

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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To: H
Subject: Fw: ElBaradei trapped in mosque, protestors clash with police (AP)

From: OpsNewsTicker@state.gov <OpsNewsTicker@state.gov>
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Subject: ElBaradei trapped in mosque, protestors clash with police (AP)

CAIRO (AP) - Thousands of Egyptian anti-government protesters clashed Friday with police in Cairo, who fired rubber bullets into the crowds and used tear gas and water cannons to disperse them. It was a major escalation in what was already the biggest challenge to President Hosni Mubarak's 30 year-rule.

Police also used water cannons against Egypt's pro-democracy leader Mohamed ElBaradei and his supporters as they joined the latest wave of protests after noon prayers. Police also used batons to beat some of ElBaradei's supporters, who surrounded him to protect him.

A soaking wet ElBaradei was trapped inside a mosque nearly an hour after being water cannoned. Hundreds of riot police laid siege to the mosque, firing tear gas in the streets surrounding it so no one could leave. The tear gas canisters set several cars ablaze outside the mosque. Several people fainted and suffered burns.

Large groups of protesters, in the thousands, were gathered at at least six venues in Cairo, a city of about 18 million people. They are demanding Mubarak's ouster.

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