

Crackdown on human rights in Egypt



ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

1,703 cases of enforced disappearances were documented between July 2013 and February 2019.¹

Enforced or involuntary disappearances are instances of abduction of individuals at the hands of state officials without any authorisation and with the intent of placing the victim outside the protection of the law. Enforced disappearance has become a widespread and systematic practice of Egyptian state policy and is used to silence any form of dissent.

Ezzat Ghoneim, head of the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms, was forcibly disappeared between September 2018 and February 2019 after a court had ordered his release.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Cairo was ranked the **most dangerous city in the world for women** in 2017.²



Violence against women continues at an alarming rate, and the authorities sometimes punish victims for speaking out.

Activist Amal Fathy was sentenced to two years in prison and a fine for posting a video about sexual harassment online.

CIVILIANS TRIED IN MILITARY COURTS

Around **15,000 civilians were tried in military courts** between October 2014 and July 2018.³

The Constitution was recently amended and now allows more civilian cases to be tried in military courts.⁴

Ismail al-Iskandarani, a researcher and journalist who published articles on the human rights situation in Sinai, was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a military court in 2018.⁵

PRISON

507 cases of arbitrary detention were documented in 2018.⁶

Inmates often suffer abusive detention conditions, such as medical neglect. Some prisoners have been held in solitary confinement for four years, a practice which may amount to torture.⁷



Human rights lawyer Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy has been in prison since 2017. Despite suffering from several illnesses, the prison directorate refuses to transfer him to the prison hospital for treatment. Mr Hegazy was investigating the case of murdered Italian PhD student Giulio Regeni.⁸

DEATH PENALTY

Between July 2013 and December 2018, at least **2,532 death sentences were issued**, and **162 people executed**.⁹

An increasing number of death sentences are being issued in Egypt, often as a result of unfair trials.

In 2018, 75 people were sentenced to death in a mass trial in relation to the Rabaa al-Adawiya sit-in in Cairo in 2013. Despite security forces killing over 900 people at the sit-in, no security official has been tried.¹⁰

EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS

189 cases of extrajudicial killing were documented in 2018.¹¹

An extrajudicial killing is when an individual has been deliberately put to death by government authorities without any preceding judicial proceedings.

The Ministry of Interior announced that five men – who reportedly belonged to an Islamist group – had been killed in an exchange of fire in July 2018. However, a rights group documented the men's arrest and enforced disappearance several months before.¹²

¹ Documented by Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, February 2019

² Thomson Reuters Foundation, October 2017

³ Human Rights Watch, July 2018

⁴ BBC, April 2019

⁵ Reporters without Borders, December 2018

⁶ Committee for Justice, March 2019

⁷ Amnesty International, May 2018

⁸ ANHRI, April 2019

⁹ Committee for Justice, February 2019

¹⁰ Amnesty International, September 2018

¹¹ Committee for Justice, March 2019

¹² Committee for Justice, March 2019

LGBTQI+ RIGHTS

76 arrests for alleged same-sex behaviour under Egypt's "debauchery" law were documented in 2018.¹³

*Egyptian law does not criminalise homosexuality, yet proposals to revise this are currently being discussed. Under the current law, people suspected of undertaking homosexual acts are charged with "habitual debauchery."*¹⁴



*Transgender feminist and LGBTQI activist Malak al-Kashif was arrested in March 2019 in connection with calls for anti-government protests. She has suffered a forced physical examination amounting to torture and sexual harassment by Ministry of Health employees.*¹⁵

FOREIGN FUNDING CASE (173/2011)

- 30 HRDs banned from travelling
- 10 HRDs' assets frozen
- 7 NGOs' assets frozen¹⁶

The foreign funding case is a politically-motivated case targeting 37 international and Egyptian NGOs who were accused of causing upheaval during the country's 2011 revolution. In December 2018, the NGO workers from international organisations were acquitted but local NGOs are still being investigated.



Nazra for Feminist Studies was forced to close its office due to asset freezing.

EXTENDED PRE-TRIAL DETENTION

Pre-trial detention has been extended in thousands of cases since July 2013, often for four years or more.¹⁷

Extended pre-trial detention means to be detained beyond the maximum pre-trial detention period of two years prescribed by Egyptian law.



*Hisham Gaafar, director of the Mada Foundation for Media Development and a member of the Journalists' Syndicate, was held in pre-trial detention for over three years.*¹⁸

NGO LAW

President Sisi called for a revision of the repressive 2017 NGO law. However, a complete redrafting of the law is required to adhere to international human rights obligations.¹⁹

*The 2017 NGO law imposes strict regulations on NGOs and severe punishments for those that do not adhere to them, in addition to giving the government wide powers to shut NGOs down.*²⁰

*Civil society organisations are increasingly being marginalised and threatened. El-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence was shut down by the authorities in 2017.*²¹

TORTURE

On average, **35 to 40 instances of torture** were documented by el-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence each month.²²

*The UN Committee Against Torture concluded that "torture is a systematic practice in Egypt" fed by security forces' impunity and high-level State acquiescence. It is usually carried out to obtain confessions or to punish and threaten political dissidents.*²³

*During solitary confinement in prison, activist Kareem Taha was beaten harshly with a belt and forced to put his head in the bucket used for toilet waste.*²⁴

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

32 journalists were in detention as of 24 January 2019.²⁵



*Egypt was ranked 161 out of 180 countries in the 2018 World Press Freedom Index.²⁶ The government has blocked at least 500 websites since May 2017, including independent news outlets such as Mada Masr and human rights organisations such as the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information and Human Rights Watch.²⁷ Photojournalist Shawkan spent more than five years in prison on trumped-up charges after his coverage of the Rabaa al-Adawiya sit-in in Cairo in 2013.*²⁸

¹³ Human Rights Watch, January 2019

¹⁴ Amnesty International, November 2017

¹⁵ Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, March 2019

¹⁶ Amnesty International, November 2018

¹⁷ Amnesty International, May 2018

¹⁸ Reporters Without Borders, April 2018

¹⁹ CIHRS, November 2018

²⁰ Amnesty International, May 2017

²¹ EuroMed Rights, February 2017

²² El-Nadeem

²³ Human Rights Watch, February 2019

²⁴ Amnesty, May 2018

²⁵ Reporters Without Borders, January 2019

²⁶ Reporters Without Borders

²⁷ Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE), September 2018

²⁸ Amnesty International, March 2019