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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEW LEGAL SAFEGUARDS INSTITUTED TO LIMIT USE OF EGYPT'S
EMERGENCY LAW**

TRANSITIONAL STEP TO NEW ANTI-TERROR LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the Egyptian Government introduced draft legislation before Parliament that would significantly curtail the special powers provided under the country's Emergency Law, prohibiting the government from monitoring communications and media, confiscating publications and property and ordering evacuations. The legal limitations were part of the request presented to parliament today to extend the state of emergency for a duration of 2 years.

“Egypt faces a very real and very serious terrorist threat, and the government's primary responsibility is to keep our citizens safe,” said Sameh Shoukry, Egypt's Ambassador to the United States. “We look forward to a day when a state of emergency will not be necessary in Egypt. In the meantime, the new legal limits on the emergency law represent a significant step in moving towards a new comprehensive counterterrorism law, an important but difficult process which we are now attempting to resolve.”

Under the draft legislation, the government may not exercise the following extraordinary powers previously available under Paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 6 of Article 3 of the Emergency Law, among them:

- The monitoring of all forms of communication
- The monitoring, censoring, and confiscation of media and publications, and the closure of publishing houses & broadcasters
- The confiscation of property
- The regulation of the hours of operation of commercial activities
- The evacuation and isolation of certain areas



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The Government would thus be limited to using only those authorities available under Paragraphs 1 and 5 of Article 3 of the Emergency Law, and only for the purposes of countering the threats of terrorism and narcotics trafficking. These include:

- The arrest and detention of persons suspected of being involved in crimes of terrorism and narcotics trafficking
- The searching of persons or places suspected of involvement in such crimes
- The cancellation of licenses to bear arms or own explosive materials, and the right to confiscate them

Throughout the use of the emergency law the Government has consistently abided by its pledge to safeguard civil liberties and political rights in accordance with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that it acceded to in 1981, which allows for the use of emergency powers in the face of grave security threats. Accordingly, the Government has thereby undertaken to limit the application of the emergency law solely for the purposes of countering terrorism and narcotics trafficking. This legislation codifies the Government's political commitment in the form of statutory limitations.

In his statement to the People's Assembly today requesting parliamentary approval of a limited renewal of the state of emergency, the Prime Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to formulating a balanced counter-terrorism law and to lift the state of emergency as soon as it is adopted by Parliament.

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