



CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

United Nations Human Rights Council – 45th Session
Item 4- General Debate
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
25 September 2020

Delivered by: Jeremie Smith

Thank you Madam President,

In Egypt, tens of thousands of citizens, including scores of rights defenders, have either been thrown into prison, tortured and left to rot, or have been forcefully disappeared, some never to be seen again. If not in prison those fighting for accountability, democracy and human rights face a constant barrage of attacks, including the kidnapping, beating and imprisonment of their relatives.

For years CIHRS and many others have warned that the government of Egypt is attempting to “eradicate” the Egyptian movement for democracy and human rights. Today, our warnings have largely become reality.

Liberals, socialists, moderate Islamists, independent journalists, human rights lawyers and activists, Nubians, Coptic, LGBTQ and labour activists, presidential and parliamentary candidates, even doctors who criticized the government for handling COVID-19 – all have been arrested on bogus National security reports and locked up on trumped up terrorism charges.

In September 2019 Egypt experienced a wave of flash protests calling for the downfall of President Sisi due to widespread discontent with endemic corruption, inequality and increasing levels of economic desperation.

What followed was a large scale campaign of repression against citizens throughout the country – with over 4400 Egyptians from all walks of life (but mostly working class) arrested in 25 out of 28 Egyptian governorates.

At least 400 people were subjected to enforced disappearance. Over 1000 remain in pre-trial detention, almost all of which have been accused of “belonging to a terror group” or harming national security. As we speak, more protests have erupted in rural areas and in city suburbs in Egypt, leading to another crackdown.

It is time for those who believe in a stable, prosperous Egypt to stand up and condemn these brutal policies.

Thank you Madam President.