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*Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt
to the United Nations Office, World Trade
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in Geneva*



البعثة الدائمة لجمهورية مصر العربية
لدى الأمم المتحدة ومنظمة التجارة العالمية
والمنظمات الدولية الأخرى
في جنيف

URGENT

CHAN. 2015.107

The Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations Office, World Trade Organization, and Other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Special Procedures Branch), and with reference to the Joint Communication dated 13th of April 2015 concerning "charges brought against Ms Azza Soliman for illegal gathering and participating in an unauthorized protest that harmed public security under law 107 of 2013 in relation to her testimony concerning the death of Ms Shaimaa Al-Sabbagh" (Ref: AL EGY 4/2015), has the honor to attach herewith the information provided by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt in relation to the allegations included in the aforementioned Joint Communication, and looks forward that the enclosed information be brought to the attention of the mandate-holders who presented the aforementioned Joint Communication, and be duly reflected in the relevant communications report to be submitted to the Human Rights Council.

The Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and Other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Special Procedures Branch), the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 28 July 2015



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(Translated from Arabic)

Comment by the Egyptian Government on joint communication No. ALEGY 4/2015, dated 13 April 2015, concerning the charges brought against Ms. Azza Soliman

1. The law enforcement officers who were present in Talaat Harb Square in central Cairo on 24 January 2015 observed a march by about 50 demonstrators along Qasr al-Nil Street towards Talaat Harb Square, which breached the law concerning the organization of demonstrations. Some participants in the demonstration blocked the street, hurled abusive comments at the armed forces and the police, launched fireworks and clashed with the police, cursing and throwing stones. The law enforcement officers ordered them to halt the demonstration and disperse, but they failed to comply. The law enforcement officers were therefore obliged to intervene, using water cannons and tear gas grenades, and some demonstrators were arrested.
2. Notification was received from the Cairo hospital for kidney diseases of the arrival of a young woman called Shaimaa Sabri Ahmed al-Sabbagh, who had been involved in the clashes that had occurred in Talaat Harb Street.
3. Against the background of this incident, questions were raised with the Police Commissioner at Qasr al-Nil police station and the Deputy Director of Cairo Security for Abdin Police Department, formerly the Police Services Supervisor. He¹ stated that a number of people had informed him, when he was reviewing the security situation, that almost a thousand demonstrators were marching down Talaat Harb Street and that they were carrying fireworks. So he went along and ordered them to halt the demonstration and to disperse. They ignored the order and began to attack him physically, pushing him backwards. As the demonstration was illegal and the participants were using force in an attempt to storm Talaat Harab Square, he issued instructions to the Central Security Forces to arrest them after firing tear gas from a distance of about 40 metres. Three suspects were arrested.
4. Ms. Azza Soliman Hashim testified that when she was in Café Riche she observed a march of about 30 people, including some acquaintances. She went out to meet them and remained with them for a while. When she returned to Café Riche, the police approached the demonstrators, using tear gas and firing gunshots. She added that she had seen the victim Shaimaa al-Sabbagh falling and a young man carrying her to Al-Bustan passage next to the Café.
5. A number of press and media correspondents were questioned and reported that there were 30 participants in the demonstration, including the accused, and that they had not perpetrated any hostile acts against the police prior to their dispersal.
6. The charges laid against Azza Soliman concern her participation in a demonstration that failed to comply with the rules governing the organization of demonstrations and that breached law and order, which constitutes a misdemeanour under the Act concerning the Right to Public Meetings, Processions and Peaceful Demonstrations. This is what was recorded by the Public Prosecutor's Office in the official misdemeanour case documents, in accordance with articles 4, 7 and 19 of Act No. 107 of 2013 concerning the Right to Public Meetings, Processions and Peaceful Demonstrations. The documents were referred to the court hearing of 4 April 2015 and

¹ Translator's note: I consulted an expert Egyptian reviser in the Arabic Translation Section. He was unable to figure out which of the two officers is the "he" referred to in this sentence.

the case was discussed at a number of sittings. The most recent was held on 23 May 2015 to deliver the judgement.

7. The court decided to acquit all of the accused, including Azza Soliman Hashim Soliman. The Public Prosecutor's Office appealed against the judgement and the first sitting concerning the appeal was held on 13 June 2015.
