

“Unprecedented” Mass Trial and Death Sentences in Egypt



Cairo, March 25 (RHC)-- The imposition of the death sentence on 528 people in Egypt is not only unprecedented in recent history, but also irregular and in breach of international human rights law, according to the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR).

The 528 defendants were convicted of various charges, including membership in the Muslim Brotherhood, incitement to violence, vandalism, unlawful gathering and the killing of one police officer.

The UN Human rights office says the mass trial conducted within two days did not meet even the most basic requirements of a fair trial and was in violation of international law in regards to the imposition of the death sentence.

Rupert Colville is the Spokesperson of the UN Human Rights office:

"The astounding number of people sentenced to death in this case is unprecedented in recent history. The mass imposition of the death penalty after a trial that was rife with procedural irregularities is in breach of international human rights law. A death sentence may only be imposed after proceedings that meet the highest level of respect for fair trial and due process standards. A mass trial conducted over just two days cannot possibly have met even the most basic requirements for a fair trial. More than three-quarters of the defendants, reportedly 398 individuals, were tried in absentia. The exact charges against

each defendant are unclear as they were not read out in court. Defence lawyers say that they have had insufficient access to the defendants and that the court did not consider relevant evidence presented by the defence."

The UN Human Rights Office says membership of a political group or participation in demonstrations do not meet the threshold of "most serious crimes" for which the death sentence is permissible.

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