine Ashton provided only tempered criticism of Egypt. While on August 21, 2013 she used the word "disproportionate" to characterize the operations of Egyptian security forces over the previous week and called the "number of people who have been killed" "alarming,"[609] she has used even milder language since August and consistently failed to raise the importance of accountability for serious abuses.[610] A July 17, 2014 European Parliament resolution, though, called for an "EU-ban on the export to Egypt of intrusion and surveillance technologies which could be used to spy on and repress citizens, and for a ban, in line with the Wassenaar Arrangement, on the export of security equipment or military aid to suppress peaceful protest."[611]

Similarly, in October 2013, the United States suspended a portion of its military aid, pending Egypt meeting particular benchmarks around rights and democratic development. The aid suspension, though, specifically exempted counter-terrorism cooperation. In April 2014, the US announced its intention to release 10 Apache helicopters and $650 million in military aid.[612] A bulk of the aid has since been released.[613] In April 2014, when Egypt's Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy visited Washington, US Secretary Kerry's public remarks failed to make any note of the mass killings of July and August 2013.[614]

The African Union's Peace and Security Council suspended Egypt from all activities on July 5, 2013 following Morsy's ouster, calling for an immediate return to the "constitutional order."[615] On June 17, 2014, however, the same body unanimously decided to unfreeze

---

[608] James Fontanella-Khan, "EU to suspend export of military equipment to Egypt," *Financial Times*, http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/07c1eb5c-0a4b-11e3-9cec-00144feabdc0.html?siteedition=intl (accessed July 29, 2013).

[609] "Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the extraordinary meeting of Foreign Affairs Council on Egypt", http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/138604.pdf (accessed July 24, 2014).

[610] "Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the constitutional referendum in Egypt", January 19, 2014, http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140119_02_en.pdf (accessed July 30, 2014).

[611] "EU Parliament pushes for ban on exporting monitoring technology to Egypt", *Mada Masr*, July 17, 2014, http://www.madamasr.com/content/eu-parliament-pushes-ban-exporting-monitoring-technology-egypt (accessed July 24, 2014).

[612] "Readout of Secretary Kerry's call with Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmy", U.S Department of State, Press Statement, April 22, 2014, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/04/225074.htm (accessed July 24, 2014).

[613] "Comment of Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman, State Department and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, on aid to Egypt", Patrick Leahy United States Senator for Vermont, June 24, 2014, http://www.leahy.senate.gov/press/comment-of-senator-patrick-leahy-chairman-state-department-and-foreign-operations-subcommittee-on-aid-to-egypt- (accessed July 24, 2014).

[614] "Remarks with Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy before their Meeting", U.S Department of State, Remarks, April 29, 2014, http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/04/225348.htm (accessed July 24, 2014).

[615] Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 384th meeting on the situation in the Arab Republic of Egypt", July 5, 2013, http://au.int/en/content/communiqu%C3%A9-peace-and-security-council-african-union-au-its-384th-meeting.

Egypt's membership in the body.[616] A report written by the African Union's High Level Panel on Egypt highlighted the restoration of the "constitutional order" and progress towards the "full implementation of the roadmap" as key factors behind the decision to lift the suspension.[617]

In March 2014, 27 states issued a joint declaration at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva expressing concern about Egypt's repeated use of excessive force against demonstrators and calling for accountability.[618] While the statement marked the first such action in this forum since the mass killings of July and August 2013, the statement failed to identify concrete actions states should take if Egypt continued to permit impunity for pervasive rights violations.

The response of the EU, US, UN, AU and other states and intergovernmental bodies falls far short of steps they have taken in similar contexts. The EU continues to maintain, for example, an arms embargo against China in part as a result of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.[619] The EU went further in the aftermath of the 2005 Andijian Massacre, imposing targeted sanctions, including visa bans and asset freezes, against 12 Uzbeki persons, including a sitting minister.[620]

---

[616] "Egypt's membership to the African Union - suspended after the overthrow of president Mohamed Morsy last year–has been unfrozen by council", *Ahram Online*, June 17, 2014, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/103986/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-regains-membership-in-African-Union.aspx (accessed July 24, 2014).

[617] "AU Panel commends Egypt's restoration of "constitutional order", *Daily News Egypt*, June 19, 2014, http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/06/19/au-panel-commends-egypts-restoration-constitutional-order/ (accessed July 23, 2014).

[618] "Denmark and 26 other countries addresses human rights situation in Egypt at HRC25", Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva", Joint Statement, item 2, July 3, 2014, http://fngeneve.um.dk/en/news/newsdisplaypage/?newsID=EB280696-2F4F-427A-A721-5963916F2CB2 (accessed on July 24, 2014).

[619] "Embargoes and sanctions on China", September 10, 2012, https://www.gov.uk/arms-embargo-on-china (accessed July 27, 2014).

[620] Human Rights Watch, *Saving its Secrets*, May 12, 2008, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/uzbekistan0508/4.html.

VI. Recommendations

To the Egyptian Government

- Order security forces to end unlawful, excessive use of force and to act in accordance with international human rights law and standards on the use of force, in policing demonstrations.
- Immediately suspend from duty and promptly investigate the officials believed to be most responsible for the crimes committed in July-August 2013, including the officials named in this report.
- Amend Presidential Decree 698/2013 to grant the post-June 30 fact-finding commission the authority to compel witnesses to testify, including former and incumbent state officials and security forces, irrespective of their official capacity, and powers of subpoena, search and seizure, all subject to judicial review.
- Make public the findings and recommendations of the post-June 30 fact-finding commission, in addition to the findings and recommendations of 2011 and 2012 fact-finding commissions.
- Provide prompt, fair, and adequate compensation to victims' families for deaths or injuries caused by security forces as required by article 9(5) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Provide assistance to families who suffered injury or property loss due to the demonstrations and government crackdown.
- Thoroughly reform the Central Security Forces (CSF) with the aim to create professional forces trained in overseeing demonstrations, crowd control, and responding to sporadic violence. As part of this process, the president should review legislation regarding the use of force and firearms by the police and orders and rules of engagement that Interior Ministry and military officials give security forces at the street level and ensure they comport with international standards and national best practices, including by integrating concepts of necessity and proportionality into the Police Act and complementary degree and restricting the use of lethal force to situations where this is a grave threat to life or a threat of a serious injury.
- Publicly order security forces to follow the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, which state that security forces shall "apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms," and that "whenever the lawful use of force and firearms is unavoidable, law enforcement

officials shall: (a) Exercise restraint in such use and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate objective to be achieved; (b) Minimize damage and injury, and respect and preserve human life."

- Set up a committee independent of the executive to oversee security sector reform and to design oversight mechanisms and the strengthening of transparency and internal accountability measures within both the Interior and Defense Ministries.
- Amend Law 107 of 2013 restricting freedom of assembly to bring it in line with international standards on freedom of assembly and association, in particular abolishing provisions that give the Interior Ministry wide latitude to ban protests and forcibly disperse or arrest protesters.
- Allow and swiftly set dates for the visits of the following United Nations Special Mechanisms who have pending requests access to Egypt to investigate and report on abuses related to their respective mandates: Special Rapporteur on freedom of association and assembly, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, Special Rapporteur on torture, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Special Rapporteur on promotion of truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence, Special Rapporteur on independence of judges and lawyers, Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and Working Group on Enforced Disappearances.

To the Interior and Defense Ministries

- Cooperate fully with the fact-finding commission and any criminal investigations, and preserve and disclose as requested all potential evidence of serious human rights violations, including video recordings taken during the August 14 sit-in dispersals, in the possession of security agencies.
- Discipline commanding officers who knew, or who should have known, about such acts, and failed to act to prevent and punish them, even if such conduct falls short of criminal liability.
- Amend Interior Ministry disciplinary proceedings to suspend any security official while they are under investigation for ordering, carrying out, or acquiescing to acts of serious human rights abuses. Ensure their dismissal if convicted.
- Inform victims and their families about the outcome of internal investigations and disciplinary measures, and make this information public to show the ministry will not tolerate abuse.

- Amend the Interior Ministry Decree 156/1964, which permits the use of live ammunition to disperse demonstrations, to comply with international policing standards that require police to use lethal force only to the extent strictly necessary to protect their lives or the lives of others.

To the Public Prosecutor

- Thoroughly and impartially investigate the unlawful use of force by security forces for protester killings since June 30, 2013.
- Prosecute members of the security forces against whom there is evidence of criminal responsibility for those crimes, including those in the chain of command, ensuring that all perpetrators of serious human rights abuses are brought to justice regardless of rank or political affiliation.
- Review the findings of the official post-June 30 fact-finding commission, when and if they are completed, and incorporate any such evidence it has compiled into the criminal investigations.
- Order security agencies to cooperate fully and prosecute any security officials who fail to do so, including by failing to deliver evidence or testify.
- Ensure that investigations and prosecutions of military officials in conjunction with the mass killings of protesters are conducted by a civilian judiciary, independent institutionally and practically from the military chain of command.
- Ensure that every investigation is conducted promptly and impartially; introduce regulatory timeframes for providing evidence; and ensure that prosecutors investigate all those responsible, including superiors.
- Follow international best practices when collecting evidence by keeping a detailed record of chain of custody so that the integrity of the evidence is preserved.
- Establish a witness protection unit that will take measures to adequately protect witnesses and victims' families from intimidation, threat, or violence during and after the investigation and trial.
- Establish victims lists particular to the investigation of each incident from the beginning in order to ensure wide victim participation in the proceedings.
- Immediately release any remaining people detained without charge following demonstrations in July and August 2013, or immediately charge them with specific criminal offences followed within a reasonable timeframe by a fair trial. Drop charges

against all those detained solely for exercising their rights to free expression, association, and peaceful assembly.

To the Post-June 30 Fact-Finding Commission

- Review and take the findings of this report into consideration during your investigation.
- Ensure investigation is conducted independently, transparently, and impartially.
- Engage with the full cross section of civil society and actively seek victim participation, including by allaying doubts about the commission's independence, articulating the need for a public accounting of the crimes that took place, and providing assurances of victim confidentiality and protection.
- Make findings public and share them with judicial authorities and any victim who suffered harm as a direct result of a human rights violation.
- Collect information from a variety of sources, including public archives, medical and morgue records, reports by human rights organizations and previous fact-finding commissions, including the fact-finding commission established by deposed President Morsy in June 2012.
- Explore the responsibility of senior officials in the chain of command, including for the formulation and execution of the plan to disperse the Rab'a and Nahda sit-ins.
- Develop recommendations for legal and institutional reforms aimed at ensuring that the human rights violations of the past will not repeat, including reforming security institutions and amending national legislation to bring it in line with international law and standards.
- Recommend the establishment of a vetting mechanism to ensure that all those found to be responsible for gross human rights violations and crimes under international law are removed from their duties.

To UN Member States

- Establish through the UN Human Rights Council an international commission of inquiry to investigate all human rights violations resulting from the mass killings of protesters since June 30, 2013. The inquiry should be mandated to establish the facts, identify those responsible with a view to ensuring that the perpetrators of violations are held accountable, as well as collect and conserve information related to abuses for future use by credible judicial institutions. Ensure that the mandate is sufficiently broad to

cover past and future acts and other human rights abuses committed by Egyptian security forces, as well as violence by protesters.

- Press Egyptian authorities to immediately set up a comprehensive independent, impartial, credible, and transparent investigation into the killings of protesters and other associated crimes since June 30, 2013 and hold those responsible accountable in accordance with international due process standards.
- Suspend all sales and provision of security-related items and assistance to Egypt until the government adopts measures to end serious human rights violations, such as those related to suppression of largely peaceful demonstrations, and to holding rights violators accountable.
- Under the principle of universal jurisdiction and in accordance with national laws, investigate and prosecute those implicated in serious crimes under international law committed in Egypt in July-August 2013.

To UN Security Council

- Recognize that these widespread and systematic violations of Egypt's obligations under international human rights law likely amount to crimes against humanity and demand that they be investigated and those responsible be held accountable.

To UN Human Rights Council

- Establish through the UN Human Rights Council an international commission of inquiry to investigate all human rights violations resulting from the mass killings of protesters since June 30, 2013. The inquiry should be mandated to establish the facts, identify those responsible with a view to ensuring that the perpetrators of violations are held accountable, as well as collect and conserve information related to abuses for future use by credible judicial institutions. Ensure that the mandate is sufficiently broad to cover past and future acts and other human rights abuses committed by Egyptian security forces, as well as violence by protesters.
- Remain seized of the situation as long as impunity for serious abuses and repression of dissent continues, including through regular briefings from Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights.

To the Arab League

- Strongly and publicly condemn and demand an end to human rights violations by the government of Egypt, along the lines of the League's response to the situations in Syria and Libya, demand accountability for abuse by security forces and, in the absence of such action, suspend Egypt from the Arab League.
- Support and collaborate with an international investigation into the events described in this report.

To the African Union

- Strongly and publicly condemn and demand an end to human rights violations by the government of Egypt and demand accountability for abuse by security forces.
- Support and collaborate with an international investigation into the events described in this report.
- Conduct through the African Commission on Human and People's Rights an inquiry into mass killings of protesters in Egypt since June 30, 2013.
- Task the following African Union Special Rapporteurs with investigating and reporting on abuses related to their respective mandates: Special Rapporteur on Extra-Judicial, Arbitrary, Summary and Arbitrary Executions, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression in Africa, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, and Special Rapporteur on Prisons and Conditions of Detention in Africa.

Acknowledgments

Omar Shakir, 2013-14 Arthur R. and Barbara D. Finberg Fellow at Human Rights Watch, researched and wrote this report. Dan Williams and Ole Solvang, researchers in Human Rights Watch's Emergencies Division, and Joe Stork, deputy director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa Division, among others, contributed research and writing. Joe Gabra assisted with setting up interviews and facilitating logistics during field missions in Egypt.

Brian Root, quantitative analyst, assisted with estimating the number of protesters in the Rab'a sit-in based on a review of aerial photos. Human Rights Watch's Arms Division reviewed video footage, photographic evidence, and references to weaponry.

Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa division, and Human Rights Watch's program division edited the report. Clive Baldwin, senior legal advisor at Human Rights Watch, provided legal review.
Pierre Bairin, Multimedia Director, oversaw multimedia production. Human Rights Watch's publications team prepared the report for publication.

Most importantly, we wish to thank the survivors, family members of those affected by the events, and witnesses, who courageously shared their stories with us at great risk to themselves.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIVISION

Sarah Leah Whitson, *Executive Director*
Eric Goldstein, *Deputy Director*
Nadim Houry, *Deputy Director*
Joe Stork, *Deputy Director*
Tamara Alrifai, *Advocacy and Communications Director*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kathleen Peratis, *Chair*
Asli Bali, *Officer*
Prince Moulay Hicham, *Officer*
Bruce Rabb, *Officer*
Gary G. Sick, *Officer*
Gamal M. Abouali
Salah Al Hejailan
Wajeha Al-Huwaider
Abdul-Ghani Al-Iryani
Ghanim Al-Najjar
Lisa Anderson
Shaul Bakhash
M. Cherif Bassioun
David Bernstein
Robert L. Bernstein
Nathan Brown
Paul Chevigny
Ahmad Deek
Hanaa Edwar
Bahey El Din Hassan
Hassan Elmasry
Mansour Farhang
Loubna Freih Georges
Aeyal Gross
Asos Hardi
Shawan Jabarin
Marina Pinto Kaufman
Youssef Khlat
Azza Kamel Maghur
Robert Malley
Ahmed Mansoor
Stephen P. Marks
Rolando Matalon
Habib Nassar
Abdelaziz Nouaydi
Nabeel Rajab
Vicki Riskin
Graham Robeson
Charles Shamas
Sid Sheinberg
Sussan Tahmasebi
Mustapha Tlili
Ferras Zalt

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director*
Michele Alexander, *Deputy Executive Director, Development and Global initiatives*
Carroll Bogert, *Deputy Executive Director, External Relations*
Jan Egeland, *Europe Director and Deputy Executive Director*
Iain Levine, *Deputy Executive Director, Program*
Chuck Lustig, *Deputy Executive Director, Operations*
Walid Ayoub, *Information Technology Director*
Emma Daly, *Communications Director*
Barbara Guglielmo, *Finance and Administration Director*
Peggy Hicks, *Global Advocacy Director*
Babatunde Olugboji, *Deputy Program Director*
Dinah PoKempner, *General Counsel*

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

www.hrw.org

Appendix I: Letter to Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy

June 12, 2014

His Excellency Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Foreign Ministry
Maspero and Korniche al-Nil Street, near the Egyptian Broadcasting and Television Building
Cairo, Egypt

Your Excellency,

I am writing to request your assistance in engaging the relevant agencies in the Egyptian government in our ongoing research into last summer's clashes between security forces and protesters in Egypt, including the August 14 dispersals of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins.

Human Rights Watch has spent the last year investigating the use of force by the police and army against demonstrators. Our team of researchers has conducted on-site investigations at many of the protest sites, in some cases while clashes were underway, interviewed over 200 witnesses, including protesters, doctors, journalists, and local residents, reviewed hours of video footage and physical evidence, and studied statements by Egyptian officials.

Our preliminary findings indicate that the police and army used excessive force and, in some cases, carried out indiscriminate and deliberate attacks on protesters in at least six incidents: the July 5 afternoon shootings in front of the Republican Guard headquarters, the July 8 early morning shootings near the Guard headquarters, the July 27 late evening clashes near the Manassa Memorial, the August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, and the August 16 clashes around Ramses Square. Our evidence indicates that a small number of protesters carried and used firearms at some demonstrations, but that the vast majority of demonstrators were unarmed and that the killings were grossly disproportionate, resulting in likely over 1000 protester deaths. We further conclude that not a single police or army officer has been held to account for their role in these events.

With regards to the Rab'a dispersal in particular, our research shows that security forces failed to sufficiently warn demonstrators before the dispersal began and to provide a 'safe exit' until the end of the

day, long after the commencement of the violent dispersal, including for injured protesters in need of urgent medical attention. We have also found that police set fire to structures throughout the square, including makeshifts hospitals and the Rab'a Medical Center, and beat and detained hundreds. Numerous government statements indicate that the interim government proceeded with a dispersal plan, which security forces adhered to on August 14, with the knowledge that it would likely result in the killing of several thousand protesters. We are currently preparing a report that presents our findings, similar to the report released by the National Council on Human Rights in March 2014, which we plan to release in Cairo.

As part of our efforts to ensure we engage with all stakeholders, we would like to request your assistance in speaking with select government officials to better understand their perspectives on the issues addressed in our research. We have detailed questions to them regarding our preliminary findings, as well as requests for information that may not have been available to us, such as information on officers killed by armed protesters, or instructions given to security forces not to use live ammunition. It is critical for us to obtain from them as much information and evidence that they may have about the use of force by security forces at these demonstrations and the government's efforts and plans to avoid loss of life to revise our preliminary findings as may be necessary and to ensure that our final report is comprehensive, accurate, and fair. We think it is important to note that where government sources have provided us with such critical information, our final reports have in fact concluded that security forces did not use excessive force against demonstrators, or that claims by demonstrators of excessive force against peaceful protesters were exaggerated or false.

I have enclosed separate letters addressed to Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim, Minister of Interior, Mr. Sidki Subhi, Minister of Defense (can be relayed to then-Minister of Defense and current President, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi), and Mr. Hisham Barakat, Public Prosecutor, requesting specific information relevant to our research and a meeting in Cairo to explore these issues further. We have also sent letters to their offices directly.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.
Regards,

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division
Human Rights Watch

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIVISION

Sarah Leah Whitson, *Executive Director*
Eric Goldstein, *Deputy Director*
Nadim Houry, *Deputy Director*
Joe Stork, *Deputy Director*
Tamara Alrifai, *Advocacy and Communications Director*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kathleen Peratis, *Chair*
Asli Bali, *Officer*
Prince Moulay Hicham, *Officer*
Bruce Rabb, *Officer*
Gary G. Sick, *Officer*
Gamal M. Abouali
Salah Al Hejailan
Wajeha Al-Huwaider
Abdul-Ghani Al-Iryani
Ghanim Al-Najjar
Lisa Anderson
Shaul Bakhash
M. Cherif Bassioun
David Bernstein
Robert L. Bernstein
Nathan Brown
Paul Chevigny
Ahmad Deek
Hanaa Edwar
Bahey El Din Hassan
Hassan Elmasry
Mansour Farhang
Loubna Freih Georges
Aeyal Gross
Asos Hardi
Shawan Jabarin
Marina Pinto Kaufman
Youssef Khlat
Azza Kamel Maghur
Robert Malley
Ahmed Mansoor
Stephen P. Marks
Rolando Matalon
Habib Nassar
Abdelaziz Nouaydi
Nabeel Rajab
Vicki Riskin
Graham Robeson
Charles Shamas
Sid Sheinberg
Sussan Tahmasebi
Mustapha Tlili
Ferras Zalt

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director*
Michele Alexander, *Deputy Executive Director, Development and Global initiatives*
Carroll Bogert, *Deputy Executive Director, External Relations*
Jan Egeland, *Europe Director and Deputy Executive Director*
Iain Levine, *Deputy Executive Director, Program*
Chuck Lustig, *Deputy Executive Director, Operations*
Walid Ayoub, *Information Technology Director*
Emma Daly, *Communications Director*
Barbara Guglielmo, *Finance and Administration Director*
Peggy Hicks, *Global Advocacy Director*
Babatunde Olugboji, *Deputy Program Director*
Dinah PoKempner, *General Counsel*

Appendix II: Letter to Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

www.hrw.org

June 12, 2014
Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim
Interior Ministry
Sheikh Rihan Street, Cairo Ministry of Interior
P.O. Box 11641
Cairo, Egypt

Your Excellency,

I write to request your assistance in obtaining information pertaining to last summer's clashes between security forces and protesters in Egypt, including the August 14 dispersals of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins. We would also greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet you in Cairo to discuss our research on this topic.

Human Rights Watch has spent the last year investigating the use of force by police and the army against demonstrators. Our team of researchers has conducted on-site investigations at many of the protest sites, in some cases while clashes were underway, interviewed over 200 witnesses, including protesters, doctors, journalists, and local residents, reviewed hours of video footage and physical evidence, and studied statements by Egyptian officials.

Our preliminary findings indicate that the police and army used excessive force and, in some cases, carried out indiscriminate and deliberate attacks on protesters in at least six incidents: the July 5 afternoon shootings in front of the Republican Guard headquarters, the July 8 early morning shootings near the Guard headquarters, the July 27 late evening clashes near the Manassa Memorial, the August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, and the August 16 clashes around Ramses Square. Our evidence indicates that a small number of protesters carried firearms at some demonstrations, but that the vast majority of demonstrators were unarmed and that the killings were grossly disproportionate, resulting in the killing of likely over 1000 protesters. We further

conclude that not a single police or army officer has been held to account for their role in these events.

With regards to the Rab'a dispersal in particular, our research further shows that security forces failed to sufficiently warn demonstrators before the dispersal began and to provide a 'safe exit' until the end of the day, including for injured protesters in need of urgent medical attention. We have also found that police set fire to structures throughout the square, including makeshifts hospitals and the Rab'a Medical Center, and beat and detained hundreds. Numerous government statements, including from the Interior Ministry, indicate that the interim government proceeded with a dispersal plan, which security forces adhered to on August 14, with the knowledge that it would likely result in the killing of several thousand protesters. We are currently preparing a report that presents our findings, similar to the report released by the National Council on Human Rights in March 2014.

We are writing to you in order to better understand what took place during these events. It is critical for us to obtain from you as much information and evidence that you may have about the use of force by police at these demonstrations and the government's efforts and plans to avoid loss of life to revise our preliminary findings as may be necessary and to ensure that our final report is comprehensive, accurate, and fair. We think it is important to note that where government sources have provided us with such critical information, our final reports have in fact concluded that security forces did not use excessive force against demonstrators, or that claims by demonstrators of excessive police force against peaceful protesters were exaggerated or false.

We would greatly appreciate your help in providing us with the following information:

- A copy of any written plan, guidelines, memos, or instructions for the August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals formulated by the Interior Ministry, including the plan submitted to the cabinet for approval; in addition, a copy of any written assessments of the dispersals after the fact;
- Access to all video footage taken by the Interior Ministry on the day of the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals;
- Access to any evidence indicating that demonstrators in Rab'a and al-Nahda Squares tortured, abused, or killed other protesters, local residents or members of the security forces;
- Answers to the following inquiries regarding the August 14 Rab'a dispersal:
    - What was the basis for the decision to forcefully disperse the sit-in?
    - Initially, the Interior Ministry promised a gradual dispersal; but this approach was ultimately not taken. What led to abandoning plans for a gradual dispersal?

- Our findings indicate that the Interior Ministry anticipated a death toll of several thousand protesters during the dispersal. Is that accurate?
- How many police officers were deployed during the dispersal? What equipment and weapons were used during the dispersal?
- To what degree did police forces on the ground adhere to the dispersal plan?
- After initially denying that police used live ammunition, the Interior Ministry conceded to The Global Post in February 2014 that security forces used live ammunition during the Rab'a dispersal. What led to the decision to use live ammunition rather than non-lethal means or even rubber bullets? What triggered the initial use of firearms? How much force was used during the course of the dispersal and under what circumstances?
- How many weapons belonging to protesters were found in Rab'a Square? What type of weapons were they and where were they found?
- How many protesters do you estimate were armed? What is the evidentiary basis for your estimate? How many protesters were arrested for unlawful possession of arms?
- Who in the chain of command was responsible for decisions made during the course of the dispersal? How was responsibility divided between the Interior and Defense Ministries?
- Video footage shows helicopters hovering over Rab'a Square during the dispersal. How many helicopters did the Interior Ministry operate over Rab'a Square? What type of helicopters were they? What was their role? Did gunmen fire from helicopters?
- According to our findings, plain-clothed men fired from atop government buildings surrounding Rab'a Square into crowds of demonstrators. Were the plain-clothed men firing from atop buildings surrounding Rab'a Square in any way affiliated with the Interior Ministry?
- Our findings indicate that hundreds were killed by bullets to their heads, necks, and chests. Why was this the case? What instructions were given to security forces with regards to firing?
- Were the police involved in any capacity in the burning of the Rab'a stage, field hospital, mosque, and Rab'a Medical Center?
- According to our findings, security forces overtook Rab'a Medical Center and ordered doctors to evacuate the hospital and leave behind the injured patients they were treating. What instructions did officers provide demonstrators when they evacuated the Rab'a Medical Center?
- Our findings indicate that security forces fired into the Rab'a field hospital and Medical Center and, for at least ten hours, on those who attempted to

enter or exit the Medical Center. Is this accurate? If so, why was this the case?;

- An explanation of whether the Interior Ministry used live ammunition during the July 5 and 8 Republican Guard shootings, July 27 Manassa clashes, and August 16 Ramses clashes and, if so, under what circumstances;
- A complete tally of all demonstrators killed during the July 5 and 8 Republican Guard shootings, July 27 Manassa clashes, August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals and August 16 Ramses clashes;
- A complete registry of all demonstrators arrested during the July 5 and 8 Republican Guard shootings, July 27 Manassa clashes, August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals and August 16 Ramses clashes, their places of detention, and the charges against them;
- The names of all officers who were killed during the July 5 and 8 Republican Guard Shootings, July 27 Manassa clashes, August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, and August 16 Ramses clashes and details about the time, manner, and location in which they were killed, and whether the perpetrators of these killings have been identified and apprehended;
- Answers to the following inquiries regarding investigations into misconduct:
- Have internal investigations been conducted to assess potential unlawful conduct in policing demonstrations? Are the outcomes of this investigation available in writing? If so, we would appreciate it if you could share these writings with us.
- If so, has any officer been found to have engaged or ordered others to engage in unlawful conduct?
- If so, what steps, if any, have been taken to discipline those officers?
- To what extent has the Interior Ministry cooperated with investigations by the official June 30 Fact Finding Committee and the public prosecutor?

We would also welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about these issues to better understand the perspective of the Ministry of Interior.
Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.

Regards,

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division
Human Rights Watch

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIVISION

Sarah Leah Whitson, *Executive Director*
Eric Goldstein, *Deputy Director*
Nadim Houry, *Deputy Director*
Joe Stork, *Deputy Director*
Tamara Alrifai, *Advocacy and Communications Director*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kathleen Peratis, *Chair*
Asli Bali, *Officer*
Prince Moulay Hicham, *Officer*
Bruce Rabb, *Officer*
Gary G. Sick, *Officer*
Gamal M. Abouali
Salah Al Hejailan
Wajeha Al-Huwaider
Abdul-Ghani Al-Iryani
Ghanim Al-Najjar
Lisa Anderson
Shaul Bakhash
M. Cherif Bassioun
David Bernstein
Robert L. Bernstein
Nathan Brown
Paul Chevigny
Ahmad Deek
Hanaa Edwar
Bahey El Din Hassan
Hassan Elmasry
Mansour Farhang
Loubna Freih Georges
Aeyal Gross
Asos Hardi
Shawan Jabarin
Marina Pinto Kaufman
Youssef Khlat
Azza Kamel Maghur
Robert Malley
Ahmed Mansoor
Stephen P. Marks
Rolando Matalon
Habib Nassar
Abdelaziz Nouaydi
Nabeel Rajab
Vicki Riskin
Graham Robeson
Charles Shamas
Sid Sheinberg
Sussan Tahmasebi
Mustapha Tlili
Ferras Zalt

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director*
Michele Alexander, *Deputy Executive Director, Development and Global initiatives*
Carroll Bogert, *Deputy Executive Director, External Relations*
Jan Egeland, *Europe Director and Deputy Executive Director*
Iain Levine, *Deputy Executive Director, Program*
Chuck Lustig, *Deputy Executive Director, Operations*
Walid Ayoub, *Information Technology Director*
Emma Daly, *Communications Director*
Barbara Guglielmo, *Finance and Administration Director*
Peggy Hicks, *Global Advocacy Director*
Babatunde Olugboji, *Deputy Program Director*
Dinah PoKempner, *General Counsel*

Appendix III: Letter to Defense Minister Sidki Subhi

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

www.hrw.org

June 12, 2014
Defense Minister Sidki Subhi
Ministry of Defense
July 23th Street, Al-Quba Bridge
Cairo, Egypt

Your Excellency,

I write to request your assistance in obtaining information pertaining to summer's clashes between security forces and protesters in Egypt, including the August 14 dispersals of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins. We would also greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet you in Cairo to discuss our research on this topic.

Human Rights Watch has spent the last year investigating the use of force by police and the army against demonstrators. Our team of researchers has conducted on-site investigations at many of the protest sites, in some cases while clashes were underway, interviewed over 200 witnesses, including protesters, doctors, journalists, and local residents, reviewed hours of video footage and physical evidence, and studied statements by Egyptian officials.

Our preliminary findings indicate that the police and army used excessive force and, in some cases, carried out indiscriminate and deliberate attacks on protesters in at least six incidents: the July 5 afternoon shootings in front of the Republican Guard headquarters, the July 8 early morning shootings near the Guard headquarters, the July 27 late evening clashes near the Manassa Memorial, the August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, and the August 16 clashes around Ramses Square. Our evidence indicates that a small number of protesters carried firearms at some demonstrations, but that the vast majority of demonstrators were unarmed and that the killings were grossly disproportionate, resulting in the killing of likely over 1000 protesters. We further conclude that not a single police or army officer has been held to account for their role in these events.

With regards to the Rab'a dispersal in particular, our research shows that security forces failed to sufficiently warn demonstrators before the

dispersal began and to provide a 'safe exit' until the end of the day, including for injured protesters in need of urgent medical attention. We have also found that police set fire to structures throughout the square, including makeshifts hospitals and the Rab'a Medical Center, and beat and detained hundreds. Numerous government statements indicate that the interim government proceeded with a dispersal plan, which security forces adhered to on August 14, with the knowledge that it would likely result in the killing of several thousand protesters. We are currently preparing a report that presents our findings, similar to the report released by the National Council on Human Rights in March 2014, which we plan to release in Cairo.

We are writing to you in order to better understand what took place during these events. It is critical for us to obtain from you as much information and evidence that you may have about the use of force by the military at these demonstrations and the government's efforts and plans to avoid loss of life to revise our preliminary findings as may be necessary and to ensure that our final report is comprehensive, accurate, and fair. We think it is important to note that where government sources have provided us with such critical information, our final reports have in fact concluded that security forces did not use excessive force against demonstrators, or that claims by demonstrators of excessive force against peaceful protesters were exaggerated or false.

We would greatly appreciate your help in providing us with the following information:

- A copy of any written plan, guidelines, memos, or instructions for the August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals formulated by the military; in addition, a copy of any written assessments of the dispersals after the fact;
- Access to all video footage taken by the military on the day of the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals;
- Answers to the following inquiries regarding the August 14 Rab'a dispersal:
    - Did the Defense Ministry participate in the formulation of the dispersal plan put forward by the Interior Ministry? Did the Defense Ministry have the opportunity to review the plan in advance? Did it approve the plan?
    - What was the role of the military in the dispersal? How was responsibility divided between the military and Interior Ministry and within the army itself?
    - How many troops were deployed? What sort of weapons and equipment were used?
    - What instructions were given to soldiers regarding the use of force?
    - What steps did the military take to secure the perimeter of the sit-in? What was the rationale?
    - Did the military provide or operate bulldozers that cleared the path for the police to enter?
    - Video footage shows helicopters hovering over Rab'a Square during the dispersal. How many helicopters did the military operate over the squares, if any? What type of helicopters were they? What was their role? Did gunmen fire from helicopters?

- According to our findings, plain-clothed men fired from atop government buildings surrounding Rab'a Square into crowds of demonstrators. Were the plain-clothed men firing from atop buildings surrounding Rab'a Square in any way affiliated with the military?
- Who in the chain of command was responsible for decisions made by the military during the course of the dispersal?;

- An explanation of whether the military used live ammunition during the July 5 and July 8 Republican Guard shootings and, if so, under what circumstances;
- The names of all military officers or soldiers who were killed during the July 5 Republican Guard shootings, July 8 Republican Guard shootings, and the August 14 Rab'a and al- Nahda dispersals, and details about the time, manner, and location in which they were killed;
- Answers to the following inquiries regarding investigations into misconduct:
  - Have internal investigations been conducted to assess potential unlawful conduct in policing demonstrations? Are the outcomes of this investigation available in writing? If so, we would appreciate it if you could share these writings with us.
  - If so, has any officer been found to have engaged or ordered others to engage in unlawful conduct?
  - If so, what steps, if any, have been taken to discipline those officers?
  - To what extent has the military cooperated with investigations by the official June 30 Fact Finding Committee and the public prosecutor?
  - Has the military prosecutor opened any investigations into these incidents? If so, how many officers have been summoned for questioning? How many eyewitnesses has he obtained testimony from? How many of those eyewitnesses were demonstrators? Have investigations explored the responsibility of those responsible in the chain of command?

We would also welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about these issues to better understand the perspective of the military. Please feel free to relay this letter to then-Minister of Defense and current President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi if more appropriate.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.

Regards,

Sarah Leah Whitson, Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division
Human Rights Watch

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIVISION

Sarah Leah Whitson, *Executive Director*
Eric Goldstein, *Deputy Director*
Nadim Houry, *Deputy Director*
Joe Stork, *Deputy Director*
Tamara Alrifai, *Advocacy and Communications Director*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kathleen Peratis, *Chair*
Asli Bali, *Officer*
Prince Moulay Hicham, *Officer*
Bruce Rabb, *Officer*
Gary G. Sick, *Officer*
Gamal M. Abouali
Salah Al Hejailan
Wajeha Al-Huwaider
Abdul-Ghani Al-Iryani
Ghanim Al-Najjar
Lisa Anderson
Shaul Bakhash
M. Cherif Bassioun
David Bernstein
Robert L. Bernstein
Nathan Brown
Paul Chevigny
Ahmad Deek
Hanaa Edwar
Bahey El Din Hassan
Hassan Elmasry
Mansour Farhang
Loubna Freih Georges
Aeyal Gross
Asos Hardi
Shawan Jabarin
Marina Pinto Kaufman
Youssef Khlat
Azza Kamel Maghur
Robert Malley
Ahmed Mansoor
Stephen P. Marks
Rolando Matalon
Habib Nassar
Abdelaziz Nouaydi
Nabeel Rajab
Vicki Riskin
Graham Robeson
Charles Shamas
Sid Sheinberg
Sussan Tahmasebi
Mustapha Tlili
Ferras Zalt

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director*
Michele Alexander, *Deputy Executive Director, Development and Global initiatives*
Carroll Bogert, *Deputy Executive Director, External Relations*
Jan Egeland, *Europe Director and Deputy Executive Director*
Iain Levine, *Deputy Executive Director, Program*
Chuck Lustig, *Deputy Executive Director, Operations*
Walid Ayoub, *Information Technology Director*
Emma Daly, *Communications Director*
Barbara Guglielmo, *Finance and Administration Director*
Peggy Hicks, *Global Advocacy Director*
Babatunde Olugboji, *Deputy Program Director*
Dinah PoKempner, *General Counsel*

Appendix IV: Letter to Public Prosecutor Hisham Barakat

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

www.hrw.org

June 12, 2014

Public Prosecutor Hisham Barakat
Public Prosecutor's Office
Dar al-Qud'a al-Aaly
July 26th Street, al-As'aaf Square
Cairo, Egypt

Your Excellency,

I write to request your assistance in obtaining information pertaining to investigations the Public Prosecutor's Office has conducted into the use of force by the army and police against demonstrators since June 30, including the August 14 dispersals of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins. We would also greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet you in Cairo to discuss our research on this topic.

Human Rights Watch has spent the last year investigating the use of force by police and the army against demonstrators. Our team of researchers has conducted on-site investigations at many of the protest sites, in some cases while clashes were underway, interviewed over 200 witnesses, including protesters, doctors, journalists, and local residents, reviewed hours of video footage and physical evidence, and studied statements by Egyptian officials.

Our preliminary findings indicate that the police and army used excessive force and, in some cases, carried out indiscriminate and deliberate attacks on protesters in at least six incidents: the July 5 afternoon shootings in front of the Republican Guard headquarters, the July 8 early morning shootings near the Guard headquarters, the July 27 late evening clashes near the Manassa Memorial, the August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, and the August 16 clashes around Ramses Square. Our evidence indicates that a small number of protesters carried firearms at some demonstrations, but that the vast majority of demonstrators were unarmed and that the killings were grossly disproportionate,

resulting in the killing of likely over 1000 protesters. We further conclude that not a single police or army officer has been held to account for their role in these events.

With regards to the Rab'a dispersal in particular, our research shows that security forces failed to sufficiently warn demonstrators before the dispersal began and to provide a 'safe exit' until the end of the day, including for injured protesters in need of urgent medical attention. We have also found that police set fire to structures throughout the square, including makeshifts hospitals and the Rab'a Medical Center, and beat and detained hundreds. Numerous government statements indicate that the interim government proceeded with a dispersal plan, which security forces adhered to on August 14, with the knowledge that it would likely result in the killing of several thousand protesters.

We are currently preparing a report that presents our findings, similar to the report released by the National Council on Human Rights in March 2014, which we plan to release in Cairo.

We are writing to you to inquire about the status of all investigations your office is conducting into these events. It is critical for us to obtain from you as much information and evidence that you may have about investigations that have been undertaken to revise our preliminary findings as may be necessary and to ensure that our final report is comprehensive, accurate, and fair. We think it is important to note that where official sources have provided us with such critical information, our final reports have, in fact, concluded that credible investigations are being carried out.

We would greatly appreciate your help in providing us with the following information:

- A complete registry of all demonstrators arrested during the July 5 and 8 Republican Guard shootings, July 27 Manassa clashes, August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals and August 16 Ramses clashes, their places of detention, the charges against them, and access to any evidence indicating that protesters used firearms during these clashes;
- Have you formally opened investigations into the July 5 and 8 Republican Guard shootings, July 27 Manassa clashes, August 14 Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals, and the August 16 Ramses clashes? How many complaints have been filed with regards to these incidents?
- How many Interior Ministry or military officials have been summoned for questioning in relation to the use of force against demonstrators? What has been the focus of ongoing investigations? Have charges been brought against any official? How many eyewitnesses have you obtained testimony from? How many of those eyewitnesses were demonstrators? What measures have been taken to ensure witness protection?
- Have investigations explored the responsibility of those responsible in the chain of command?
- To what extent has the Ministry of Interior and the military cooperated with investigations?

- Have you subpoenaed documents from the Interior Ministry and military related to their use of force against demonstrators, including the Interior Ministry's plan for the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals and video footage taken by the Interior Ministry and military on the day of the Rab'a and al-Nahda dispersals?
- What steps have been taken to protect the integrity of physical evidence?
- Have you reviewed the report prepared by the National Commission on Human Rights? What sort of cooperation have you had with the official June 30 Fact Finding Committee?

We would also welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about these investigations and our own documentation about these events.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.

Regards,

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division
Human Rights Watch

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIVISION

Sarah Leah Whitson, *Executive Director*
Eric Goldstein, *Deputy Director*
Nadim Houry, *Deputy Director*
Joe Stork, *Deputy Director*
Tamara Alrifai, *Advocacy and Communications Director*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kathleen Peratis, *Chair*
Asli Bali, *Officer*
Prince Moulay Hicham, *Officer*
Bruce Rabb, *Officer*
Gary G. Sick, *Officer*
Gamal M. Abouali
Salah Al Hejailan
Wajeha Al-Huwaider
Abdul-Ghani Al-Iryani
Ghanim Al-Najjar
Lisa Anderson
Shaul Bakhash
M. Cherif Bassioun
David Bernstein
Robert L. Bernstein
Nathan Brown
Paul Chevigny
Ahmad Deek
Hanaa Edwar
Bahey El Din Hassan
Hassan Elmasry
Mansour Farhang
Loubna Freih Georges
Aeyal Gross
Asos Hardi
Shawan Jabarin
Marina Pinto Kaufman
Youssef Khlat
Azza Kamel Maghur
Robert Malley
Ahmed Mansoor
Stephen P. Marks
Rolando Matalon
Habib Nassar
Abdelaziz Nouaydi
Nabeel Rajab
Vicki Riskin
Graham Robeson
Charles Shamas
Sid Sheinberg
Sussan Tahmasebi
Mustapha Tlili
Ferras Zalt

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director*
Michele Alexander, *Deputy Executive Director, Development and Global initiatives*
Carroll Bogert, *Deputy Executive Director, External Relations*
Jan Egeland, *Europe Director and Deputy Executive Director*
Iain Levine, *Deputy Executive Director, Program*
Chuck Lustig, *Deputy Executive Director, Operations*
Walid Ayoub, *Information Technology Director*
Emma Daly, *Communications Director*
Barbara Guglielmo, *Finance and Administration Director*
Peggy Hicks, *Global Advocacy Director*
Babatunde Olugboji, *Deputy Program Director*
Dinah PoKempner, *General Counsel*

Appendix V: Follow-up Letter to Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

www.hrw.org

July 8, 2014
His Excellency Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Maspero and Korniche al-Nil Street, near the Egyptian Broadcasting and Television Building, Cairo, Egypt

Your Excellency,

I am writing to follow-up on a letter sent to the Foreign Ministry on June 12, addressed to former Minister Nabil Fahmy, requesting the Ministry's assistance in engaging the relevant agencies in the Egyptian government in our ongoing research into last summer's clashes between security forces and protesters in Egypt, including the August 14 dispersals of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins.

We have yet to hear back from your office or from the other ministries and are reaching out again, as it very important to us to understand the government's perspectives on the issues addressed in our research. We have written again this week to each of the other ministries, renewing our requests for information.

I have enclosed again the letter sent to the Foreign Ministry on June 12, as well as separate letters sent on June 12 to Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim, minister of interior, Mr. Sidki Subhi, minister of defense, and Mr. Hisham Barakat, public prosecutor. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in facilitating replies to our letters and/or in-person meetings with relevant officials to discuss the report.

We plan to release the report in Cairo next month and would like to request meetings with you and other officials when we are in town. Please do let us know your availability and how you suggest we proceed with setting up the other meetings.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss these matters further.

Regards,

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIVISION

Sarah Leah Whitson, *Executive Director*
Eric Goldstein, *Deputy Director*
Nadim Houry, *Deputy Director*
Joe Stork, *Deputy Director*
Tamara Alrifai, *Advocacy and Communications Director*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kathleen Peratis, *Chair*
Asli Bali, *Officer*
Prince Moulay Hicham, *Officer*
Bruce Rabb, *Officer*
Gary G. Sick, *Officer*
Gamal M. Abouali
Salah Al Hejailan
Wajeha Al-Huwaider
Abdul-Ghani Al-Iryani
Ghanim Al-Najjar
Lisa Anderson
Shaul Bakhash
M. Cherif Bassioun
David Bernstein
Robert L. Bernstein
Nathan Brown
Paul Chevigny
Ahmad Deek
Hanaa Edwar
Bahey El Din Hassan
Hassan Elmasry
Mansour Farhang
Loubna Freih Georges
Aeyal Gross
Asos Hardi
Shawan Jabarin
Marina Pinto Kaufman
Youssef Khlat
Azza Kamel Maghur
Robert Malley
Ahmed Mansoor
Stephen P. Marks
Rolando Matalon
Habib Nassar
Abdelaziz Nouaydi
Nabeel Rajab
Vicki Riskin
Graham Robeson
Charles Shamas
Sid Sheinberg
Sussan Tahmasebi
Mustapha Tlili
Ferras Zalt

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director*
Michele Alexander, *Deputy Executive Director, Development and Global initiatives*
Carroll Bogert, *Deputy Executive Director, External Relations*
Jan Egeland, *Europe Director and Deputy Executive Director*
Iain Levine, *Deputy Executive Director, Program*
Chuck Lustig, *Deputy Executive Director, Operations*
Walid Ayoub, *Information Technology Director*
Emma Daly, *Communications Director*
Barbara Guglielmo, *Finance and Administration Director*
Peggy Hicks, *Global Advocacy Director*
Babatunde Olugboji, *Deputy Program Director*
Dinah PoKempner, *General Counsel*

Appendix VI: Follow-up Letter to Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

www.hrw.org

July 8, 2014
Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim
Interior Ministry
Sheikh Rihan Street, Cairo Ministry of Interior
P.O. Box 11641

Your Excellency,

I am writing to follow-up on a letter sent to you on June 12 requesting your cooperation in our ongoing investigation into last summer's clashes between security forces and protesters in Egypt, including the August 14 dispersals of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins.

We have yet to hear back from you and are reaching out again, as it is very important to us to understand the Interior Ministry's perspectives on the issues addressed in our research. I have enclosed the letter sent to your office on June 12. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in providing us with the information requested and the opportunity to speak with you further about these issues.

We plan to release the report in Cairo next month and would like to request a meeting with you when we are in town. Please do let us know your availability.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss these matters further.

Regards,

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIVISION

Sarah Leah Whitson, *Executive Director*
Eric Goldstein, *Deputy Director*
Nadim Houry, *Deputy Director*
Joe Stork, *Deputy Director*
Tamara Alrifai, *Advocacy and Communications Director*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kathleen Peratis, *Chair*
Asli Bali, *Officer*
Prince Moulay Hicham, *Officer*
Bruce Rabb, *Officer*
Gary G. Sick, *Officer*
Gamal M. Abouali
Salah Al Hejailan
Wajeha Al-Huwaider
Abdul-Ghani Al-Iryani
Ghanim Al-Najjar
Lisa Anderson
Shaul Bakhash
M. Cherif Bassioun
David Bernstein
Robert L. Bernstein
Nathan Brown
Paul Chevigny
Ahmad Deek
Hanaa Edwar
Bahey El Din Hassan
Hassan Elmasry
Mansour Farhang
Loubna Freih Georges
Aeyal Gross
Asos Hardi
Shawan Jabarin
Marina Pinto Kaufman
Youssef Khlat
Azza Kamel Maghur
Robert Malley
Ahmed Mansoor
Stephen P. Marks
Rolando Matalon
Habib Nassar
Abdelaziz Nouaydi
Nabeel Rajab
Vicki Riskin
Graham Robeson
Charles Shamas
Sid Sheinberg
Sussan Tahmasebi
Mustapha Tlili
Ferras Zalt

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director*
Michele Alexander, *Deputy Executive Director, Development and Global initiatives*
Carroll Bogert, *Deputy Executive Director, External Relations*
Jan Egeland, *Europe Director and Deputy Executive Director*
Iain Levine, *Deputy Executive Director, Program*
Chuck Lustig, *Deputy Executive Director, Operations*
Walid Ayoub, *Information Technology Director*
Emma Daly, *Communications Director*
Barbara Guglielmo, *Finance and Administration Director*
Peggy Hicks, *Global Advocacy Director*
Babatunde Olugboji, *Deputy Program Director*
Dinah PoKempner, *General Counsel*

Appendix VII: Follow-up Letter to Defense Minister Sidki Subhi

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

www.hrw.org

July 8, 2014
Defense Minister Sidki Subhi
Ministry of Defense
July 23th Street, Al-Quba Bridge
Cairo, Egypt

Your Excellency,

I am writing to follow-up on a letter sent to you on June 12 requesting your cooperation in our ongoing investigation into last summer's clashes between security forces and protesters in Egypt, including the August 14 dispersals of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins.

We have yet to hear back from you and are reaching out again, as it is very important to us to understand the military's perspectives on the issues addressed in our research. I have enclosed the letter sent to your office on June 12. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in providing us with the information requested and the opportunity to speak with you further about these issues.

We plan to release the report in Cairo next month and would like to request a meeting with you when we are in town. Please do let us know your availability.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss these matters further.

Regards,

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIVISION

Sarah Leah Whitson, *Executive Director*
Eric Goldstein, *Deputy Director*
Nadim Houry, *Deputy Director*
Joe Stork, *Deputy Director*
Tamara Alrifai, *Advocacy and Communications Director*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kathleen Peratis, *Chair*
Asli Bali, *Officer*
Prince Moulay Hicham, *Officer*
Bruce Rabb, *Officer*
Gary G. Sick, *Officer*
Gamal M. Abouali
Salah Al Hejailan
Wajeha Al-Huwaider
Abdul-Ghani Al-Iryani
Ghanim Al-Najjar
Lisa Anderson
Shaul Bakhash
M. Cherif Bassioun
David Bernstein
Robert L. Bernstein
Nathan Brown
Paul Chevigny
Ahmad Deek
Hanaa Edwar
Bahey El Din Hassan
Hassan Elmasry
Mansour Farhang
Loubna Freih Georges
Aeyal Gross
Asos Hardi
Shawan Jabarin
Marina Pinto Kaufman
Youssef Khlat
Azza Kamel Maghur
Robert Malley
Ahmed Mansoor
Stephen P. Marks
Rolando Matalon
Habib Nassar
Abdelaziz Nouaydi
Nabeel Rajab
Vicki Riskin
Graham Robeson
Charles Shamas
Sid Sheinberg
Sussan Tahmasebi
Mustapha Tlili
Ferras Zalt

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Kenneth Roth, *Executive Director*
Michele Alexander, *Deputy Executive Director, Development and Global initiatives*
Carroll Bogert, *Deputy Executive Director, External Relations*
Jan Egeland, *Europe Director and Deputy Executive Director*
Iain Levine, *Deputy Executive Director, Program*
Chuck Lustig, *Deputy Executive Director, Operations*
Walid Ayoub, *Information Technology Director*
Emma Daly, *Communications Director*
Barbara Guglielmo, *Finance and Administration Director*

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

www.hrw.org

Appendix VIII: Follow-up Letter to Public Prosecutor Hisham Barakat

July 8, 2014
Public Prosecutor Hisham Barakat
Public Prosecutor's Office
Dar al-Qud'a al-Aaly
July 26th Street, al-As'aaf Square
Cairo, Egypt

Your Excellency,

I am writing to follow-up on a letter sent to you on June 12 requesting your cooperation with our ongoing research into last summer's clashes between security forces and protesters in Egypt, including the August 14 dispersals of the Rab'a and al-Nahda sit-ins.

We have yet to hear back from you and are reaching out again, as it is very important to us to understand what the status is regarding investigations into the potential unlawful use of force by the army and police against demonstrators since June 30, 2013. I have enclosed the letter sent to your office on June 12. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in providing us with the information requested and the opportunity to speak with you further about these issues.

We plan to release the report in Cairo next month and would like to request a meeting with you when we are in town. Please do let us know your availability.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss these matters further.

Regards,

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division

In July and August 2013, tens of thousands of Egyptians, many supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, participated in demonstrations across Egypt to denounce the military's July 3 ouster of Mohamed Morsy, Egypt's first elected civilian president.

In *All According to Plan: The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt*, Human Rights Watch documents the manner in which Egyptian police and army forces methodically opened fire on crowds of unarmed protesters at six demonstrations in July and August 2013, killing at least 1,150 people. Human Rights Watch's year-long investigation into the killings included interviews with over 200 witnesses, visits to each of the protest sites, and review of video footage, physical evidence, and statements by public officials. The report concludes that the systematic and widespread killings likely amount to crimes against humanity.

In the single largest incident, Egyptian security forces forcefully dispersed the major pro-Morsy sit-in Rab'a al-Adawiya Square in Cairo, where demonstrators, including women and children, had been camped out for over 45 days. Using armored personnel carriers, bulldozers, hundreds of ground troops, and snipers, security forces followed a violent dispersal plan that had been formulated by Egyptian authorities in full awareness that it would result in the deaths of thousands. Security forces attacked the protest encampment, including makeshift hospitals. They gave little to no effective warning and surrounded protesters, leaving no safe exit for those seeking to escape the violence, for nearly 12 hours. Security forces killed at least 817 and likely over 1,000 people, making it one of the world's largest killings of demonstrators in a single day in recent history.

One year later, the Egyptian government has failed to hold accountable even a single Egyptian police and army official. In light of this failure, the report calls for international accountability, prosecution of those implicated in serious crimes under international law, and full suspension of military aid and law enforcement support to Egypt.

(above) The front of Rab'a al-Adawiya mosque on August 15, 2013, the day after security forces dispersed the over month-long sit-in that had taken place in the surrounding area. The mosque, which had served as a refuge for women and children seeking to escape the violence during the dispersal, was set ablaze as security forces took control of central Rab'a Square around 6 p.m. The Egyptian government has claimed that protesters set the mosque afire, but accounts gathered by Human Rights Watch strongly indicate that security forces were responsible.

© 2013 Private

(front cover) A volunteer tends to an injured demonstrator in front of a police armored personnel carrier (APC) in Rab'a Square in Cairo, Egypt on August 14, 2013. That day, Egyptian police and army forces opened fire on tens of thousands of demonstrators who had been staging an open-ended sit-in calling for the re-instatement of former president Mohamed Morsy, and violently dispersed the demonstration, killing at least 817 people.

© 2013 Associated Press