

Organisation for Women's Liberation

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International Women's Day in Egypt

An eyewitness report from Cairo

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8 March demonstrators attacked by Islamist and government thugs

Hundreds of women gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square on 8 March to celebrate International Women's Day. It was organized with the slogan a million march. It started well. However, after 3 hours the government and the Islamist thugs attacked the demonstrators. They started throwing abusive language against the women and physically threatening them.

"Sali", a young Egyptian woman who had got to know us in the Women's Conference in Cairo in December 2010 contacted Azar Majedi (chairperson of Organization for Women's Liberation) on 7 March and had this to say: "I am going to take part in the 1 million march in Cairo and carry the banner *"The measure of freedom of a society is the freedom of women."*

After 8 March, however, *"Sali"*, angry and sad gave an eyewitness report: "I will write a short report for you. The march started at 2pm and was fantastic till 5pm. The government and Islamist thugs attacked us. The Islamist men humiliated us and using foul language hit us. This went on from 5pm till 8pm. It



was the worst 3 hours of my life.”

“Let me give you an example. A 45 year old man kept using dirty and foul language threatened a woman for 15 minutes. These men are truly disgusting. Words fail me. As usual these men first humiliated women and then laughed at them. They said things like ‘go and feed your baby’, and ‘go and wash your clothes’!! Even the men who took part in the march were humiliated. They were told ‘be ashamed’ and ‘you are not men’!”

“Then, the thugs shouted ‘the demonstrators are foreign agents’. Then they attacked the women. Towards the end, a number of women were in shock and tears.”

The painful experience of women in Iran after the Islamic regime came to power is being repeated in Egypt. Organization for Women’s Liberation resolutely defends the struggle of women’s liberation movement in Egypt and the region. We urge all freedom loving people to support the struggle of this movement in Egypt and the region. The Egyptian rule is strongly misogynous and reactionary. The Islamist current too is a misogynous force. Clearly, after the removal of Mubarak , without removing the system, has made no difference to people’s and women’s situation. We must fight to overthrow the totality of the system and strongly oppose the Islamists. We must fight for complete freedom and equality of women. ***“The measure of freedom of a society is the freedom of women.”***