

*Testimony of Azza Hilal Suleiman, an unarmed protestor attacked after trying to stop army officers from beating another unarmed female protestor on December 17, 2011 in Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt.*



*Azza in the week after the attack, and in Geneva this week*

*“I grew up in an environment that respected the army: my father was a general. Two of my uncles are generals. Two of my brothers are also generals. We were raised up respecting the army and strongly believing in the nobility of our national army. The day I helped this veiled girl I never thought of what they would do to me. All I thought was that another human being needed help. I ran to her and asked the officers, ‘why this violence? She’s not armed; she’s not a criminal, she’s just a girl.’ Their answer was to push me back and beat me without mercy. I lost consciousness. I was in hospital for a full week in a coma. My doctor told my family and friends to pray God to have mercy on me and my sufferings as they believed I was going to die. When I regained*



*I don't regret anything I did. I'm happy I was able to do something although I was unable to prevent this girl from being harmed. I tried to do my best. This is something any of us would do, we would always give help if we had the chance. We are all in solidarity with each other. We need each other and want to help each other.*

*Then I received another shock. I was engaged with a fellow revolutionary. We stood together in Tahrir Square. He was killed. Shot last month by the thugs of the army, people the army uses to do their dirty work. Now I am committed to avenge his life through legal recourse.*

*When you go through hard times, solidarity is strongest. These attacks have proven to me the love between us, the strength we share. I never imagined my family, my friends, would stand by me to this extent. People visited me in hospital, friends, colleagues. They cried. I used to say, 'I'm fine! We're much stronger than they are. The attacker is much weaker than us. They're weak, we must ensure we get our rights back, that we hold these people accountable.' Visitors would say we came here feeling weak but now we leave stronger.*

*I hope I'll feel better so I can go back to Tahrir Square. I used to say to my fiancé, 'I'm so sorry I can't be part of these demonstrations.' He'd say, 'you've done what you can, let others also carry your torch.' He reminded me of the saying, 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.' Now, I am stronger than ever and I will receive justice, I will be vindicated, also for his death. I will find legal accountability. My assailants must be held accountable before the law. Ending impunity is the only thing that will end these violations.*

