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The following remarks were made by Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif before the People's Assembly on May 11, 2010 on the occasion of the Government's request to Parliament for limited renewal of the State of Emergency.

In the name of God the Most Gracious, Most Merciful,

Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, President of the People's Assembly,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Honorable Assembly,

I am pleased to meet with you today as part of the continuous engagement and coordination between the Government and your honorable assembly. I am personally pleased, as are all Egyptians, with the recovery of the President of the Republic, his safe return to the homeland and his resumption of his political activity and his official and popular meetings. May God grant him lasting health.

Brothers and Sisters, Members of the honorable Assembly,

In the lives of nations and peoples there are moments where they pause to reorder their affairs and reassess their situation so that they may afterwards move forward without hesitation and complete their progress supported by their experience with confidence in their present and hope for their futures.

I believe that today we are going through developments that demand that we pause to review our past, consider our present, and prepare for a prosperous future, God willing.

Terrorism attempted to deny us the ability to reap the rewards of a war in which we were victorious, and those of the honorable peace which restored our lands. We sought subsequently to lift the state of emergency and move on the path of development. But it targeted the state, seeking to undermine

its foundations over the last three decades with political assassinations and attempts to stoke sectarian strife. Later it adapted its operations, targeting our economy through attacks on foreign tourists. Each of those attacks was a blow that caused losses in lives and wealth, taking us backward each time, requiring that we restore confidence in our security and stability, and in our ability to rebuild our economy.

It was consequently understandable that we would re-declare a state of emergency after the assassination of the late President Mohamed Anwar El-Sadat, and for us to extend this state so long as the rationale for its declaration persisted. The Government committed itself, at the declaration of the state of emergency and its extension, to not use the extraordinary measures authorized by it except to confront the threats of terrorism and narcotics, and only to the extent necessary to confront these dangers, and under the supervision of the judiciary. The Government's commitment on this was not merely empty promises, but rather a specific commitment in line with the principles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt acceded on the first of October 1981, Article 4 of which permits states-parties, in times of officially declared general emergency that threaten the life of the nation, to take such measures without being restricted by the current Covenant, in the exact proportion necessitated by the situation.

Our confrontation with terrorism was not limited to the declaration of the state of emergency or security response. Rather, we took steps to address its underlying causes. We called upon the international community to cooperate with us to combat and confront terrorism. But our call was not met with the appropriate consideration until major states with well-established democracies were attacked by terrorism, leading them to take measures and adopt legislations in comparison to which our emergency measures are mild.

Dr. Fathi Sorour, President of the Assembly,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Honorable Assembly,

In recent years, we have introduced unprecedented reforms in support of our democracy and freedom of expression, notwithstanding the threats which surround us. We were keen to provide basic guarantees for the accused, so we amended the criminal procedures code to increase safeguards in regard to pre-trial detention. We restricted the number of situations where this form of detention can be used, and we introduced a maximum time limit which may not be exceeded. Moreover, the President annulled a number of military orders which were applied under the state of emergency. Today none remain except those related to the safety and security of the armed forces. We have achieved an unprecedented economic boom, which allowed us to stand firm in the face of the international financial crisis. We confronted conspiracies to undermine our security and stability and stoke strife between the people. These are our achievements and we are not prepared to squander them.

To that end, the President of the Republic committed himself in his electoral platform to lift the state of emergency and formulate a new counterterrorism law which would balance personal freedom with the interests and security of society. The Government reiterated this commitment a few weeks ago before the UN Human Rights Council, and today the Government restates this commitment to the representatives of the nation to lift the state of emergency as soon as a balanced law is adopted

which does not permit the use of extraordinary investigation measures unless necessary to counter terrorism, and then only under complete supervision by the judiciary. The Government is committed to presenting this law for public discussion, and to deliberate on it with the National Council for Human Rights and the civil society organizations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Previously the Government had stated that it was requesting an extension of the state of emergency even though it was abhorrent to it, because we do not wish to govern under extraordinary conditions, but at the same time we do not wish to squander what we have achieved. Our achievements may not rise to the level of our ambitions or fulfill all our hopes, but we hold on to them, desiring to improve and develop them. They were not achieved easily, surrounded as we are by an unstable region, threats of terrorism around the world, and an unforeseen severe financial crisis. Nonetheless, and notwithstanding these conditions, we have been able to implement gradual political reform, and achieved economic growth which many states failed to accomplish. We were able to create job opportunities for our youth, and we are committed to increase them and wipe out unemployment, which is our highest priority and a major weapon against terrorism.

While it would be unjust to credit the stability we enjoy, and which has permitted us to achieve so much, to the emergency law alone, it would also be unjust to ignore the fact that the application of the emergency law has spared the nation the threats of terrorism and stopped many terrorist crimes before they could be committed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When the Government requested an extension of the state of emergency previously, it committed itself to only apply these powers solely to the dangers of terrorism and narcotics, and some unfairly doubted the sincerity of our commitment. Therefore, the President sought to dispel all doubt with clarity by including in his request for extension of the state of emergency restrictions to the application on the use of emergency powers to only those cases related to the threats of terrorism and its financing and narcotics trafficking. Moreover, the measures that may be taken to preserve public security and order will be limited to those listed in Paragraphs 1 and 5 of Article 3 of the Emergency Law. This step shows the world that we are a state that respects its commitments in the area of human rights, and respects the rights and freedoms of its citizens, which are not infringed upon by the emergency law, but rather the law is used only to confront those threats that endanger our nation and the world as a whole.

The Government as it requests an extension of the state of emergency for a duration of two years, commits itself before the representatives of the nation to not utilize the extraordinary measures made available under the emergency law except to confront the threat of terrorism and narcotics, and only to the extent necessary to confront these dangers. The emergency law will not be used to undermine freedoms or infringe upon rights if these two threats are not involved. The Government also commits itself to enforce safeguards regarding the use of these measures as required by the Constitution, the law and international agreements, and that all such measures be taken under judicial supervision. These are the standards which we will impose upon ourselves and which we are

committed to because we are an ancient nation that has contributed to human rights; contributions which have been codified in constitutions, laws and treaties which we are committed to fulfilling.

Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, President of the People's Assembly,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Honorable Assembly,

As it requests that the people's representatives extend the state of emergency, the Government is confident that they, with their varied partisan and political backgrounds, appreciate its objectives and appreciate its rationale and motivation, and we are hopeful that this state will be lifted as soon as possible. The Government on its part will not breach their trust, and will seek to fulfill their demand as soon as possible. We are all partners sharing responsibility for this nation. We may have differing views on how to provide for its prosperity, but we are united in confronting the dangers that surround it. Let the decision of the majority and the opposition be to approve the extension of the state of emergency as a message to our great people that, in confronting these dangers, we are united, and that we, for the sake of its stability and prosperity, set aside our disagreements and stand united in words and deeds.

May God preserve Egypt's security and stability.

Peace be upon you and God's Mercy and Blessings.