

# Joint Report on the Human Rights Situation in Egypt

## Submission to the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Universal Periodic Review (January 2025)



Egypt’s human rights crisis is exacerbating. Over the past fourteen years, the government’s spurning of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations, including in 2019, has aggravated the ongoing political and socioeconomic crises. The absence of space for political opposition or democratic transition of power was underscored by the unfree and unfair 2024 presidential election, where peaceful dissidents, including those who challenged the incumbent were arrested. An economically floundering and punitive authoritarian environment alongside closure of all peaceful avenues for change portends dire consequences for Egypt. Through this report, our organizations aim to highlight prominent features of the ongoing human rights crisis and offer recommendations to address it.

**Submitted by:**

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ANKH Association                  | The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies   |
| Committee for Justice             | The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms  |
| El Nadeem Center                  | The Egyptian Front for Human Rights  |
| Sinai Foundation for Human Rights | The Egyptian Human Rights Forum  |
| EgyptWide for Human Rights        | Law and Democracy Support Foundation   LDSF  |
| Refugees Platform in Egypt (RPE)  | Two other organizations that wished to remain anonymous due to concerns over potential reprisal. |

## The Right to Life

1. Death is a penalty for 105 crimes in national legislation including the Penal Code (58/1937) and laws on military justice (25/1966), arms (394/1954), and narcotics control (182/1960); despite Egypt accepting 29 UPR recommendations in 2019 on suspending and abolishing capital punishment, and ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
2. In 2020, constituting a notable rise in death sentences and executions, 126 people were executed in 26 cases, with the Cassation Court upholding death sentences of 55 people.<sup>1</sup>
3. In 2021, Egypt issued the most death sentences of any country and ranked third globally in executions<sup>2</sup> with 84 people executed in at least 29 cases. The Cassation Court upheld death sentences of 80 people, half in political cases. Criminal courts sentenced 403 people to death.<sup>3</sup>
4. In 2022, criminal courts issued 538 death sentences while the courts of cassation and military appeals upheld death verdicts for 39 people. 30 people were executed in 11 cases, including 7 in the 'Helwan Microbus ' and 'Ajnad Misr' cases, where defendants were disappeared and tortured in unofficial detention centers, and their confessions coerced.<sup>4</sup> In 2023, 590 death sentences were issued throughout Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Since 2013, our organizations documented the execution and extrajudicial killing of 299 persons against the backdrop of political cases.<sup>6</sup>

## Enforced Disappearance

5. Egypt received seven recommendations in its 2019 UPR and accepted three on enforced disappearance, including to address impunity and investigate allegations of torture, extrajudicial killing, and disappearance; crimes for which the government pledged to form an independent investigative authority. The four rejected recommendations were on joining the International Convention for the Protection of All

---

<sup>1</sup> Egyptian Front for Human Rights (EFHR), 'What do you want before dying?': A report monitoring the death penalty during 2020, <https://shorturl.at/wtmcj>

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International (AI), The death penalty in 2021: the numbers and the facts, 24 May 2022, available on <https://shorturl.at/HIbHp>

<sup>3</sup> EFHR, Increasing death sentences: Summary of the death penalty situation in Egypt during 2021, January 19, 2022, available on; <https://shorturl.at/T9lrC> (AR)

<sup>4</sup> EFHR, 'Escalating Death Sentences: Brief on the death sentence in Egypt during 2022', February 12, 2023, available on; <https://shorturl.at/PJHr5>

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International, The death penalty in 2021: the numbers and the facts, 29 May 2024, available on <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/7952/2024/en/> Among these cases, for example: Case No. 2177 of 2022 in North Cairo, known in the media as the "Heliopolis Cell." Where 6 people were sentenced to death, and in case No. 182 of 2017, State Security Criminal Court known as "ISIS Al-Umraniya", in which the death sentence was issued to one person. In case No. 335 of 2022, State Security Criminal Court, known as the "Minya Terrorist Cell," in which 4 people were sentenced to death. In case No. 1224 of 2021, Supreme State Security, known as the "Sudan Cell," in which death sentences were issued against 4 people. In addition, death sentences were issued to 332 people in 217 criminal cases. For More details, see EFHR's 2023 report available on <https://shorturl.at/uxo8q>

<sup>6</sup> Committee for Justice database, available on: [https://cfjustice.uwazi.io/en/library/?q=\(allAggregations:!f,filters:\(violations:\(values:\(%277ovh7mhjv6v%27\)\)\),from:30,inclUdeUnpublished:!f,limit:300,order:asc,sort:title,treatAs:number,unpublished:!f\)](https://cfjustice.uwazi.io/en/library/?q=(allAggregations:!f,filters:(violations:(values:(%277ovh7mhjv6v%27))),from:30,inclUdeUnpublished:!f,limit:300,order:asc,sort:title,treatAs:number,unpublished:!f))

Persons from Enforced Disappearance and ensuring detention center accessibility for unannounced official visits.

6. Enforced disappearance is a systematic and widespread practice of the security agencies. Citizens are abducted and tortured in National Security premises, often to coerce confessions.

7. Disappeared persons' families seeking information continually face security threats and violations while their complaints are routinely disregarded by the Public Prosecution. Victims' lawyers are vulnerable to harassment that not only restricts their work but can also lead to their arrest.<sup>7</sup>

8. Over the last four years, citizens are continually disappeared as soon as ordered released. Security authorities routinely deny holding them until it becomes apparent that they are defendants in new cases under investigation before a prosecutor, in a practice known as 'recycling'.

9. Between August 2022 and August 2023, 821 people were disappeared, increasing to 4,253 disappeared persons documented since 2015 by the Stop Enforced Disappearance Campaign.<sup>8</sup> The campaign also documented many disappeared persons' testimonies of torture inside security and intelligence headquarters. National Security has been repeatedly implicated in extrajudicial killings of arrested and disappeared persons. Although the Interior Ministry typically claims these persons were killed during counterterrorism operations, evidence has shown that some were detained and disappeared well before the dates officially cited for their deaths.<sup>9</sup>

## **Detention Conditions**

10. Egypt received about 20 UPR recommendations in 2019 on detention conditions, detainee rights, and protection from torture and ill-treatment, including to take measures (legislative, administrative, or judicial) to uphold detainee rights, ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, establish a national preventive mechanism, and cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on torture. The Egyptian delegation's response asserted that 'all detention centers are subject to judicial oversight according to Egyptian legislation, and that the Prisons Law and its regulatory bylaws comply with the standard rules for the treatment of prisoners'.<sup>10</sup>

11. Prolonged solitary confinement has been increasingly used over the past four years under Law 106/2015, which amended the Prisons Law to extend the maximum period from 15 to 30 days while in 'special high-security rooms' detention can last up to six

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibrahim Metwally, Lawyer, HR activist and founder of the Association of Families of the Forcibly Disappeared, remains in pretrial detention in connection with several cases since September 2017, following his arrest shortly before he travelled to Geneva to participate in a meeting with the United Nations Group on Enforced Disappearances. For more, see; CIHRS: Rights groups demand release of Ibrahim Metwally-December 2017, available on <https://shorturl.at/wpSUn>

<sup>8</sup> 'Stop Enforced Disappearances' is a campaign launched by the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms and endorsed by human rights activists and researchers at the Commission. See 8th Annual Report: Nonstop Violation, August 30, 2023, available on; <https://shorturl.at/2D9un> (AR)

<sup>9</sup> HRW "Security Forces Dealt with Them", Report, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/09/07/security-forces-dealt-them/suspicious-killings-and-extrajudicial-executions>

<sup>10</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, 24 February – 20 March, available on <https://sschr.gov.eg/media/0jgkffc/wg-ar.pdf>

months. Solitary confinement is punitively used following conflicts with prison administration or protests against detention conditions, exemplified by the strike at Badr Rehabilitation Center (3) in February/March 2023. According to an inmate's brother, prison officials emptied cells and transferred inmates to disciplinary units.

12. Inmates at the Badr and Wadi Al-Natroun endure constant fluorescent lighting inside cells, leading to nervous breakdowns, insomnia, and chronic migraines. There has been a surge in hunger strikes and suicide attempts in prisons. In August 2021, several Tora Prison inmates attempted suicide,<sup>11</sup> including blogger Mohamed 'Oxygen' Ibrahim. Between February and March 2023, leaked messages from political prisoners' families indicated a rise in suicide attempts, including by hanging, slitting wrists, and overdosing.<sup>12</sup>

13. In October 2022, Badr 3 inmates went on hunger strike to protest poor conditions and a visitation ban. Alaa Mohamed El-Salami died in November 2022 after a two-month hunger strike.<sup>13</sup> Poet Galal El-Beairy announced his hunger strike in March 2023; he attempted suicide in September 2023.<sup>14</sup>

14. Following the transfer of women prisoners from Qanater Prison to the Tenth of Ramadan Rehabilitation Center, leaked messages detailed complaints about surveillance cameras in cells. Due to such surveillance, women are required to wear full clothing, including hijab, at all times. They also must alternate sleep periods, where an inmate wakes the other if her body becomes exposed during sleep.<sup>15</sup>

15. Medical neglect is widespread in prisons, including in newer facilities. Medical emergencies are ignored and medication at times withheld, causing a rise in prisoner deaths. The ECRF documented 31 detainee deaths between 2023 and March 2024, including 15 in the newer 'rehabilitation centers' of Badr and Tenth of Ramadan.

16. Visitation bans are instituted under the Prison Regulation Law's article 42, where vague phrasing<sup>16</sup> grants prison officials discretionary authority to ban visits, including to repeatedly and completely close facilities for prolonged periods, as happened in Tora Prison and Badr (3) Rehabilitation Center. After the inmates' hunger strike in February/March 2023 and repeated suicide attempts, families were permitted to visit detainees in Badr once every two months, through a glass barrier.<sup>17</sup>

17. The National Council for Human Rights, local and international rights organizations, and UN committees are barred from conducting surprise visits to prisons. Oversight is restricted to the Public Prosecution, which neglects to investigate torture.

---

<sup>11</sup> ECRF: 'The Unbearable: About Suicide in Egyptian Prisons.', June 2023, available on <https://shorturl.at/sLE9b>

<sup>12</sup> ECRF and others: 'Egypt: Parallel Report to the UN Committee against Torture-2023,' Oct 2023, available on <https://bit.ly/49Xbk6U>

<sup>13</sup> Mada Masr, death of a prisoner in 'Badr 3' after a two-month hunger strike, November 2, 2022, available on: <https://shorturl.at/BXmun> (AR)

<sup>14</sup> Al-Hurra, the sister of an imprisoned Egyptian poet, reveals his health condition after his suicide attempt, September 19, 2023, available on <https://shorturl.at/FXA90> (AR)

<sup>15</sup> Al Jazeera, "Egypt; A leaked message reveals "spy cameras" in a women's prison, and the Interior Ministry responds," July 2023, available at <https://bit.ly/3UkTftI>

<sup>16</sup> Article 42 of the Prison Organization Law (No. 396 of 1995) allows for the absolute or restricted prohibition of prison visits during certain times for reasons related to health or security.

<sup>17</sup> ECRF and others, 'Egypt: Parallel Report to the UN Committee against Torture – 2023,' October 2023, available at <https://bit.ly/4cAunpq>

## Judicial Independence and Fair Trial Guarantees

18. The government accepted 9 UPR recommendations in 2019 on the right to fair trials, including shortening pretrial detention and ensuring access to justice, due process, and lawyers, and consular assistance for foreigners. Egypt rejected 10 recommendations on military trials for civilians, mass trials, and fair trials for those sentenced to death.

19. The 2018 constitutional amendments and Law 77/2019 authorizes the President to appoint judicial body heads, undermining judicial independence.<sup>18</sup>

20. Detainees are increasingly denied communication, even their lawyers are barred from reviewing their cases. The prosecution recently renewed the detention of hundreds in a single session, obstructing lawyers' defense preparation.<sup>19</sup> In December 2021, the Justice Ministry implemented remote pretrial detention renewal through Decision 8901. Lawyers attend court sessions online with the judge, not in person with the defendant in custody,<sup>20</sup> which undermines the defendant's right to a fair trial.

21. In November 2021, the torture of detainees was filmed at El-Salam First Police Station in Cairo. In January 2022 officers dismissed the circulating video as fake<sup>21</sup> and Nasser Omran was arrested for posting it. On 15 February, the prosecution said the video seeks to destabilize the country and charged at least 20 individuals under Case 95/2022, including the torture victims shown in the video, with offenses related to terrorism and 'spreading false information'. A 17-year-old minor was sentenced to five years imprisonment, and the other defendants given varying prison terms. All were placed on terrorism watchlists and under police surveillance for five years.<sup>22</sup>

22. In December 2021, the State Security Emergency Court sentenced HRDs and lawyers Alaa Abdel Fattah, Mohamed Ibrahim, and Mohamed El-Baqer in Case 1228; five years in prison for the former, four years for the latter two. Their trial lacked due process; they were referred to trial without their lawyers' knowledge, and the prosecution withheld information about the charges. The court denied the defense the opportunity to speak, access the case file, or consult with clients. The prosecution presented only unreliable evidence; electronic publications and offenses allegedly committed while in prison.<sup>23</sup> Despite El-Baqer's 2023 presidential pardon, he remains listed as terrorist and subject to associated penalties, including an asset freeze and travel ban.

23. In 2013, Justice Minister Decree 10412 established five specialized judicial circuits for terrorism and national security cases. Authorities have full discretion to refer cases directly to these circuits or transfer them from their original courts. Alongside

---

<sup>18</sup> In accordance with the law and Articles 185 and 193 of the amended Constitution.

<sup>19</sup> ANHRI, "We apologize: We will not respect the law today; On the phenomenon of security failures and the absence of the law in Egypt," August 18, 2019, available at: <https://www.anhri.info/?p=10398> (AR)

<sup>20</sup> The decision consists of two articles: The first allows pretrial detention renewal hearings to be held remotely using unspecified technology, and the second allows the use of technology that converts speech into written text during hearings.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Shorouk, 'Brotherhood fabrications and lies: A security source denies that detainees were tortured, January 24, 2022, available on <https://shorturl.at/Zg4AQ> (AR)

<sup>22</sup> CIHRS, 'Human Rights Demands to Retry the Defendants in the Peace Department Case and Investigate Their Complaints of Torture,' November 24, 2022, available at <https://shorturl.at/NWe3b>

<sup>23</sup> CIHRS, 'Egypt: Unjust verdict must not be ratified against activists Mohamed El-Baqer, Alaa Abdel Fattah, and Mohamed Ibrahim', December 20, 2021, available at: <https://shorturl.at/4iSrK>

expansions to counterterrorism legislation, particularly the 2014 Penal Code amendments and the 2015 Anti-Terrorism Law, terrorism circuits have become instrumental in targeting human rights activists.<sup>24</sup>

24. Throughout 2020, terrorism courts issued at least 20,998 detention renewal orders in 2,581 cases, with only 6.3% of defendants released, according to civil society monitoring. In 2021, 28,959 detention renewal orders were issued in 2,043 cases, as some of the defendants exceeded the maximum legal pretrial detention period (two years).<sup>25</sup>

25. In 2023, terrorism circuits drastically reduced pretrial releases in State Security cases. In 127 sessions across three circuits, 35,966 pretrial detention renewal orders were reviewed but only three releases ordered by the Court, constituting less than 0.1% of the total reviewed. Detention was typically renewed for 45 days.<sup>26</sup>

26. On 15 January 2023, the First Terrorism Circuit of the Emergency State Security Court sentenced to prison 83 defendants, including 23 children, in Case 653/2021. Despite numerous defendant allegations of enforced disappearance and torture, the court disregarded those and sentenced 38 people to life imprisonment; the remaining received prison terms ranging from 5-15 years.<sup>27</sup>

27. Although Egypt was recommended to stop prosecuting civilians in military courts, military courts have been increasingly used to imprison civilians. In December 2022, a military court sentenced 184 civilians to prison, sentencing 5 to death (2 in person and 3 in absentia), 31 to life imprisonment, and 30 to 15 years. Most of remaining defendants received sentences ranging from 3 to 10 years.<sup>28</sup>

28. In January 2024, parliament enacted Law 3/2024, multiplying offenses for which civilians could be arrested and prosecuted in military courts, including offenses impacting essential goods and supplies.<sup>29</sup>

## **Human Rights in the Context of Combating Terrorism**

29. On protecting human rights while combating terrorism, Egypt received 11 recommendations in 2019 and rejected two: to abolish legislation restricting human rights and release prisoners of conscience. The State Security Prosecution arbitrarily detains rights defenders through terrorism charges often together with accusations of social media misuse and ‘spreading false news’.

---

<sup>24</sup> In May 2023 alone, the 13th Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court issued a decision to include 81 Egyptians on terrorism lists for 5 years, including HR activists and politicians.

<sup>25</sup> EFHR, The State of Terrorism Pre-Trial Chambers in 2021, Feb 2022, available on <https://egyptianfront.org/ar/2022/02/tcc-2021annual/>

<sup>26</sup> EFHR, ‘No One Came Out’: Report on Monitoring the Performance of Terrorism Chambers in the Pre-Trial Phase during the Year 2023, January 31, 2024, available on: <https://egyptianfront.org/ar/2024/01/tcc-2023/>

<sup>27</sup> Egyptian Front for Human Rights, The Joker Case: Report on Violation of Fair Trial Guarantees, October 2023. available on: <https://shorturl.at/FQZeZ> (AR)

<sup>28</sup> Egyptian Front for Human Rights, A military court sentences 5 people to death and dozens of other defendants to various terms of imprisonment, in Case No. 79 of 2016, December 2022, available on: <https://shorturl.at/5rKz5> (AR)

<sup>29</sup> CIHRS, ‘Alarming New Law Expands Military Power amid Fears of Popular Unrest as Economy Deteriorates, Feb 2, 2024, available on <https://shorturl.at/N9qYe>

30. Egypt has invoked counterterrorism since 2013 to justify draconian legislation. The Terrorist Entities Law (8/2015) authorizes the Attorney General to request courts to designate individuals or groups as terrorist without trial for over three years, leading to asset confiscation and travel bans. The Anti-Terrorism Law (94/2015) broadens terrorism's definition, facilitating prosecution of activists, HRDs, lawyers, journalists, and citizens for expressing opinions.

31. The February 2020 amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Law broadened the definition of 'financing terrorism' and introduced new crimes with penalties ranging from fines to death. In November 2021, two more amendments were enacted: one granting the President authority to declare terrorism-related measures, and another banning the recording, broadcasting, or displaying of terrorism trial proceedings without court approval.

32. Politicians, HRDs, and journalists are vulnerable to austere sentencing by the Emergency State Security Court. Opposition party leader Abdelmoneim Aboufotouh his deputy Mohamed Al-Qassas were sentenced to 15 and 10 years respectively. Moaz Al-Sharqawi, Tanta University Student Union vice president, was sentenced to 10 years.<sup>30</sup>

### **Freedom of Expression and Digital Rights**

33. In 2019, Egypt received 29 recommendations on guaranteeing free opinion and expression. The government accepted 18 recommendations on media and press freedom, and rejected 11 calling for the release of prisoners of conscience and ensuring their right to a fair trial.

34. The Protest (107/2013) and Assembly (10/1914) laws have enabled the arbitrary prosecution of thousands of citizens for 'crimes' related to exercising fundamental rights.<sup>31</sup> Egypt's parliament repealed the draconian colonizer-issued Assembly Law in 1928, but the repeal was not published and thus the law remains in force.

35. 120 people were arrested following demonstrations against Israel's war in Gaza. Of these, 67 individuals remain in pretrial detention, accused of terrorism, unlawful assembly, and spreading false news, while six have been disappeared.<sup>32</sup>

36. The COVID-19 pandemic witnessed the arbitrary arrest of many doctors, trade unionists, journalists, and citizens for criticizing government policies. Typically accused of 'spreading false news', some have spent years behind bars.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> CIHRS and HR organizations, 'President must overturn unjust verdicts against politicians Aboul- Fotouh, Al-Qassas, Moaz al-Sharqawi, and Yahia Abdel Hadi' available on <https://shorturl.at/TIPQc>

<sup>31</sup> CIHRS, 'The campaign against the state's unlawful use of the colonial-era Assembly Law persists despite courtroom defeat' available on <https://shorturl.at/832rt>

<sup>32</sup> On April 23, 2024, authorities arrested 16 women HRD for a brief sit-in outside the UN Women's office in Cairo supporting Palestinian and Sudanese women. They forcibly disappeared for 20 hours then appeared before the State Security Prosecution, to be charged with disrupting work, enforcing laws, and joining a banned group to disturb public peace and security. They were released on bail ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 EGP, pending case 1567 of 2024 in the Supreme State Security.

<sup>33</sup> Ahmed Allam, a TV producer, was arrested by security forces on April 24, 2020, from his family's home in Al-Ayyat. He was released on March 1, 2023, along with 33 others. Journalist Khaled Ghoneim, arrested in April 2020 for posts on COVID-19 measures, was also released after over two and a half years. Darb website: 'After 3 Years in Prison, First Photos

37. Reporters Without Borders placed Egypt among the worst violators of press freedom globally, ranking it 166th out of 180 countries. Egypt is one of the world's largest prisons for journalists, the report noted.<sup>34</sup>

38. 2023 was replete with constant violations of press freedom throughout Egypt. Journalists, media personnel and their families were subject to harassment, arrest, prolonged detention, and arbitrary administrative investigations<sup>35</sup>. At least 32 journalists were arrested between 2019 and 2023.<sup>36</sup>

39. On 16 February 2020, executive regulations were issued for the Media Regulation Law (180/ 2018), which imposed strict administrative requirements on journalists and media licensing. The law also prohibits creating or managing any website, in or outside Egypt, without licensing from the Supreme Council for Media Regulation. Violators face fines ranging from one to three million Egyptian pounds, along with office closure and equipment confiscation.

40. The Media Regulation Law imposes broad and vague restrictions on publishing and distributing content. Article 4 authorizes the Supreme Council for Media Regulation to prohibit entry of publications into Egypt for reasons of 'national security' or constitutional infringement. The law grants the Council sweeping powers to block websites without requiring judicial order.

41. Penal Code articles (80 D), (102 Bis), and (188) penalizes publication of 'false news' with up to 5 years imprisonment and fines.

42. Penal Code article 184 shields public figures and institutions from criticism, for which persons can be penalized with imprisonment and fines. Article 178 Bis imposes fines for publishing images that may tarnish the country's reputation, while Article 178 criminalizes publications vaguely deemed offensive to public morality, thereby curtailing artistic and creative expression.

43. Over 630 sites have been blocked in Egypt since May 2017, especially those of independent journalism platforms and local and international rights organizations. The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies website was blocked in 2023 after publishing its mid-term UPR report; the Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) and Human Rights Watch websites are also blocked.

44. ANHRI's news website was blocked just nine hours after its 2019 launch. In 2022, the news website of Al-Manassa and three of its alternative links were blocked within 72 hours.

45. In June 2020, security forces raided Al-Manassa premises, arresting editor-in-chief Nora Younis and detaining her for over 30 hours before her release on 10,000 EGP

---

of Journalist Ahmed Allam on the Ground Following His Release Order," March 1, 2023, available on : <https://shorturl.at/5Et0J>

<sup>34</sup> Reporters without Borders, Egypt index 2023, available on <https://rsf.org/en/country/egypt>

<sup>35</sup> In August 2023, journalist Karim Asaad of "Matsadaksh" was arrested for reporting on the detention of an Egyptian plane in Zambia. He was released after two days in National Security custody. For details, refer CIHRS's statement of solidarity with "Matsadaksh" on August 23, 2023, available on : <https://shorturl.at/AL00e>

<sup>36</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists database available on : <https://shorturl.at/WgFaR>



bail.<sup>37</sup> In September 2022, the Public Prosecution summoned three Mada Masr journalists and accused them of spreading false news. Editor-in-chief Lina Attalah was also accused of operating an unlicensed website.<sup>38</sup> They were later released on bail, but the case remains ongoing.<sup>39</sup>

46. The Telecommunications Law's article 64 (10/2003) requires service providers to provide technical capabilities to military and national security agencies, violating the right to privacy.<sup>40</sup>

47. The Anti-Cyber and Information Technology Crimes Law's article 2 (175/2018) obliges service providers to save and store user data for 180 days and make this data available to national security agencies upon request.

48. Articles 25 and 26 of the same law criminalize acts that 'violate family values' without specification,<sup>41</sup> facilitating the imprisonment and prosecution of content creators. Activists and HRDs can be charged with managing websites and accounts for the purpose of committing a legally punishable crime, under the law's article 27.<sup>42</sup>

49. In 2021, the phones of opposition politician Ayman Nour and a well-known television host were hacked. Politician Ahmed Tantawi also faced an attempted phone-hacking after announcing his intention to run for president.<sup>43</sup>

## **The Right to Political Participation**

50. Our organizations have underscored that the 2024 Egyptian presidential elections were neither free nor fair.<sup>44</sup> Occurring in a repressive climate, the processes' legitimacy was undermined by arrests of President Sisi's potential rivals as well as of journalists and activists. Former MP Ahmed Tantawi's family was targeted by authorities in May

---

<sup>37</sup> CIHRS, HR organizations: 'The investigation of the 'Al-Manassa's Editor must be shelved', Jul 4, 2020.

<https://shorturl.at/cBnkG>

<sup>38</sup> CIHRS:Human rights organizations; 'Public Prosecutor urged to close investigation of Mada Masr's journalists'

September 15, 2022 <https://shorturl.at/GXVOh>

<sup>39</sup> In October 2023, the Supreme Council for Media Regulation decided to block "Mada Masr"—despite it already being blocked by Egyptian authorities—for six months, accusing it of unlicensed journalism and publishing false news. The SCMR referred the case to the public prosecutor after a report on Egypt's stance on Palestinian displacement. Lina Attalah, Mada Masr's Editor, was summoned and released on bail in February 2024, with the case still open. In March 2024, journalist Rana Mamdouh from "Mada Masr" was arrested and interrogated by State Security while covering the "Ras El Hikma" deal, then released on bail.

<sup>40</sup> The delay in issuing the executive regulations for the Personal Data Protection Law (No. 151 of 2020) has hindered its implementation, leaving personal data unprotected. Exemptions for national security and the Central Bank raise questions about the law's effectiveness. The establishment of a Personal Data Protection Center is overshadowed by concerns about its independence due to its security-focused board. The law lacks details on cross-border data sharing and mechanisms for reporting data breaches. Article 7 requires notification of the Personal Data Protection Center within 72 hours of a breach but does not specify when to inform affected individuals, reducing transparency.

<sup>41</sup> Smex, The TikTok Case: A New Platform to Oppress Women in Egypt, 28 Aug 2020 available on <https://smex.org/the-tiktok-case-a-new-platform-to-oppress-women-in-egypt/>

<sup>42</sup> Among them are Nora Younis, Al-Manassa' Editor, and Hossam Bahgat, the current director of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.

<sup>43</sup> Reuters, Prominent Egyptian opposition activist's phone hacked – watchdog, December 17, 2021,

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/prominent-egyptian-opposition-activists-phone-hacked-watchdog-2021-12-16/>

<sup>44</sup> CIHRS: 'Egypt's 2024 Presidential Elections: A Dead End' May 2, 2023 available on <https://cihrs.org/egypts-2024-presidential-elections-a-dead-end/?lang=en>

2023 shortly after announcing his presidential bid from abroad.<sup>45</sup> 194 supporters and members of Tantawi's campaign were arrested, some on unsubstantiated terrorism charges<sup>46</sup> while more broadly those who would openly support Tantawi faced threats and intimidation, to the extent that employees at notary offices declined to register endorsements for him.

51. Tantawi and his campaign manager, along with several supporters, were prosecuted under Case 16336/2023. Not summoned for investigation, they were instead referred to trial without notification, accused of handling election documents without proper authorization. On 6 February 2024, Tantawi and his campaign manager were sentenced to one year in prison. On 27 May, the Appeals Court upheld the verdict, and Tantawi was arrested in the courtroom.

52. Supporters of Gameela Ismail, the Constitution Party leader, were prevented by authorities from registering endorsements for her at notary offices in several cities. According to her issued statement, there were incidents of assault, and one woman was sexually harassed.<sup>47</sup>

53. In December 2023, the Supreme Council for Media Regulation launched an investigation into 'Sahih Misr' website staff, referring them to the Public Prosecution for their coverage of the Egyptian presidential elections. In January 2024, the council summoned the editor of the 'Zat Masr' website under accusation of publishing false and provocative news after airing interviews with politicians and economists critical of government policies.<sup>48</sup>

### **Freedom of Association and Transnational Repression**

54. Over the UPR's past three cycles, Egypt received 31 recommendations to lift restrictions on, and decriminalize, the work of HRDs; including to refrain from prosecution and to protect them from retaliatory practices.

55. Law 149/2019 regulating civil work undermines civil society independence, granting authorities broad powers to interfere in an organization's management and employee hiring, and in its projects and activities. Authorities have the right to shutter organizations, reject any foreign funding they may receive, and prohibit them from conducting surveys and field studies.<sup>49</sup> Anti-terrorism legislation is also used to punish HRDs in Egypt, including Ramy Kamel, Patrick Zaki, Mohamed Ramadan, and others

---

<sup>45</sup> CIHRS: 'As National Dialogue starts, family and supporters of Ahmed Tantawy arrested after he announced his intent to run as president', May 5, 2023, <https://shorturl.at/4JG05>

<sup>46</sup> CIHRS: Tantawi Arrested in Court for Defying President Sisi by Contesting the 2024 Elections, May 28, 2024, <https://shorturl.at/9SSXt>

<sup>47</sup> The official page of Jamila Ismail on Facebook, September 27, 2023, available on <https://shorturl.at/2vy4y> (AR)

<sup>48</sup> The Egyptian daily Al-Youm Al-Sabea, 'Supreme Council for Media Regulations decides to conduct an urgent investigation with Sahih Misr, December 10, 2023, available on: [bit.ly/4cPGYVN](https://bit.ly/4cPGYVN) (AR)

<sup>49</sup> For more refer to Articles 14, 15, 19, 45, 75 of Law No. 149 of 2019. And the legal analysis from CIHRS for the legal regulations, available on <https://cihrs.org/legal-commentary-on-regulations-of-ngo-law-n-149-for-2019-on-civic-associations/>

from the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms and Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.<sup>50</sup>

56. Retaliatory practices continue against HRDs and activists abroad. In June 2020, Salah Sultan was detained incommunicado in retribution for his son Mohamed Sultan's human rights activism abroad (founder of the Freedom Initiative)<sup>51</sup>. Similarly, the family of journalist and advocate Ahmed Gamal Ziada was targeted, with his father arrested and interrogated about his journalist son's activities abroad.<sup>52</sup>

57. The Terrorist Entities Law is used to list as terrorist activists and HRDs abroad, subjecting them to deportation while restricting their free movement and financial transactions.<sup>53</sup>

58. Prosecuting HRDs abroad as defendants in new cases<sup>54</sup> deprives them of their right to return to Egypt. They are pursued abroad by Egyptian authorities who aim for their deportation to Egypt where they would face imprisonment or disappearance. Sentences are issued in absentia against HRDs abroad<sup>55</sup> who are also subject to retaliatory threats<sup>56</sup> and media smear campaigns.<sup>57</sup>

59. Many activists and HRDs abroad have been denied the right to have their identification documents issued or renewed<sup>58</sup>, restricting their ability to travel, live, and work legally, and depriving them of basic medical care and educational services.<sup>59</sup>

60. The Egyptian Human Rights Forum has documented cases of defenders being tracked, surveilled, and having their residences searched by Egyptian security agents abroad. Their families in Egypt are also threatened, with family homes raided and relatives targeted, some of whom are arrested or denied professional positions or

---

<sup>50</sup> For example: Coptic activist Rami Kamel was arrested in November 2019 before his trip to Geneva for a UN forum on minority issues. He was accused of committing acts of terrorism in Case No. 1475 of 2019. Before his arrest, Kamel was beaten, tortured, and threatened to stop his activism after an unofficial interrogation by national security. Released after over two years of detention, his case remains open. Similar cases include Mohamed Ramadan, Amr Imam, and Patrick Zaki. In Jun 2020, security forces arrested five relatives of Egyptian American rights defender Mohamed Soltan in retaliation for his lawsuit in the US against a former Egyptian PM. They were accused of joining a terrorist group and spreading false news after being forcibly disappeared. Soltan's father, Salah, imprisoned since 2013, faces poor conditions and lacks urgent medical care. In Mar 2023, 29 human rights defenders from the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms were sentenced for terrorism acts, some in pretrial detention since 2018, including Ezat Ghonim, Hoda Abdelmonem, Aisha El-Shater, and Mohamed Abu Horira. In November 2020, three senior staff of the Egyptian Initiative were arrested on terrorism charges. Despite international protests leading to their release, they are still barred from travel and their assets frozen.

<sup>51</sup> CIHRS: Egypt: US Advocate's Father Held Incommunicado, November 15, 2021, available <https://cihrs.org/egypt-us-advocates-father-held-incommunicado/?lang=en>

<sup>52</sup> Egypt: Recent arbitrary practices show no intent to improve human rights situation or release political prisoners <https://shorturl.at/sfecU>

<sup>53</sup> Forthcoming report by the Egyptian Human Rights Forum.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> For example Bahey eldin Hassan, sentenced to 18 years in prison after a media smear campaign calling for his assassination on channels close to Egyptian authorities. For more, see: Egypt.. Bahey eldin Hassan sentenced to 15 years. <https://shorturl.at/MN7Yh>

<sup>56</sup> The Sinai Organization and its director, Ahmed Salem, faced threats due to their human rights work and reports on Rafah, North Sinai.

<sup>57</sup> CIHRS, Egypt, Human Rights Group and its Director Threatened and Smeared, Reprisals Follow Reports on Gaza Border Incidents <https://shorturl.at/eLjqu>

<sup>58</sup> HRW, Egypt: Dissidents Abroad Denied Identity Documents, <https://shorturl.at/HLiVy>

<sup>59</sup> Forthcoming report by the Egyptian Human Rights Forum.

promotions. Such intimidatory tactics are intended to pressure HRDs abroad to renounce their human rights activities or to force them to return to Egypt.<sup>60</sup>

## Sexual and Gender Rights

61. Egypt has rejected recommendations to combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals (LGBTQI+ community).

62. While Egyptian law does not explicitly criminalize consensual same-sex relationships, the government uses the Anti-Prostitution Law (10 /1961) to prosecute LGBTQI+ individuals, with penalties of up to three years imprisonment. Penal Code articles 279 and 278 are also used for the same purpose.<sup>61</sup>

63. Over the past five years, arrests and prosecutions have risen of LGBTQI+ individuals, who are subject to inhumane detention conditions. In 2020, 25 arrests and 21 cases were documented by rights organizations;<sup>62</sup> 15 cases resulted in jail sentences of one or more years (8 verdicts followed an appeal). In 2021, eleven people, mostly outside Cairo, were arrested for public debauchery.<sup>63</sup> In 2022, 43 people in 19 cases were prosecuted on charges of habitual prostitution, as reported by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.<sup>64</sup> In 2023, between 35 and 40 people were arrested<sup>65</sup> while in January 2024, two individuals were arrested for debauchery.<sup>66</sup>

64. The rights of LGBTQI+ detainees, whether transgender women or gay men, are prone to severe violations. In 2023, 28 individuals were forced to undergo anal examinations conducted by the Forensic Medicine Authority despite objections from rights organizations.<sup>67</sup>

65. Digital platforms, dating websites, and applications are used to track, target, and arrest LGBTQI+ individuals. Human Rights Watch documented 29 cases of arrest and prosecution in September 2023 alone<sup>68</sup>, revealing a systematic security campaign against such individuals.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Egyptian authorities continue to spread hate speech against the LGBTQ+ community. In September 2017, the Supreme Council for Media banned their appearance in media unless they acknowledge their behavior as wrong and repent. Source: Egypt Independent "Egypt imposes media blackout on LGBT community," October 01, 2017. <https://shorturl.at/a5PtS>

<sup>62</sup> Bedayaa, Report: Queen Boat Incident:20 years on <https://shorturl.at/OMdNv> (AR)

<sup>63</sup> ANKH association Documenting cases of the arrest of LGBTQ+ individuals in Egypt.

<sup>64</sup> DW: Social media is a "trap" to catch LGBTQ+ individuals in Egypt, available on <https://shorturl.at/2OL6b> (AR)

<sup>65</sup> NBC News, Grindr sends Egypt users a warning after alleged entrapments and arrests, available on <https://shorturl.at/vgxsy>

<sup>66</sup> Masrawy, Dakahlia's Public Prosecutor's Office decided on the "Shams and Noor" network for homosexuals in, January 21, 2024, available on : <https://shorturl.at/wXKwH> (AR)

<sup>67</sup> OHCHR, In Dialogue with Egypt, Experts of the Human Rights Committee Commend Measures Combatting Discrimination, Raise Issues Concerning Treatment of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Persons and Judicial Independence, available on : <https://shorturl.at/qcqiE>

<sup>68</sup> HRW: Report, 'All This Terror Because of a Photo.' February 21, 2023, <https://shorturl.at/ljaaK>

<sup>69</sup> LGBTQ+ individuals also face torture. Hossam Ahmed, a transgender person, was arrested in February 2019 on charges of terrorism and misuse of social media. The authorities have deprived him of hormone treatment since his arrest. The prison authorities forced him to undergo a genital examination without a prosecution order, despite him having a medical certificate for gender transition treatment. Ankh, Save Hossam Ahmed, available <https://www.ankhfrance.org/savehossam>

## Human Rights in North Sinai

66. From 2014 until 2021, amid prolonged armed conflict between Egyptian security forces and the 'Sinai Province' group affiliated with ISIS, deaths in North Sinai have risen 1,836 civilians, with 2,915<sup>70</sup> injured. 9 civilians were killed by security forces<sup>71</sup> in 2020 and at least 7 in 2021, some due to stray and direct gunfire, or toxic gas inhalation.<sup>72</sup>

67. Armed clashes between state security and Sinai Province have escalated, with both sides committing rights violations potentially amounting to war crimes under international humanitarian law. In addition to subjecting residents to arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, and extrajudicial killing<sup>73</sup> Security and military operations in Sinai amount to collective punishment, with thousands of residents displaced and thousands of homes demolished, alongside destruction of agricultural lands.<sup>74</sup>

68. A 2021 presidential decree granted the Defense Minister broad powers to impose, without oversight, exceptional measures in North Sinai including curfews, forced evacuations, property seizures, and disruption of transportation and communications.<sup>75</sup>

69. Strict restrictions are imposed on the movement of people and goods in North Sinai, hindering access to essential supplies such as food, medicine, gas, and fuel. Water, electricity, and internet services are repeatedly cut off, constituting a policy of collective punishment.<sup>76</sup>

70. Sinai Province has conducted unlawful operations targeting civilians and security forces through violations like abduction and killing,<sup>77</sup> including against Christian citizens.<sup>78</sup> Hundreds of civilians have been killed, and local residents forcibly displaced<sup>79</sup> as a result of the group's direct attacks on residential areas (often using explosive devices), which have also targeted and destroyed schools.<sup>80</sup> In areas under their control, Sinai Province imposes restrictions on women, and subjects civilians to unfair trials, security checkpoints, and regular patrols.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Al-Masry Al-Youm, Report: the National Council for Human Rights report on North Sinai reviews the governorate's response to complaints about compensation, housing, health, education, transportation, and the expansion of Al-Arish port," February 10, 202, available on <https://shorturl.at/Inuqj> (AR)

<sup>71</sup> Egyptian Front for Human Rights, Report on Human Rights Violations in the Context of the War on Terror in North Sinai for 2020," April 2021. available on <https://shorturl.at/jvBrw> (AR)

<sup>72</sup> Egyptian Front for Human Rights, Report on Human Rights Violations in the Context of the War on Terror in North Sinai for 2021, April 2022. available on <https://shorturl.at/4S4Xw> (AR)

<sup>73</sup> HRW, Report: 'If You Are Afraid for Your Lives, Leave Sinai' May 28, 2019. available on <https://shorturl.at/QK0LN>

<sup>74</sup> HRW, Egypt: Massive Sinai Demolitions Likely War Crimes March 17, 2021. available on <https://shorturl.at/MIF7m>

<sup>75</sup> Sinai Foundation for Human Rights (SFHR); A dangerous presidential decree "perpetuates" the state of emergency in North Sinai. available on <https://sinaifhr.org/show/102> (AR)

<sup>76</sup> Egyptian Front for Human Rights, Report on Human Rights: Violations in the Context of the War on Terror in North Sinai for 2020," April 2021. available on <https://shorturl.at/jvBrw> (AR)

<sup>77</sup> HRW, Report: 'If You Are Afraid for Your Lives, Leave Sinai' May 28, 2019. available on <https://shorturl.at/QK0LN>

<sup>78</sup> HRW, Report; Egypt's Christians Flee ISIS Violence. March 13, 2017 available on <https://shorturl.at/W7Yxy>

<sup>79</sup> Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, Monthly Report, October 2020. available on <https://sinaifhr.org/show/35> (AR)

<sup>80</sup> The Guardian, Egyptian army has turned Sinai schools into military bases, says rights group. March 30, 2023. available on <https://shorturl.at/jP04w>

<sup>81</sup> HRW, Report: 'If You Are Afraid for Your Lives, Leave Sinai' May 28, 2019. available on <https://shorturl.at/QK0LN>

71. Since mid-2015, tribes loyal to the military in Sinai began forming militias to support the government in its war against Sinai Province.<sup>82</sup> Since July 2020, the army has been arming and regularly training pro-government militias.

72. In mid-2021, the military's Tribal Affairs Office requested some tribal leaders to register their tribe's members in militias loyal to the government, where they would undergo military training. By late 2021, these militias had begun armed operations against Sinai Province.<sup>83</sup>

73. The right to education in North Sinai<sup>84</sup> has been severely undermined by the armed conflict. Schools are converted into military bases<sup>85</sup> and are damaged during confrontations. Military and police forces have been implicated in using schools for military purposes,<sup>86</sup> at times without evacuating students and teachers.<sup>87</sup>

74. 21 health facilities have been destroyed and closed by military forces during clashes with armed groups, as documented by the Sinai Foundation for Human Rights; security forces were implicated in using health facilities for military purposes.

75. Between 2013 and 2022, the military was implicated in recruiting children, including under the age of 12, likely constituting a war crime. Child recruits (aged 15-18) were assigned to dangerous tasks against Sinai Province members, who later pursued and killed these children.<sup>88</sup>

## **Discrimination and Violence Against Women**

76. In the 2019 UPR, the government received 82 recommendations regarding women's rights, accepting 70 but rejecting all recommendations related to lifting reservations on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and criminalizing marital rape. Despite accepting recommendations on amending personal status laws and combating domestic violence, no relevant laws have been issued while legislation perpetuating violence and discrimination against women continues to be enacted.

77. Egyptian personal status laws and related legal procedures are determined by a family's religion. On 5 June 2022, the Justice Minister formed a committee of 11 judges, including two women, to amend the Personal Status Law for Muslims. Although

---

<sup>82</sup> Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, Report, 'Imminent' end for ISIS in Sinai and an uncertain future. The "lesser of two evils" strategy does not ensure long-term stability or rights.' September 26, 2022. available on <https://sinaifhr.org/show/154> (AR)

<sup>83</sup> ibid

<sup>84</sup> Egyptian Front for Human Rights, Report on Human Rights: 'Mines Of The Future' April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 available on <https://sinaifhr.org/show/365>

<sup>85</sup> The Guardian, Egyptian army has turned Sinai schools into military bases, says rights group. March 30, 2023. available on <https://shorturl.at/jP04w>

<sup>86</sup> Including using schools for inspection, monitoring, supply camps, or military bases.

<sup>87</sup> According to HR organizations, 73 schools in North Sinai were destroyed by artillery and aerial bombardment, with 135 educational facilities affected across 5 cities. See the map by SFHR for school coordinates, types of violations. available on <https://educationmap.sinaifhr.org>

<sup>88</sup> Army forces allowed allied militias to recruit and use children under 18 in combat against armed groups, leading to some being killed or injured. For more see SFHR's report 'I Was Afraid...I Was Only 17' available on <https://sinaifhr.org/show/205>

committee's term was to end after four months with a new personal status law issued, this has not happened.<sup>89</sup>

78. Under the current Personal Status Law's article 144, a mother loses custody of her children upon remarriage, while a father retains custody of his children after remarriage.

79. The proposed Unified Christian Family Law, formulated without stakeholder consultation, has not been published yet. Under the current law, Christians cannot divorce unless one party converts to another religion. Custody is forfeited for a Christian mother married to a Muslim upon the children reaching seven years, in other cases the age is 15.

80. The Penal Code's article 60 serves to vindicate domestic and family violence while Article 17 continues to exonerate (or reduce sentencing of) men who rape, assault, or commit so-called 'honor' crimes against women. 1,006 cases of violence against women and girls were documented in 2022<sup>90</sup>, and 950 cases in 2023.<sup>91</sup>

81. Penal Code articles 237, 274, and 277 are glaringly discriminatory in punishment for adultery: for men, up to 6 months imprisonment while for women, 2 years for the same crime.

82. Rapists evade justice through Public Prosecution intervention. In the infamous 'Fairmont Case', several men (including prominent businessmen's sons) were accused of rape. Witnesses to the crime were turned into defendants by the Prosecutor, who charged them with debauchery and spreading false news.<sup>92</sup> After witnesses were imprisoned for four months and coerced through threats to change their statements, the prosecution closed the case.<sup>93</sup>

## **Refugees' Rights**

83. The ECRF has documented the detention of Uyghur, Afghan, Sudanese, and Syrian refugees. Asylum seekers arriving through conflict zones across Egypt's borders have been detained arbitrarily while in 2020, an arrest campaign was initiated mostly Sudanese refugees were targeted in an arrest campaign following the killing of a Sudanese child in Cairo. Detainees faced deportation threats and medical neglect in inadequate facilities. Deprived of contact with lawyers or families, refugees have no mechanism for complaints, appeals, or access to the prosecution as long as it falls under national security jurisdiction.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Sky News Arabia, 'Forming the committee to amend the Family Law in Egypt.' June 5, 2022, available on <https://shorturl.at/YPbSe> (AR)

<sup>90</sup> Idrak Foundation for Development and Equality, 2022 Violence Crimes Report, available on <https://edraak-eg.org/442/> (AR)

<sup>91</sup> Idrak Foundation for Development and Equality, Report on Violence Crimes against Women and Girls in Egypt 2023, available on <https://bit.ly/3WaA3RA> (AR)

<sup>92</sup> Al-Manassa: Fairmont Case: Virginity Tests and Anal Examinations for 'Witnesses', September 3, 2020, available on <https://almanassa.com/stories/4604> (AR)

<sup>93</sup> Mada Masr: How the 'Fairmont Rape' Witnesses Became Defendants and Why the Case Was Closed, August 22, 2021, available on <https://bit.ly/3AraaBV> (AR)

<sup>94</sup> Amnesty International, Egypt: Protests by Sudanese migrants and refugees over brutal killing of a child met with violence and arrests, November 4, 2020, available on <https://shorturl.at/K33Ir>

84. Sudanese refugees face mass arrest and forced deportation, with 800 Sudanese detainees forcibly deported in the first quarter of 2024 without being permitted to request asylum, contact the UNHCR, or appeal deportations.<sup>95</sup>

85. The ECRF has documented numerous cases of sexual harassment and rape against women asylum-seekers, with no medical examination of victims' allegations or investigation and charges brought against perpetrators. Police refuse to register victims' complaints and some are assaulted and falsely accused of prostitution.

86. Egypt has accepted only limited numbers of Palestinian refugees from Gaza after 7 October 2023, most requiring medical treatment. Authorities impose what amounts to house arrest on them, prohibiting contact with the press. There are several cases of Palestinians previously in Egypt treatment but unable to return after the war. Their families were also denied entry, with exorbitant fees in dollars imposed for Gazans to enter Egypt.<sup>96</sup>

### **Minorities and Marginalized Groups**

87. Egyptian authorities continue to resort to informal reconciliation sessions over the judiciary in sectarian violence cases between Christians and Muslims, sometimes leading to forced displacement. Sectarian attacks and incitement to hatred are ignored, with neither the root causes of such issues addressed nor legislation enacted to combat religious hate speech.

88. On 23 April 2024, sectarian attacks broke out in Minya governorate following rumors of church construction; Coptic Christians were assaulted, their homes burned or otherwise assailed to compel them to flee. Multiple incidents of harassment and incitement against Copts predated the violence but was ignored security forces,<sup>97</sup> leading to Christian students being assaulted at a school.<sup>98</sup>

89. On 26 April 2024, Copts in Minya were ambushed by a crowd of worshippers exiting mosques after Friday prayer, protesting church construction despite that the church obtained official permission from authorities since 2023. The mob threw stones at Coptic homes before security forces intervened and arrested several assailants. On 5 September 2023, dozens attacked a Christian-owned house under construction in Minya, chanting incendiary slogans against Copts and looting construction materials under the pretext that it was an unlicensed church.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> Amnesty International Egypt: Authorities must end campaign of mass arrests and forced returns of Sudanese refugees. June 19, 2024 <https://shorturl.at/FM78V>

<sup>96</sup> Le Monde: Escape from the hell of Gaza for \$7,000 per person January 25, 2024 available on <https://bit.ly/4eT2P0m> (FR) BBC: Gazans crowdfund thousands for uncertain escape. March 3, 2024 available on <https://shorturl.at/Q82IM>

Asharq Al-Awsat: In Gaza, travelling is only for Rich. January 17, 2024 available on <https://bit.ly/3W9vSFH> (AR)

<sup>97</sup> The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights: EIPR holds the security authorities responsible for sectarian attacks in the villages of "Al-Fawakhir" and "Al-Kom Al-Ahmar" in Minya, April 29, 2023, available on: <https://shorturl.at/raAuV>

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> EIPR: Unknown individuals set fire to a licensed church in Manshiyat Za'farana village, Minya Governorate, on January 6, 2024, Christmas Day. Witnesses reported Muslim villagers marching after Friday prayers, threatening to prevent church construction. Security forces left before the fire around 3 a.m. The church, approved by authorities, is a 170-square-meter area enclosed by "block" walls, with only a tent and chairs used for prayer services for four months. The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) condemns delays in permits for building three churches in Minya amid sectarian tensions, January 28, 2024, available on : <https://shorturl.at/2rei5> (AR)



90. On 18 December 2023, sectarian attacks on Christians, including the burning of their homes, occurred in Al-Azeib Village in retaliation for church construction licensed by official authorities.<sup>100</sup>

91. Since the Church Construction Law (no.80) was issued in 2016, only 50 new churches have been approved for construction. Organizations have demanded the law's review with the aim of arriving at a unified law for building places of worship.<sup>101</sup>

92. Shiites face persecution and arrest for disturbing social peace and undermining public security, with links to Iran alleged. A 2020 court ruling closed and suspended Shiite media platforms. Security forces prevent Shiites from holding religious celebrations at Hussein Mosque in Cairo, while Al-Azhar issues hostile statements against them.<sup>102</sup>

93. Egypt's constitution recognizes only Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, while Baha'is are marked with a dash ("-") in the religion section of their identity cards. Baha'is are required to practice their religious rites at home after the dissolution of Baha'i assemblies in 1950<sup>103</sup>. In December 2021, the Administrative Court rejected a lawsuit to compel Alexandria Governorate to allocate land for use as cemeteries for non-adherents of the recognized three religions and citizens marked with a dash ("-") in the religion section.<sup>104</sup>

94. Baha'i parents and guardians are forced to sign a declaration stating, 'their children have no objection to taking Islamic or Christian religious education exams in public schools'.

95. Although the constitution acknowledges the Nubians' right to return to their lands, with a timeframe ending in 2024<sup>105</sup>, the authorities have undermined this right through policies such as Presidential Decree 444 of 2014, which declared 16 Nubian villages' land as military border zones, thus prohibiting civilians from living on or using the land. Decrees 355 and 498 of 2016 authorized the confiscation of many Nubian lands for the Million and a Half Acres Reclamation Project.

## **Right to Adequate Housing**

96. The ECRF has documented continued home demolitions and excessive use of force to evacuate residents from the city of Rafah continues, with the aim of establishing military buffer zone along the Egyptian-Palestinian border. The army illegally evacuated tens of thousands of residents illegally, destroying their homes and farms.

---

<sup>100</sup> Watani: Assaults on Copts in the village of "Al-Azeb" in Samalout due to church construction, security forces increase their presence, December 19, 2023, available on <https://shorturl.at/hsbE8> (AR)

<sup>101</sup> Al-Ahram: 'Five years after the Law on Church Construction and Restoration was issued, the New Republic strengthens citizenship and freedom of worship', January 7, 2022, available on <https://shorturl.at/KAm9y> (AR)

<sup>102</sup> Al-Ahram: a lawsuit to close and cease the broadcasting of Shia websites, February 23, 2020, available on: <https://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/2375158.aspx> (AR)

<sup>103</sup> HRW: Prohibited Identities, November 11, 2007, available on <https://shorturl.at/nooON>

<sup>104</sup> Minority Map in Egypt: An Egyptian court refuses to oblige the allocation of cemeteries for followers of unrecognized religions, available on <https://shorturl.at/LU1WR>

<sup>105</sup> Article 236: 'The state shall work to develop and implement projects that will return the Nubian population to their original areas and develop them within 10 years.'

Satellite images between 2017 and 2020 showed the demolition of approximately 4,000 buildings in Arish.<sup>106</sup>

97. The ECRF documented forced evictions in a Port Said suburb, with the Interior Ministry violently suppressing residents' attempts to stay in their homes. The government began evictions in February 2024 while ignoring residents' proposals for local development.<sup>107</sup>

98. Repeated security raids seek to expel Warraq Island residents from their homes, without compensation, in order to appropriate land for government investment projects. Sieges of varying lengths have led to public and health service closures<sup>108</sup> and residents arrested during anti-eviction protests.<sup>109</sup>

### **Recommendations for the Egyptian Government:**

1. Suspend the death penalty with the aim of abolition.
2. Release the tens of thousands of prisoners of conscience.
3. End torture, enforced disappearance, and impunity.
4. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.
5. Implement all recommendations and decisions of the Human Rights Council, the Committee against Torture, Special Procedures of the United Nations, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.
6. Discontinue the practice of 'recycling' detainees and amend legislation allowing it, especially the Criminal Procedures Code.
7. Repeal counter-terrorism laws and align other legislation, including the Penal Code and emergency laws, with international standards.
8. Publish the 1928 repeal of the Assembly Law (10/1914) and replace the Protest Law to ensure the right to peaceful assembly.
9. Hold free and fair elections under international supervision.
10. Ensure judicial independence and amend legislation enabling executive control over the judiciary.

---

<sup>106</sup> HRW, Egypt: Massive Sinai Demolitions Likely War Crimes available on: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/17/egypt-massive-sinai-demolitions-likely-war-crimes>

<sup>107</sup> The residents of the Al-Jamil suburb live 5 km from Port Said, and it is a tourist area located on the Mediterranean Sea. Residents of the area maintain long-term annually renewable usufruct contracts, with one term that either party (the governorate - the people) has the right to terminate the contract. The governorate currently refuses to renew the contract, and sent eviction notices, and one of the representatives of Port Said Governorate submitted a request to stop evacuation without consulting the people and presenting a proposal. However, the response of the Urban Planning Authority, "which the aPresident assigned to present alternatives," was negative and biased towards the governorate's decision.

<sup>108</sup> Mada Masr, Closing services and a mysterious "housing" project..tightening the siege of "Al-Warraq", November 22, 2022, available on <https://bit.ly/3ErZtBb>

<sup>109</sup> Mada Masr website, renewed protests in "Al-Warraq" after the arrest of 3 residents, February 5, 2023, available on <https://bit.ly/3Ktv35j>

11. Abolish terrorism and exceptional courts and stop trying civilians before military courts.
12. Lift restrictions on independent civil society, repeal Law 149/2019 and replace it with legislation respecting international standards.
13. Allow rights organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to inspect prisons.
14. Amend laws regulating press, communications, and cybercrime to align with international standards.
15. Issue legislation criminalizing domestic violence and a personal status law in accordance with international standards, in consultation with independent rights organizations, and form an independent committee to combat gender discrimination.
16. Issue a unified law for worship sites and halt persecution of religious and ethnic minorities.
17. Cease inciting hatred of and targeting the LGBTQI+ community.