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EGYPT CSW urges prayer during unrest

Christian Solidarity Worldwide is urging Christians to pray for all the citizens of Egypt in the current time of unrest.

Anti-government protests calling for the immediate resignation of President Hosni Mubarak have been underway for over a week, and in the last 24 hours largely peaceful protesters have been attacked by alleged supporters of the government. The resulting violence has left five dead and over 800 wounded.

While acknowledging that yesterday's protest in Tahrir Square was initially peaceful, Egypt's new Minister of the Interior went on air to apologize for the violence, which he attributed to unknown groups who went to the area to cause trouble, and to announce his intention of launching an investigation into these events. However, the violence has continued.

The protests have been characterized by unity across every social strata, with crowds chanting "Muslims and Christians are all Egyptians", and reports of Christian demonstrators forming human chains to protect Muslims as they pray. Such signs of solidarity may indicate the emergence of a shared vision for the nation's future that may eventually override every difference in Egyptian society.

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "CSW encourages Christians to pray for the safety of Egypt's citizens, and for wisdom for the leadership and the army, who will play a crucial part in the future direction of the nation. We are also asking for prayer for peace to be restored, for an end to attacks on demonstrators, and for justice for those who have lost loved ones or suffered debilitating injury. However, in the midst of all the turbulence and certainty, the unified stance of Christian and Muslim protesters has at least provided us with uplifting glimpses of hope."

Notes to Editors:

1. CSW's No Way Out campaign is calling for Egyptian Christians to be able to practice their faith freely, without fear. No Way Out seeks to bring about equal rights for Egyptian Christians with the rest of society and freedom from discrimination based on religion. For more information about CSW's No Way Out campaign, visit: www.csw.org.uk/nowayout