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Egypt – Woman Human Rights Defender Shaimaa ElSabbagh Killed by Bird Pellet Shots during a Peaceful Demonstration to Commemorate January 25th Revolution's Martyrs

On the eve of the fourth anniversary of the January 25th Revolution, woman human rights defender (WHRD), Ms. Shaimaa Sabry Ahmed El Sabbagh, was killed in Downtown – Cairo, while she was participating in a peaceful protest to commemorate the martyrs of the January 25th Revolution.

Ms. ElSabbagh was a 34 years-old prominent woman human rights defender and the Secretary of the Collective Action at the Socialist Popular Alliance Party in Alexandria governorate. She is also known for her defense of labor rights, a field she was active in for years in Alexandria governorate. Around 20 to 40 members of the party were intercepted by security forces shortly after leaving the party's headquarters. The members of the party were marching in the peaceful protest, holding flowers and chanting "bread - freedom - social justice", as part of the commemoration process. The Secretary General of the party, Mr. Talaat Fahmy, who was also taking part in the concerned peaceful protest, approached the security forces to be granted permission for the march to pass through Talaat Harb Square to approach Tahrir Square. It is reported that moments after they had spoken to him as he walked back to the protest, security forces opened fire and started dispersing them. Ms. ElSabbagh was shot in the back by bird pellet shots, and the Forensic Medicine Administration autopsy report issued by the morgue stated that the cause for death was laceration of the lungs and heart that caused intensive bleeding in the chest, due to bird pellet shots that were shot at her in the back at close range. Ms. ElSabbagh was assisted by bystanders and members of the concerned party, where she was taken to Cairo Center For Kidney Diseases and died as a result of the injuries she sustained.

The march's dispersal resulted in the arrest of 6 members of the Popular Socialist Alliance Party: Talaat Fahmy, ElSayed Fawzy AbuElEla, Hossam Nasr Khalil, Mohamed Saeed AbdelTawwab, Mostafa Mansour Khalil, and Hassan Mohamed Mahmoud, where they spent the night at Abdeen Police Station, and a police report No. 805 for Misdemeanor Cases Kasr ElNile was made, where charges directed at 5 of the 6 arrested protesters include: demonstrating without a permit, attacking security forces, terrorizing citizens and rallying. The Prosecution Office is currently interrogating them.

Nazra for Feminist Studies greatly condemns the killing of WHRD Ms. ElSabbagh, and calls on the Egyptian government to conduct prompt and thorough investigations to identify those who shot her, and demands holding them accountable, should it be proven that state actors were indeed the perpetrators. It also calls on the conduction of investigations regarding the violation of the Protest and Public Assembly Law No. 107 issued on November 24, 2013, which clearly states that security forces warn protesters before dispersal, and dispersal commences through using water hoses, followed by tear gas in the case of demonstration participants being unresponsive to warnings issued, in addition to immediately and unconditionally releasing the aforementioned 6 party members who are still detained and dropping all charges against them. Finally, Nazra for Feminist Studies stresses the need of conducting thorough investigations for all crimes related to the killing of protesters since the uprising on January 25, 2011, through transitional justice mechanisms that would ensure accountability of real perpetrators and redress.

Nazra for Feminist Studies (<http://nazra.org/en>) is a group that is based in Egypt with special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). Nazra aims to build an Egyptian feminist movement, believing that feminism and gender are political and social issues affecting freedom and development in all societies. Nazra aims to mainstream these values in both public and private spheres.