

## MB Statement on the Case of Foreign Funding of Non-Governmental Organizations



The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is baffled at comments made in numerous news media outlets regarding allegations made by US officials about the MB's "constructive role" in the NGO case. Local media interpreted that as: the MB mediated or intervened with relevant Egyptian authorities of the interim government to lift the travel ban against foreign defendants in this case.

Indeed, the MB would never allow itself to intervene in Egypt's judicial decisions. We believe in the full independence of the state's judiciary and respect its integrity.

We previously relayed our stance regarding this issue in a statement issued February 20, where we stated that: "The case of foreign funding of NGO's – with the escalating tone of U.S. threats to cut off aid and perhaps jeopardize the relationship between the two countries – has developed fast. We believe that – since this issue has become a judicial matter – it is neither right nor acceptable for anyone, Egyptian or foreign, to interfere in the case, especially because Egypt's judiciary is fair and independent and enjoys the people's full confidence. We underscore our support for NGOs that serve the interests of this homeland, adopt a national agenda – rather than foreign policies and goals, respect the laws of the land, are committed to transparency, and are not subject to foreign blackmail".

Thus the MB has fully clarified its neutral stance regarding the issue, leaving it completely in the hands of the judiciary and the country's legal system, since the MB does not interfere in judicial decisions, nor does it comment on its verdicts, procedures or other affairs. Hence, we absolutely refute any claims of Brotherhood mediation in lifting the travel ban on the indicted NGO foreign workers, and we denounce any domestic or foreign pressure which may have been used on the judiciary handling this case. On the other hand, the MB has clearly announced its position, very early on, re-iterating its full support for safeguarding the freedom and independence of NGOs as an effective element in the democratic transformation process and necessary development in Egypt. On many

occasions, the MB has previously stated its support of civil and non-governmental organizations, and called – for so long – for an urgent and comprehensive review of the exceptional laws that restrict freedoms, including current laws that control the work of such NGO's. The MB and Freedom and Justice MPs have vowed to work collectively, in a framework of consultation with other political parties and stakeholders to draft a law allowing freedom and legitimacy to these NGOs, free from restrictions, with Egypt's best interests in mind. While we consider our stance, as stated above, to be responsible and constructive, we reject any intervention, mediation or negotiations with regard to matters under judicial consideration. Under no circumstances can such intervention be constructive. The MB, therefore, asserts that circulating rumors of its interference in this case are false. The MB did not intervene or act as mediator to lift the travel ban imposed on foreign NGO workers involved in this case. Furthermore the Brotherhood stresses that its principles stem from faith, humanity and patriotism, and that it holds these principles high above any other considerations. We emphasize the need to protect and ensure the freedom of civil and political activists within the legislative framework established by law in Egypt. This remains our initial stance, although some Western countries and the organizations they fund ignored, during the reign of the ousted Mubarak's regime, a huge number of bloody and repeated incidents in which the MB and other opposition groups and parties regularly fell victim to the suppression of freedoms, security crackdowns and violent repressive measures, at the hands of the former regime. Cairo – 2 March 2012