



Cairo Institute
for Human Rights Studies
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'Homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

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Item 3 – ID Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
Oral Intervention
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Delivered by: Mayassa Achek

Middle Eastern governments are using anti-terrorism laws to target civil society

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

As highlighted in your report, we welcome that the Middle East will be a geographical focus for country visits. We would also urge you to focus on North Africa where the patterns of violations in the context of counter-terrorism are similar and interrelated to those found in the Middle East.

Over the last several years, almost all governments of North Africa have increased efforts to criminalize and punish independent civil society and human rights work using sweeping counter-terrorism laws that effectively allow these governments to attack and prosecute as terrorists almost any actor that is critical of the government.

In many countries, domestic counter-terrorism security bodies and exceptional courts have become government structures whose primary mission is to threaten, attack, disappear, torture and imprison peaceful critics, artists, activists, politicians, journalists, union leaders and anyone else who challenges undemocratic and corrupt policies.

In Egypt and Algeria these practices have been harnessed to silence large-scale social movements for democratic and economic reform. In this sense, the term “counter-terrorism” has become a by-word for brutal repression and the destruction of independent civil society.

As such, CIHRS and its partners urge you and your mandate to engage on these critical situations.

Thank you.