

**Statement  
For Immediate Release  
27 October 2011**

**FOR A FREE AND SECULAR MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH  
AFRICA**

75 secularists and human rights campaigners, including Mina Ahadi, Nawal El Sadaawi, Marieme Helie Lucas, Hameeda Hussein, Ayesha Imam, Maryam Jamil, Maryam Namazie, Taslima Nasrin, Farida Shaheed, Fatou Sow, and Stasa Zajovic have signed on to a Manifesto for a Free and Secular Middle East and North Africa.

In light of the recent pronouncements of the unelected Libyan Transitional Council for 'Sharia laws', the signatories of the manifesto vehemently oppose the hijacking of the protests by Islamism or US-led militarism and unequivocally support the call for freedom and secularism made by citizens and particularly women in the region.

Secularism is a minimum precondition for a free and secular Middle East and for the recognition of women's rights and equality.

We call on world citizens to support this important campaign by signing on to our petition: <http://www.change.org/petitions/world-citizens-defend-a-free-and-secular-middle-east-and-north-africa>

We also ask that supporters click 'like' on our Facebook page to support this important campaign: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/A-Free-and-Secular-Middle-East-and-North-Africa/271164176261820#!/pages/A-Free-and-Secular-Middle-East-and-North-Africa/271164176261820> and Tweet: #freeseccularMENA in support of a free and secular Middle East and North Africa.

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