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NEWS

MEMBERS OF ISLAMIC LIBERATION PARTY CLAIM TORTURE BY EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS

By Esther Choi

Twenty-five members of the banned Islamic Liberation Party, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, claim Egyptian security officers tortured them when they were arrested and charged for being members of the party and for spreading propaganda to overthrow the government. BBC News, *Islamists allege Egypt torture*, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2597699.stm. Egyptian officials are in a long war of fighting terrorist operations and preventing coups from overthrowing the current government. The allegations of torture amidst Egypt's war against terrorism forced the United Nations to ensure Egypt would investigate all complaints of torture.

The members, including three Britons, Ian Nisbet, Reza Pankhurst, and Maajid Nawaz, were arrested in April 2002 and held under emergency laws introduced after President Anwar Sadat's 1981 assassination by Islamic militants. The three Britons claim they were blindfolded, handcuffed, given electric shocks, left in solitary confinement, sleep-deprived and forced to watch others being tortured at the Cairo

State Security Intelligence building. The prisoners say they were also forced to sign confessions they could not read. On December 21, 2002, medical reports indicated that the causes of the Britons injuries could not be discerned. There were medical reports on injuries suffered by two Egyptians that showed signs of torture.

Egyptian officials assert that they are trying to prevent terrorist measures. The Hizb-ut-Tahrir emerged in the 1970s and seeks one

Committee urged Egyptian officials however, to investigate the allegations of torture. United Nations, *Committee against Torture Concludes Twenty-Ninth Session*, at <http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/FramePage/Subject+Torture+En?OpenDocument>.

Amnesty International, a major advocate for human rights, is concerned about the allegations and the trial itself. "Reports that these men were tortured are deeply

"The systematic use of torture in Egypt is one of the key influences corrupting the country's political and legal systems, indeed even its social fabric. All strata of Egyptian society is subject to torture."

- Geoffrey Mock, USA Country Specialist for Egypt, Amnesty International

Islamic government for Islamic states through military coups. The Islamic Liberation Party is blamed for an attempted 1974 coup and other terrorist operations in Egypt.

On November 20, 2002 the United Nations Committee Against Torture recognized Egypt's vulnerable position in its prolonged fight against terrorism. The

worrying... We are pressing the Egyptian authorities to ensure a fair trial which includes the right of appeal." Amnesty International, *Opening of Trial of Three Britons and 23 Egyptians Raises Unfair Trial and Torture Concern*, at <http://>

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