

Barbed Wire and Tear Gas in Cairo as Protesters Rise After Mubarak Acquittal

Police and military units used water cannons, barricades and tear gas to prevent protesters trying to march on Tahrir Square

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Egyptian anti-government protesters on Saturday pull on barbed wire separating them from security forces guarding Tahrir Square in central Cairo. (Photo: AP)

Egyptians enraged by Saturday's court decision to drop murder charges against Hosni Mubarak took to the streets of Cairo on Saturday where they were met by tanks, barbed wire fences, tear gas and army units ready to repel any effort to gain access to Tahrir Square, the birthplace of the 2011 revolution that led to the former president's overthrow.

As *The Independent's* Jon Stone [reports](#):

News that the ousted president had murder and corruption charges against him dismissed by a judge brought demonstrators out onto the streets of Cairo at the start of the weekend.

On Saturday some 2,000 young people protested the verdict near Cairo's Tahrir Square, the birthplace of the nation's 2011 uprising. The square itself was closed off by soldiers and police.

"The people want to bring down the regime!" protesters shouted, echoing one of the most prominent slogans of the 2011 anti-Mubarak uprising.

Protesters were further incensed after Mr Mubarak gave a television interview after the verdict in which he said he "did nothing wrong" during the 2011 clashes that left at least 200 protesters dead.

Journalist Sharif Abdel Kouddous covered the development of the protest in a series of tweets on Saturday night:

Crowd protesting Mubarak acquittal near entrance to Tahrir square has grown. Chanting against military. pic.twitter.com/GCb9qItWf1

— Sharif Kouddous (@sharifkouddous) [November 29, 2014](#)

Large crowd now outside Tahrir. A couple thousand maybe. Ambulances nearby on standby. pic.twitter.com/C4uvH490ay

— Sharif Kouddous (@sharifkouddous) [November 29, 2014](#)

Heavy police presence at Tahrir entrance. Armored trucks, officers in black balaclavas pic.twitter.com/C4mKregMet

— Sharif Kouddous (@sharifkouddous) [November 29, 2014](#)

Part of crowd singing anti-police ultras songs under Oct. 6 bridge [#Egypt](#) pic.twitter.com/tQ3HIF4fsX

— Sharif Kouddous (@sharifkouddous) [November 29, 2014](#)

Police fire water for a few seconds then begin lobbing tear gas canisters. Crowd flees in a panic.

— Sharif Kouddous (@sharifkouddous) [November 29, 2014](#)

And Reuters [adds](#):

Two people were killed and nine were wounded on Saturday evening, when security forces fired tear gas and birdshot to disperse about 1,000 protesters who attempted to enter Tahrir Square — the symbolic heart of the revolt that ousted Mubarak.

Security forces closed a Cairo metro station, the state news agency said, an apparent effort to prevent gatherings downtown.

Clashes also erupted at Zagazig University in the Nile Delta, and the state-owned Al-Ahram newspaper said 11 students were detained after setting fire to a building.

Many Egyptians who lived through the rule of former air force officer Mubarak view it as a period of autocracy and crony capitalism.

His overthrow led to Egypt's first free election. But the winner, Mohamed Mursi, was ousted last year by Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, another military officer who won a presidential vote in May.

Egyptian authorities have since jailed Mursi and thousands of his Muslim Brotherhood supporters, sentencing hundreds to death in mass trials that drew international criticism.

By contrast, Mubarak-era figures have been released and new laws curtailing political freedoms have raised fears among activists that the old leadership is back.

"Down with Hosni Mubarak, down with every Mubarak, down with military rule" said one Facebook page that called for protests against the ruling.

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