



# RIGHT NOW

FEBRUARY 3, 2012

VOLUME 02, ISSUE 01

## Interview with Nora El Gharbawi

The National Officer on Human Rights and Peace of Egypt

*What an extraordinary year 2011 has been for human rights. Millions of people decided that the time had come to claim their rights and found their voices through social media. Gone are the days when governments had total control of the flow of information. Many human rights activists and bloggers used Facebook, Twitter and other social media to allow the world to witness step by step exactly what was going on. What will 2012 bring for human rights?*

Text: Illaa Smessem



*Please tell us your name, where you study, and your involvement in the works of IFMSA.*

My name is Nora El Gharbawi. I am a 4th year medical student, living in Mansoura, Egypt. Currently I am the NORP. I do have a special interest in SCORP because it is related to everything that happens around us, and it meaningfully contributes to the global movement for the respect, promotion and protection of Human Rights.

*How did you experience the demonstrations and the revolution in Egypt of last year?*

Demonstrations in Egypt started on January 25th, 2011. There were previous announcements disseminated through Facebook events and Internet pages. Honestly, I didn't expect much to happen, because a lot of small demonstrations used to happen before but with no concrete result. Be this as it may, I joined Jan 28th demonstrations, which were mushroomed everywhere in Egypt. No matter how aggressively and forcefully the police force reacted to stop the crowd, the protestors stood their ground and eventually took control of everything. After that day, most demonstrations went peacefully until Mubarak finally stepped down on the 11th

of February 2011.

Let me say a few words about the experience I got in Mansoura on that very date, January the 28th. I went uptown not knowing what exactly was happening because all connections were cut. I found thousands of people gathered there, screaming. I stood there for a while and all of a sudden, there was teargas all over. I tried to go into a building for cover, but some people tried to prevent me and others. We managed though. Some policemen kept chasing us and shooting a couple of teargas canisters inside the building before they left in order to suffocate us in there. Thankfully one of the residents inside the building allowed us inside. Outside was total chaos: car tires were on fire, and policemen that dressed as civilians were beating protesters with sticks. Not knowing what was going on or where to go, I just kept running with a friend of mine until I finally got home.

*Could you tell us what changes have been registered in the lives of students since Mubarak has left?*

One of the greatest changes every student enjoys is the freedom of expression. We were

### Article 20

*Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.*

*'We have the right to be part of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations!'*

Text: Mahlet Beyene

able to establish our students' union and elect the leadership. We can partake in public and social movements that are related to politics or human rights. We can publicly pronounce our positions on issues of national concern, we can perform protest marches, etc. Although the incumbent leadership is not always in favor of this, we don't see them forcing us to stop.

*Do you have a message for your fellow IFMSA members in the Netherlands?*

I would like to say that it has been a pleasure for me having this interview with you guys. It means a lot knowing that the world is keeping an eye on the situation in Egypt, it motivates us to keep it more peaceful, and civilized as it has been from the beginning. I hope I was able to give you some information about how things look like in Egypt, and I look forward to working with you on more SCORP related projects.

*(You can read the whole interview on our Facebook page)*

Text: Marina Kaspar



© Copyright PAX 48



FB: Pax FortyEight  
pax48@ifmsa.nl

---

## Column: “Y en a marre”

---

“We are fed up!” is the literal translation of “Y en a marre”, the recent uprising in West-Africa’s Senegal. A large proportion of the population, 75% of which is below the age of 25, is fed up with how the country is governed presently. Increasing unemployment, rising living costs, frequent power (electric) shortages are some among the main causes for popular uprising. In addition, with elections scheduled to take place in February 2012, many people are not comfortable. They are also very suspicious because Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, the incumbent President, is attempting to forward his candidature for re-election.

Wade was elected in 2000 and then re-elected for a second term in 2007. Under the current constitution, he cannot run for a third term.

That is why many politicians and members of the Y-en-a-marre movement oppose it. Be this as it may, President Wade appears so determined not to give up his power easily. This situation seems reminiscent of certain North-African countries.

Wade is accused of having spent public money on grotesque statues and giving jobs to friends and family members. Many urge Wade to abandon the presidency, the reason given for this is because many believe that he failed to address the real problems facing Senegal. One of his vocal opponents is the super star Youssou N’Dour, who wanted to run against Wade in the forthcoming election. Relying on the existing constitution which bars Wade from running for a third time. N’Dour calls upon the international community to stop Wade from acting above the law.

Senegal is on crossroad. Will it remain one of the most peaceful countries of the subregion or will it go along the route of its northern (and eastern!) neighbours? It all depends on the extent of Abdoulaye Wade’s readiness to hear the peoples voice and Y-en-a-marre’s perseverance.

Text: Koen Bolhuis

## A cry for truth

The Oxford dictionary defines the word “Genocide” as follows: it is “the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular nation or ethnic group”. Recently the French government passed a bill that criminalizes a denial of the Armenian massacre as genocide. Turkey reacted with a boycott of France while Armenia highly commended the act of France by stating that France once again has proven itself of a guardian for universal human values. In the absence of credible research, we are simply left to question whether this unilateral declaration is appropriate or not. One fact we have at hand is the absence of a thorough, objective and politically neutral research conducted over the said genocide.

The United Nations Security Council has a mandate under chapter VII of the United Nations Charter to refer to the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, to conduct an investigation over this extremely controversial matter. The Armenian as well as the Turkish people have the right to request for the neutral undertaking of such an investigation, and to know what exactly happened.

As we all know, international and many domestic laws condemn genocide, and perpetrators of this international crime have been brought before international and domestic courts. For the purpose of educating existing and forthcoming generations, and with a view to curb the occurrence of this international crime, a proper investigation needs to be conducted. Not by politicians such as Sarkozy or Erdogan, the Presidents of France and Turkey respectively, but by historians and experts qualified to do the job.

Text: Esra Dede

# Anatomy of an atocracy

Although the war launched by the United States of America against the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq was formally over in 2004, Fallujah is still suffering from the consequences of that war. In response to the on-going resistance made by Iraqis against the occupation, the United States military launched two massive attacks against the city of Fallujah.

It was alleged that the US military used newly designed weapons that were tested for the first time in Fallujah. Young women in Fallujah are suffering from the continued anxiety. The reason being that the number of babies born with a deformity, or with no heads, no eyes and missing limbs is disturbingly high. Concerns have been expressed in the city for some time due to the rising number of patients affected by cancer, leukemia and congenital birth anomalies. It is reported that depleted uranium is the most likely cause of the health crisis in Fallujah.

As a result, a high number of children are being born with untold birth defects. Within the last 6 years, the rate of birth defects in Fallujah has risen by more than 25%. Congenital heart defects (CHD) are the most recurrent incidents, followed by neural tube defects (NTD) and skeletal anomalies. The statistics shows that 170 babies were born in the General Hospital of Fallujah, out of which about 24% were reported dead within the first seven days and about 75% of the dead babies were identified as born deformed.

Text: Illaa Smesseim

## Article 10

*Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.*

*‘People that have lost their lives in a genocide can not, but we sure can stand up for their rights!’*

Text: Mahlet Beyene



# PAX 48