

# Political unrest in Egypt

February 2011



## The situation

In January 2011, pro-democracy activists and political opposition groups in Egypt initiated a countrywide protest campaign against President Hosni Mubarak. The protests, which continued for 16 days, were characterised by widespread civil unrest and disorder, and left between 150 - 300 people dead. Mubarak's administration announced a number of measures to contain the protests, including a curfew, the deployment of the military and a number of significant political concessions, including the formation of a new government. Despite these measures, protests calling for the resignation of Mubarak and the creation of a unity government continued, significantly destabilising the country's security environment.

Although red24 had already proactively raised Egypt's political risk rating in response to developments in neighbouring Tunisia some weeks previously, as the opposition protests in Egypt gathered momentum, red24 escalated its overall country risk rating for Egypt and adapted its security advice for specific parts of the country. We amended the Egypt country page online and pushed out a number of alerts to clients via SMS and email as the

political crisis developed. An in-depth analysis, giving further background to the situation, was also posted on a unique page online, which was updated as the volatile situation developed on the ground.



*31 January: The Egyptian military has confirmed that they will not use force against protesters, even if ordered to... This is a significant move and may indicate that it is slowly starting to distance itself from Mubarak and its regime and aligning itself with protesters.*

Simultaneously, red24's escalated advisory automatically triggered the organisation to contact tracked clients currently in Egypt, as well as to those listed as planning to visit the country in coming days. As the unrest continued, the 24/7 crisis response management (CRM) centre started receiving inbound calls and email enquiries from clients actively seeking advice and assistance on the ground in Cairo and other parts of Egypt. Those clients located in the Red Sea and Sinai peninsula holiday resorts were advised to remain there, given that the risk levels remained low in that region. However, for those in Cairo, Alexandria and other major



urban centres, we advised them to prepare to evacuate the country. In the ensuing hours, we worked with them, their families and their employers (where applicable), first to secure their immediate safety in-country and then to plan and execute an evacuation back home. These operations varied from pick-up's and drop-off's to the airport through the near-immobile Cairo traffic, to more sophisticated security operations involving dozens of employees, bureaucratic red tape and the chartering of aircraft.

### Assistance

We deployed a team of experienced in-house consultants to Cairo to establish an in-country HQ, which acted as a

safe departure point for clients. It was also a coordination and liaison venue for our three security consultancy partners in-country to resolve incidents for clients which came about due to flight cancellations, delays and general unforeseen events.

All 185 left various locations in Egypt by air, to several destinations across the world, including the USA, Europe and Asia. We were able to secure transport on commercial flights for some; other parties were evacuated by private charter aircraft.

At the end of the two week period, red24 had worked around the clock to complete the successful evacuation of 185 people in 21 separate operations.

### Feedback:

I have made it home safely. I wanted to take a moment to thank you for all of your support for Bertie, Hanny, and their families as well as me. I truly appreciate the constant support and communication.

- Tom McAndrew, Vice President APMEA at Golden State Foods