

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Statement on the Situation in Egypt

February 10, 2011

The Egyptian people have been told that there was a transition of authority, but it is not yet clear that this transition is immediate, meaningful, or sufficient. Too many Egyptians remain unconvinced that the Government is serious about a genuine transition to democracy, and it is the responsibility of the Government to speak clearly to the Egyptian people and the world. The Egyptian Government must put forward a credible, concrete, and unequivocal path toward genuine democracy, and they have not yet seized that opportunity.

As we have said from the beginning of this unrest, the future of Egypt will be determined by the Egyptian people. But the United States has also been clear that we stand for a set of core principles. We believe that the universal rights of the Egyptian people must be respected and their aspirations must be met. We believe that this transition must immediately demonstrate irreversible political change and a negotiated path to democracy. To that end, we believe that the emergency law should be lifted. We believe that meaningful negotiations with the broad opposition and Egyptian civil society should address the key questions confronting Egypt's future: protecting the fundamental rights of all citizens, revising the Constitution and other laws to demonstrate irreversible change, and jointly developing a clear roadmap to elections that are free and fair.

We therefore urge the Egyptian Government to move swiftly to explain the changes that have been made and to spell out in clear and unambiguous language the step-by-step process that will lead to democracy and the representative Government that the Egyptian people seek. Going forward, it will be essential that the universal rights of the Egyptian people be respected. There must be restraint by all parties. Violence must be forsaken. It is imperative that the Government not respond to the aspirations of their people with repression or brutality. The voices of the Egyptian people must be heard.

The Egyptian people have made it clear that there is no going back to the way things were. Egypt has changed, and its future is in the hands of the people. Those who have exercised their right to peaceful assembly represent the greatness of the Egyptian people and are broadly representative of Egyptian society. We have seen young and old, rich and poor, Muslim and Christian join together and earn the respect of the world through their nonviolent calls for change. In that effort, young people have been at the forefront, and a new generation has emerged. They have made it clear that Egypt must reflect their hopes, fulfill their highest aspirations, and tap their boundless potential. In these difficult times, I know that the Egyptian people will persevere, and they must know that they will continue to have a friend in the United States of America.

Categories: Statements by the President : Egypt, situation in.

Subjects: Egypt : Democracy efforts; Egypt : Human rights issues; Egypt : Relations with U.S.; Foreign policy, U.S. : Democratization.

DCPD Number: DCPD201100080.