



Facts on IRI's Work in Egypt and the Crackdown on NGOs

The International Republican Institute's (IRI) offices in Alexandria, Cairo and Luxor were raided on December 29, 2011, by Egyptian authorities. The raids were conducted as part of an investigation opened by the Ministry of Justice at the urging of the Ministry of International Cooperation. The raids were an aggressive action that ironically was never taken against IRI under the former regime of Hosni Mubarak. The actions taken by the Egyptian government following the raids against IRI and other organizations have intensified.

- The Ministry of Justice has conducted 20 interrogations of 17 IRI staff since December 2011. The grounds for the overall investigation were politically motivated and instigated by a Mubarak-era holdover attempting to stifle the voices of civil society organizations in post-revolution Egypt. During interrogations, staff were asked to respond to assertions made by the Minister of International Cooperation that the IRI had conducted political activity in Egypt in violation of the Egyptian law.
- During the raids, the government of Egypt took hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of cash, equipment and documentation from offices in Alexandria, Cairo and Luxor, none of which has been returned to IRI. The Cairo offices have remained sealed since December 29. Much of the cash was for an official election observation mission that the Egyptian government invited IRI to undertake in support of the country's people's assembly elections.
- IRI's Country Director, Sam LaHood, was prevented leaving the country on January 21, 2012. LaHood was not notified that he was on a no exit list until he attempted to leave the country on a routine trip. IRI has learned that the government of Egypt has officially barred nine IRI staff from leaving the country. The government has also issued detention warrants upon arrival for five expatriate staff currently outside of Egypt.
- The raids have been followed by rumors and statements from the Ministry of Justice that 43 staff from IRI, the National Democratic Institute, Freedom House, the International Center for Journalists and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation will face trial as a result of the findings of the investigations.

The rumored charges against IRI:

- *IRI was not legally registered to work in Egypt.* IRI applied for official registration in 2006 with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to which the government of Egypt never responded. At the request of Egyptian authorities, IRI resubmitted registration paperwork in 2011 and is awaiting a decision from the ministry. IRI was not asked to close its offices and Egyptian authorities were thoroughly briefed on IRI's work.

- *IRI gave money to political parties.* In accordance with U.S. law, IRI does not give money to political parties in Egypt, nor does it show any bias to any single political entity. IRI training activities were conducted with a spectrum of political parties, regardless of faith or party ideology. IRI has held workshops on candidate preparation and registration, Election Day poll-watching and on the use of survey research in election campaign design.
- *IRI conducts polling in violation of Egyptian law.* IRI has conducted several public opinion polls in Egypt in 2011 to gauge citizen perspectives on the political, social and economic environment since the revolution. Poll results have been shared with the public and with political parties to inform their party platforms and election campaign strategies. Data for IRI's public opinion polls was collected by a licensed Egypt-based marketing firm. IRI has shared poll results with Egyptian officials.
- *IRI staff receive funds illegally from abroad.* As is standard practice, IRI's Washington headquarters procures all funding for its programs abroad. IRI's Egyptian and expatriate Egypt-based staff did not sign any grant agreements in Egypt on IRI's behalf.
- *IRI had a map in its Cairo office that showed it wanted to divide Egypt.* IRI used Internet-generated maps that displayed Egypt's four natural geographic regions: Greater Cairo, Upper Egypt, the Canals and the Delta. The maps were used to prepare for IRI's international election observation of the people's assembly elections to show where IRI would be deploying observers. Egypt's Higher Elections Commission officially invited IRI to witness the elections and gave official accreditations to all foreign witnesses.

Regarding the general situation in post-revolution Egypt:

- IRI and other organizations believe that Egypt's repressive law number 84 on nongovernmental organizations seeks to control and repress civil society. The Egyptian government continues to instill fear among Egyptian civic groups that carry out activities or take funding not specifically authorized by the government. In the U.S., registered nongovernmental organizations do not have to seek approval for funding or activities from the federal government if they remain within their mandated mission, and they can accept foreign funding, including funding from foreign governments.
- The investigations carried out by the Ministry of Justice mirror politically-motivated detentions and/or charges brought against Egyptian activists who have criticized the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces in recent months. This suggests that there is a well-coordinated plan to limit the space for political and civic activism in Egypt.
- In accordance with the annual State and Foreign Operation Appropriation Bill, U.S. democracy and human rights programming "shall not be subject to the prior approval by the government of any foreign country."