

Egyptian police arrests 20 Muslim Brotherhood

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Egyptian authorities detained Saturday 20 members of the opposition Muslim Brotherhood, the largest and most organised opposition group in the country, a security official and the group said.

The 20 members of the Muslim Brotherhood, including a candidate in the 2005 legislative elections, were arrested in the Nile delta city of Mansoura, said the security official on condition of anonymity.

"They are accused of having held a political meeting at the home of one of them," said the official.

The men said the meeting was a sit-in to protest Israeli actions limiting access to the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem, a flashpoint site sacred to Muslims and Jews, the security official added.

The Muslim Brotherhood confirmed the arrests on its website, saying police raided the homes of nine of those arrested while they were at the meeting.

The group is officially banned, but Muslim Brotherhood members are left to operate openly by the authorities and even have a working office in central Cairo, although the group is subject to regular crackdowns.

In 2005, the Muslim Brotherhood won 88 seats out of 454 in parliamentary elections marred by violence, having fielded candidates as "independents."

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