

CRS in Egypt:

CRS has been working with local partners in Egypt for more than 50 years, providing food, health care, education and income-generating programs for vulnerable Egyptians and refugees living in the country. Our current programs include providing educational assistance, protection and counseling to Iraqi and African refugees and asylum seekers, combating child trafficking, assisting those living with HIV/AIDS and more.

Status of CRS Staff: CRS/Egypt national and international staff are safe. As of 8:30 p.m. local time Sunday all national staff and their immediate families are safe. International staff members were evacuated on 1/31 and 2/1 to other countries in the region due to security concerns. They maintain daily contact with CRS/Egypt and will return to Cairo as soon as the situation improves. The main office and sub-office are safe and secure.

Status of CRS Programming: CRS/Egypt programs were on hold temporarily as CRS staff and partner staff have not been able to report to work since Thursday, January 27. CRS/Egypt offices are scheduled to reopen (security allowing) today, Monday February 7. CRS will hold meetings with partners to discuss the resumption of individual projects shortly after regular business resumes.

Quick Country Facts: Egypt today has a population of more than 80 million people. Approximately 90% are Muslim and 10% are Coptic Christian. The country staged its first modern revolution in 1919 and established independence in 1922. Continued instability due to remaining British influence led to a second revolution in 1952 and the creation of the Egyptian Republic in 1953.

General Situation as of Sunday February 6 – 10:30PM local time: The situation in Egypt appears to have gradually improved today. Banks re-opened today for the first time in ten days, albeit with reduced hours from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The stock market is scheduled to open again tomorrow after seeing how the banks fare today. Public transport commenced again this morning with buses and trains carrying out their regular routes. The Government called on Egyptians to return to work today. Many businesses re-opened their doors for the first time in several days. Several air carriers resumed their flights going into and out of Cairo today. The Justice Minister also announced that courts would re-open today. Curfew hours were further reduced from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. The internet and mobile phone service are still functioning.

Sunday's key developments:

- Members of Egypt's Christian minority held a Mass in Tahrir Square to pay tribute to those killed during clashes. In a show of solidarity, some Muslim protestors formed a ring around the Christians to protect them during the mass.
- Thousands of anti-government demonstrators remain in Tahrir Square. Today's protests are reported to be much more peaceful with no mention of clashes with Mubarak loyalists who appear to be out of sight today. Thousands of anti-government protestors also hit the streets in Alexandria, Suez, and several other locations today throughout Egypt in what is being called "The Day of Martyrs".

- Newly appointed VP Omar Suleiman held meetings today with leaders of several different opposition groups, including representatives of the banned Muslim Brotherhood, who had earlier indicated that they would not meet with any government official until Mubarak stepped down. State-run TV announced that both sides had agreed to form a national committee to work on changes to the constitution within a month, take steps to provide greater freedom for media and communications, and end military law and security threats. Both sides also agreed to reject any foreign interference in Egypt as they move forward to suggest needed changes.
- Opposition groups continue to demand Mubarak resign immediately and show little trust in VP Suleiman and his efforts to reach out to the opposition. The Muslim Brotherhood announced that it doesn't trust to government to bring in reforms.
- Key members of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), including Mubarak's son, Gamal, announced on Saturday that they resigned from their leadership positions, a gesture that will undoubtedly please many anti-government protestors. Gamal's decision to resign makes him no longer eligible to take over the presidency from his father.
- U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, speaking on Saturday from a security conference in Germany, said it is "important to follow the transition process announced by the Egyptian government, actually headed by Vice President Omar Suleiman."
- President Obama continued to stress on Saturday the importance of an "orderly, peaceful transition" to a government that is "responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people."
- The State Department acknowledged its concern regarding the restrictions placed on foreign journalists and the harassment and detention that many journalists have experienced in recent days in Egypt. The State Department reported that it has been in touch with the Egyptian foreign ministry and the Egyptian ambassador in Washington to communicate its concern regarding the treatment of foreign journalists in Egypt. Ambassador Margaret Scobey spoke earlier today with Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit to communicate the same message.

Reaction from Cardinal Antonio Naguib: On February 4, the Catholic Coptic patriarch of Alexandria, Cardinal Antonios Naguib, called on Egyptians "to return to your homes and your jobs in peace, following the invitation extended by the authorities to be able to recover what the country has lost." Cardinal Naguib said the Church "carries in its heart" this "precarious moment of [the nation's] history." The cardinal said the Church is praying that God "will give peace and stability to Egypt and [it] asks God to give wisdom and understanding to the leaders of the nation and all those who work for it." Cardinal Naguib stated the Church "calls everyone to embrace ethical and human values, which are characteristic of the Egyptian people, especially fear of the Lord and love for homeland and neighbor".