



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

13 JULY 2009

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1. Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information Key Documents (COI Key Documents) on Egypt has been produced by COI Service, UK Border Agency (UKBA), for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. It provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The COI Key Documents includes information available up to 12 June 2009. It was issued on 13 July 2009.
- ii The COI Key Documents is an indexed list of key reports, papers and articles produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. It does not contain any UKBA opinion or policy.
- iii For UK Border Agency users, the COI Key Documents provides direct electronic access to each source referred to in the document, via a link on the source numbers in the index and list of sources. For the benefit of external users, the relevant web link has also been included, together with the date that the link was accessed.
- iv As noted above, the documents identified concentrate mainly on human rights issues. By way of introduction, brief background information on Brazil is also provided. Please note, this background material is not intended to provide a summary of the material contained in the documents listed.
- v This COI Key Documents and the documents listed are publicly disclosable.
- vi Any comments regarding this COI Key Documents or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to COI Service as below.

Country of Origin Information Service
UK Border Agency
Apollo House
36 Wellesley Road
Croydon CR9 3RR
United Kingdom

Email: cois@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html

INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

- xi The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency to make recommendations to him about the content of the UKBA's country of origin information material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on UKBA's COI Reports, COI Key Documents and other country of origin information material. Information about the IAGCI's work can be found on the Chief Inspector's website at <http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk>
- xii In the course of its work, the IAGCI reviews the content of selected UKBA COI documents and makes recommendations specific to those documents and of a more general nature. A list of the COI Reports and other documents which have

been reviewed by the IAGCI or the Advisory Panel on Country Information (the independent organisation which monitored UKBA's COI material from September 2003 to October 2008) is available at <http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

- xiii Please note: it is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any UKBA material or procedures. Some of the material examined by the Group relates to countries designated or proposed for designation to the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Group's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information contact details:

Office of the Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency
4th floor, 8-10 Great George Street,
London, SW1P 3AE

Email: chiefinspectorukba@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

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2. Background information on Egypt

GEOGRAPHY

Area: 1,001,450 sq. km

Population: 76.5 million (Census 2006)

Capital City: Cairo (population - 17 million)

People: Eastern Hamitic (Egyptians, Bedouins, and Berbers) (99%); Greek, Nubian, Armenian, other European (primarily Italian and French) (1%)

Languages: Arabic (official), English widely understood

Religion(s): Muslim (mostly Sunni) (90%), Coptic Christian (9%) and other (1%)

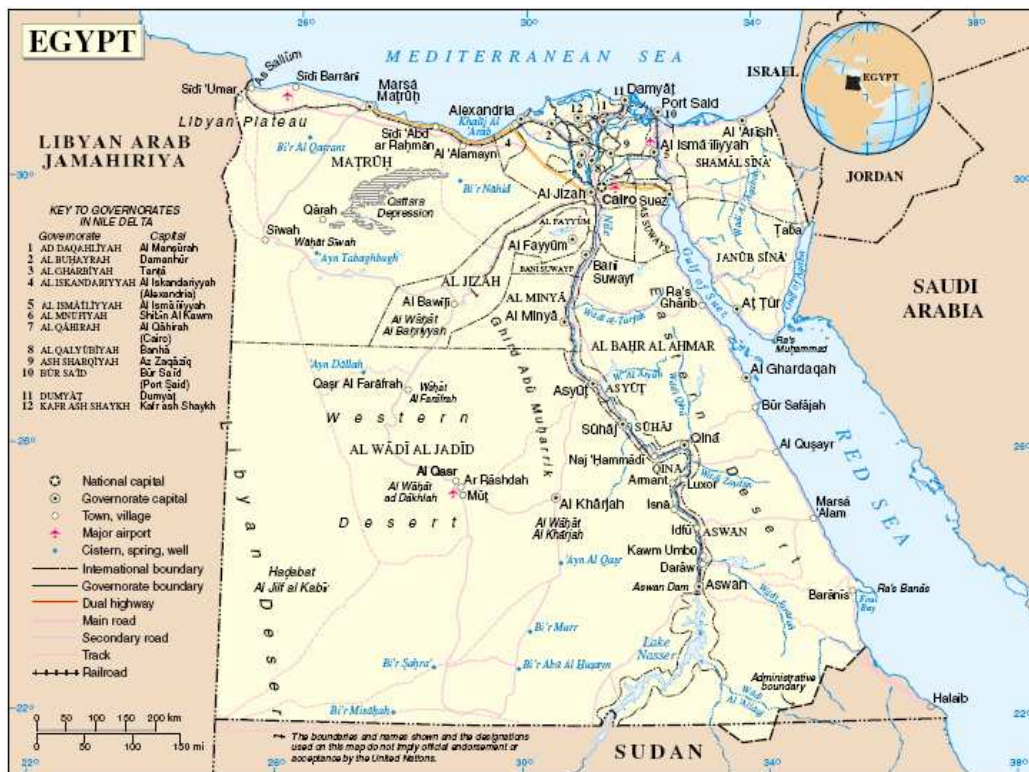
(Extracted from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile, last reviewed by the FCO 27 January 2008) [3a]

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Country Profile, last reviewed by the FCO on 27 January 2008, stated:

"Egypt lies in the north-eastern corner of Africa, a major crossroads between Europe, the Middle East, Africa and west and south Asia, with an area of 386,000 square miles (four times the size of the UK). It is bordered by Libya to the west, Sudan to the south, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Israel and Jordan to the north-east. Its north coast is on the Mediterranean Sea, while the Red Sea bounds the eastern coast. The Suez Canal links the Red Sea to the Mediterranean - a linkage vital to both Egypt and the world. Less than 4% of the country is cultivated and inhabited, mainly in the Nile Delta and along the banks of the Nile." [5a] (Geography)

MAP

UN Cartographic Section, Map of Egypt, January 2004:



[6a]

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RECENT HISTORY

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile, last reviewed by the FCO on 27 January 2008 recorded: "Following the revolution of 1952, Egypt declared itself a Republic in 1953. The first President, Mohamed Naguib, was soon ousted by Gamal Abdel Nasser, whose leadership over the next 18 years left a long lasting imprint on the Egyptian political, economic and social scene. His successor was Anwar El Sadat (1970-1981) who was followed by the current President, Mohammed Hosni Mubarak." [3a] (History)

The FCO Country Profile continued: "President Mubarak assumed power in October 1981, after President Sadat's assassination by Islamist extremists. He was re-elected on 7 September 2005 for his fifth successive term. This was the first contested presidential election in Egypt, following a change to the constitution in May 2005." [3a] (Politics-Overview)

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RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The FCO Country Profile, last reviewed on 27 January 2008, noted:

"In March 2007, the constitution was amended again. It is difficult to judge the practical impact but the changes were criticised as reducing not increasing political freedoms and guarantees. The changes were supposed to pave the way for the introduction of counter-terrorism legislation, and the consequent ending of the State of Emergency which has existed continuously since 1981. This gives the authorities the ability to detain people suspected of being a threat to national security and public order. But in May 2008 the State of Emergency was extended again, for two years or until counter-terrorism legislation is introduced." [3a] (Politics-Overview)

ELECTIONS – APRIL 2008

The European Commission's (EC) European Neighbourhood Policy Report of April 2009 stated:

"Local municipal elections were held in April 2008 in accordance with the 2007 constitutional amendments and on the basis of local administration law. The elections resulted in an overwhelming victory for the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) which won around 95% of the 53,000 seats. Voter turnout remained low with 23% of registered voters, according to official figures, and between 1 and 5% according to local NGOs. Despite some delays, the holding of local elections demonstrates a commitment on the part of the government to the electoral process. On the other hand, there are a number of concerns over shortcomings in this area. Thousands of candidates from the legal opposition parties and independent candidates, including from the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), were either prevented from registering their candidacies, or had their candidacies rejected by the electoral committees." [12a] (p3-4)

The US Department of State (USSD) Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2008, released on 25 February 2009, noted: "During the weeks leading up to April 8 [2008] local council elections, police detained an estimated 1,000 MB members, 148 of whom were potential candidates. On July 9, SSIS [State Security Investigative Service] reportedly arrested at least 38 MB members in advance of the July 13 parliamentary by-elections for four open parliamentary seats. At year's end [2008] the government had allegedly released most of the MB members who had been arrested before the local council elections." [13b] (Section 1e)

CAIRO BOMBING – FEBRUARY 2009

The British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) Timeline noted that a bomb attack in a popular tourist area of Cairo killed a French student and injured 24 other people; the three suspects were claimed by the authorities to be part of a small Islamist cell. In May 2009, seven people with suspected links to al-Qaeda were also arrested in connection with the bombing. [40b]

For the latest news and developments in Egypt see: [BBC News](#); [Reliefweb](#); [IRIN News](#) and [ECOI.net](#)

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ECONOMY

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): \$129.8bn (2007)

GDP per head: \$5,318 (US\$ at PPP, est 2007)

Annual growth: 7.1%

Inflation: 14.4% (2008)

Major Industries: Agriculture, Manufacturing, Services, Tourism. Growth sectors include ICT, Construction.

Exchange rate: £1 = 10.61 Egyptian pounds (June 2008)

(Extracted from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile, last reviewed by the FCO 27 January 2008; original source: Economic Intelligence Report) [3a] (Economy-Basic Economic Facts)

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile, last reviewed by the FCO on 27 January 2008, noted:

“The success of Egypt’s ambitious programme of economic reform and liberalisation is demonstrated by GDP growth of around 7% for the past 3 years. Growth has been driven by high levels of FDI [foreign direct investment] and increased exports. ... Living standards remain low, and Government subsidies add to a growing deficit of 10% of GDP.

“High inflation and rising food prices have led to social tension, resulting in sporadic demonstrations and will continue to do so as the economic climate remains uncertain. ... Educational reform is another key challenge for the government, improving the skills base of the workforce in line with market demands is essential for Egypt to continue to enjoy high economic growth, and for its citizens to realise the benefits.

“In trade, Egypt is heavily import-dependent. Exports include oil, cotton and textiles. Service industries, specifically tourism, canal revenues and emigrant workers' remittances, provide a significant proportion of foreign currency earnings.” [3a] (Economy-Overview)

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HUMAN RIGHTS

OVERVIEW

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile, last reviewed by the FCO on 27 January 2008, reported:

“Egypt is a signatory to all the major UN human rights conventions. In January 2004, we welcomed the establishment of a National Council for Human Rights chaired by the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr Boutros Boutros Ghali, as a demonstration of Egypt's willingness to improve their human rights record. Nevertheless there is still much work to be done, much of which has been set out in the National Council's reports. Freedom of expression and freedom of the media are two examples of areas in which the Egyptian Government has made progress. But we shall continue to encourage the Egyptian authorities to work towards improving their human rights record.

“One of the key human rights concerns in Egypt is the widespread mistreatment of detainees and use of torture in police stations, especially in cases involving political detainees. The government has taken some steps to address the problem, such as allowing semi-independent prison inspections, improving prison conditions, and paying compensation to victims of torture. There have also been a few court cases against police and prison officers accused of mistreating detainees. But the basic problem still remains, and we actively encourage the Egyptians to tackle it.” [3a] (Human Rights)

The US Department of State (USSD) Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2008, released on 25 February 2009, stated:

“The government's respect for human rights remained poor, and serious abuses continued in many areas. The government limited citizens' right to change their government and continued a state of emergency that has been in place almost continuously since 1967. Security forces used unwarranted lethal force and tortured and abused prisoners and detainees, in most cases with impunity. Prison and detention center conditions were poor. Security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained individuals, in some cases for political purposes, and kept them in prolonged pretrial detention. The executive branch placed limits on and pressured the judiciary. The government's respect for freedoms of press, association, and religion declined during the year, and the government continued to restrict other civil liberties, particularly freedom of speech, including Internet freedom, and freedom of assembly, including restrictions on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Government corruption and lack of transparency persisted.” [13b]

See also: [Political affiliation](#)

See also: Index to key source documents: [Arrest and detention - legal rights](#); [Corruption](#); [Freedom of religion](#); [Freedom of speech and the media](#); [Human rights institutions, organisations and activists](#); [Humanitarian issues](#); [Judiciary](#); [Political affiliation](#); [Prison conditions](#); [Security forces](#); [Security situation and Terrorism](#)

Amnesty International's Annual Report 2009, published on 28 May 2009 and covering events in 2008, reported:

“The renewal of the state of emergency for a further two years caused widespread discontent. Rising food prices and growing poverty fuelled a wave of strikes by private and public sector workers. Some protests led to violent clashes between police and demonstrators, and some protesters were prosecuted, including before emergency courts. A rockslide in Al-Duwayqah slum in September killed at least 100 people and highlighted the plight of slum dwellers in Cairo, believed to comprise nearly a third of the capital's

population. Journalists remained under threat of imprisonment for defamation and on other charges. Hundreds of political activists, mainly from the Muslim Brotherhood, were arrested, including in the run-up to local elections in April. While a new anti-terrorism law was still being prepared, thousands of political prisoners continued to be held in administrative detention under emergency legislation, many of them for more than a decade. Torture and other ill-treatment were widespread. Migrants were killed by Egyptian security forces when attempting to cross into Israel, and around 1,200 Eritrean asylum-seekers were forcibly returned to Eritrea despite fears for their safety there. The practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) was banned by law.” [16a]

See also: [Political affiliation](#) and [Women](#)

Index to key source documents: [Arrest and detention - legal rights](#); [Employment rights](#); [Foreign refugees](#); [Freedom of speech and the media](#); [Humanitarian issues](#); [Judiciary](#); [Political affiliation](#); [Prison conditions](#); [Security forces](#); [Security situation](#); [Terrorism](#) and [Women](#)

Human Rights Watch’s (HRW) World Report 2009, which covered events in 2008 and was released on 14 January 2009, stated:

“Security forces acting with impunity prevented strikes, violently dispersed demonstrations, and harassed and in some cases tortured rights activists. Journalists, activists, and hundreds of members of the Muslim Brotherhood-the banned organization that is the country’s largest opposition group-were jailed. The government used lethal force against migrants and refugees seeking to cross into Israel, and forcibly returned asylum seekers and refugees to countries where they could face torture.” [17b]

See also: [Political affiliation](#)

Index to key source documents: [Arrest and detention - legal rights](#); [Employment rights](#); [Foreign refugees](#); [Freedom of speech and the media](#); [Human rights institutions, organisations and activists](#); [Judiciary](#); [Political affiliation](#); [Prison conditions](#) and [Security forces](#)

For the latest human rights news and developments in Egypt see: [Amnesty International](#); [Human Rights Watch](#) and [ECOI.net](#)

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FREEDOM OF RELIGION

The US Department of State (USSD) International Religious Freedom report 2008, released on 19 September 2008, recorded: “The Constitution provides for freedom of belief and the practice of religious rites, although the Government places restrictions on these rights in practice. Islam is the official state religion, and Shari’a (Islamic law) is the primary source of legislation.” [13c]

“Although there were some positive steps in support of religious freedom, the status of respect for religious freedom by the Government declined overall during the period covered by this report. Members of non-Muslim religious minorities officially recognized by the Government generally worship without harassment and maintain links with coreligionists in other countries. However, members of religious groups that are not recognized by the Government, particularly the Baha’i Faith, experience personal and collective hardship.” [13c]

Apostasy

'Apostasy' is the act of giving up your religious beliefs and leaving a religion.

The USSD International Religious Freedom Report 2008 stated:

"The Government does not recognize conversions of Muslims to Christianity or other religions, and resistance to such conversions by local officials--through refusal to legally recognize conversions--constitutes a prohibition in practice. January 2008 rulings by the Cairo Administrative Court stated that freedom to convert does not extend to Muslim citizens. This was under appeal at the end of the reporting period. ... Conversion is not illegal under civil law, but, in practice the Government does not recognize conversions of Muslim-born citizens to other religions. However, in January 2008 the Supreme Administrative Court ruled that the Ministry of Interior (MOI) must issue identity documents indicating the conversion back to Christianity of some Christian-born converts to Islam." **[13c] (Section II. Status of Religious Freedom – Legal/Policy Framework)**

Christian Solidarity Worldwide's (CSW) Religious Freedom Profile of July 2008 noted:

"The issue of apostasy is very sensitive in the Muslim world, including Egypt. Accusations of apostasy (irtidad) can be grouped under three categories:

- "a) Devout or secular Muslim intellectuals are often declared 'apostates' for criticising Islam or Islamic institutions;
 - "b) Followers of the Bahá'í faith or any other religious creed that promotes a new belief postdating Islam are regarded as 'apostates' or heretics;
 - "c) Muslims who abandon Islam for another religion (murtad) are apostates."
- [31c] (3.1 Apostates)**

Human Rights Watch's November 2007 report, 'Prohibited Identities – State Interference with Religious Freedom' recorded: "Although there is no penalty in Egyptian law for apostasy, government lawyers have argued in conversion cases, and courts have agreed, that apostasy 'is synonymous with death'; that is, it deprives the 'apostate' of the ability to perform many civil acts. For instance, consequences of conversion from Islam include the revocation of an individual's right to marry, maintain custody of children, and inherit property." **[17ad] (p24)**

The US Committee on International Religious Freedom annual report 2009 notes:

"Although neither the Constitution nor the Penal Code prohibits proselytizing or conversion, the State Department has observed that the Egyptian government uses Article 98(f) of the Penal Code to prosecute any alleged proselytizing by non-Muslims. Known converts from Islam to Christianity generally receive scrutiny from the state security services; most conversions therefore are done privately..."

[13c] (Section II. Status of Religious Freedom – Legal/Policy Framework)

For more detail on the legal and social ramifications of apostasy see:
[CSW – Religious Freedom Profile, July 2008](#)

Baha'is

The USSD International Religious Freedom Report 2008 noted that the Cairo Administrative Court ruled in January 2008 "... that constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion do not apply to Baha'is. ... Law 263 of 1960, still in force, bans Baha'i institutions and community activities and strips Baha'is of legal recognition. During the Nasser era, the Government confiscated all Baha'i community properties, including Baha'i centers, libraries, and cemeteries." **[13c] (Section II. Status of Religious Freedom – Legal/Policy Framework)**

The Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), published in May 2009, added:

“Baha’is, who number approximately 2000 in Egypt, are unable to meet or engage in group religious activities. Over the years, Baha’is have been arrested and imprisoned because of their religious beliefs, often on charges of insulting Islam. Almost all Baha’i community members are known to the state security services, and many are regularly subject to surveillance and other forms of harassment. Al-Azhar’s Islamic Research Center has issued fatwas (religious edicts) in recent years urging the continued ban on the Baha’i community and condemning Baha’is as apostates.” [14a] (p164)

In May 2009, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported: “Egypt’s Interior Ministry on March 19 issued a decree allowing adherents of ‘non-recognized’ religions to obtain vital identification documents without having to misidentify themselves as Muslim or Christian, a change that was urged by Human Rights Watch and the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR).” [17c] The Annual Report of the USCIRF of May 2009 noted “...it is too soon to tell if this ruling will be implemented.” [14a] (p161)

Index to key source documents: [Citizenship and nationality](#); [Ethnic groups](#) and [Freedom of religion](#)

Coptic Christians

The FCO Country Profile, last reviewed by the FCO on 27 January 2008, reported:

“The Egyptian Government is sometimes accused of persecuting Coptic Christians and other religious minorities, such as Bahá’ís, and restricting freedom of religion. The President is personally involved in efforts to promote tolerance and inter-faith harmony, and has taken some concrete steps to promote and protect Christian rights, such as appointing Christians to parliament and other senior government posts (including the current head of the National Council for Human Rights, Minister of Finance, Minister of Environment and Governor of Qena) and declaring 7 January – Coptic Christmas – a national holiday. But sectarian tension and discrimination does sometimes exist at grass roots level, and non-Muslims remain under-represented in certain sectors of society e.g. the armed forces.” [3a] (Human Rights)

The FCO Country Profile continues, “Another concern is the difficulty in obtaining permits for building churches; this eased somewhat after a presidential decree in 2005 devolving the regulation of church repairs to governorate level. Further changes may be on the way if Parliament passes the ‘Unified Building Law’, that will regulate the building and restoration of all places of worship.” [3a] (Human Rights) However, the May-June 2009 edition of the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs noted the comments of Naguib Gobrail, a Coptic lawyer, that ‘The unified religious building law has been stalled for over 15 years in the parliament—three parliamentary terms and nothing has happened,’ “. [46a]

Other issues of concern include difficulties faced by religious minorities including converts from Islam to Christianity when obtaining official documents, and the requirement to stipulate one of the three Abrahamic religions on ID cards.” [3a] (Human Rights)

In December 2008, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) called for an investigation into a riot in which a church was attacked in Cairo. [31a] The CSW press release provided the following details:

“On Sunday, 23 November [2008] the Coptic Church of St. Mary and Anba Abraam was attacked by a mob of thousands, who began by protesting outside the church’s newly

constructed extension building. The protest soon degenerated into a riot that lasted until 4am the following morning. The crowd initially threw stones at the new church building, and as the violence escalated, bottles and gas canisters were launched at [the] church, despite the presence of Christians inside the building. Several people were wounded and the glass front of the St. Mary and Anba Abraam church building was completely destroyed in the attack. Video footage of the event shows protestors setting banners alight while chanting Islamic slogans. The violence ended after police reinforcements arrived to disperse the crowd. ...

“Police are reported to have questioned up to 60 rioters; however, eight people who were arrested have since been released, three of whom were Christians.” [31a]

The British Broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) Timeline, last updated on 25 May 2009, reported that, in May 2009, clashes occurred between the Egyptian police and Coptic Christian pig farmers who were trying to prevent their animals being taken away for slaughter as a precaution against swine flu. [40b]

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LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS / PEOPLE WHO ARE INFECTED WITH HIV/AIDS

The US Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2008, released on 25 February 2009, stated: “Although the law does not explicitly criminalize homosexual acts, police targeted homosexuals and persons with HIV/AIDS, leading to arrests on charges of ‘debauchery.’ Authorities also reportedly forced individuals in detention to undergo HIV tests and conducted abusive anal examinations. Homosexuals and persons with HIV/AIDS faced significant social stigma in society and in the workplace.” [13b] (Section 5)

A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report of May 2008 noted: “Since October 2007, Cairo police have arrested a dozen men on suspicion of being HIV-positive. The crackdown began when one man, stopped on the street during an altercation, told officers he was HIV-positive. Police arrested him and the man with him, beat and abused them, and interrogated them to name sexual contacts. Police then began picking up others based on information from those interrogations.” [17i]

Amnesty International (AI) also reported on the crackdown in May 2008:

“... 12 men have so far been subjected to criminal prosecution. In two separate trials in January and April 2008, nine of the men received prison sentences of one to three years following conviction on charges of ‘habitual debauchery’, the basis of which was an assumption about their sexual orientation on the basis of their HIV status. The sentences were upheld on appeal. All the men have denied the charges against them. Five of them are HIV-positive and were held in hospital chained to their beds for weeks or even months. Allegations of torture and ill-treatment involving police and medical professionals during the pre-trial detention of the 12 men have not been investigated. Most of the men were subjected to forced anal examinations and HIV testing without their consent. Some were beaten. The nine convicted men are now serving their sentences in prison; three others have been released without charge.” [16p] (p1)

Index to key source documents: [Arrest and detention - legal rights](#); [Judiciary](#); [Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons](#) and [Medical issues](#)

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POLITICAL AFFILIATION

Human Rights Watch's (HRW) World Report 2009, covering events in 2008 and released in January 2009, stated:

"Egypt continued its relentless attacks on political dissent in 2008. The government renewed the Emergency Law (Law No. 162 of 1958) in May [2008] for an additional two years, providing a continued basis for arbitrary detention and unfair trials, and despite repeated promises not to do so by top officials, including President Hosni Mubarak. Egyptian human rights organizations estimate that up to 5,000 people remain detained without charge under the law, some for over a decade." [17b]

Amnesty International's (AI) Annual Report 2009 also noted:

"The government clampdown on political opposition groups, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, intensified in April [2008]. On 5 April, three days before local elections and a day before a planned general strike, the government banned all demonstrations. Protests were nevertheless held in Mahalla, north of Cairo, which were violently suppressed, and in other cities. At least three people were shot dead and dozens wounded as a result of excessive use of force by the security forces." [16b] (Freedom of assembly and association)

Index to key source documents: [Arrest and detention - legal rights](#); [Judiciary](#); [Political affiliation](#); [Prison conditions](#) and [Security forces](#)

Muslim Brotherhood

A June 2008, International Crisis Group (ICG) paper, 'Egypt's Muslim Brothers: Confrontation or Integration?' reported:

"The regime's strategy towards the Muslim Brothers over the last two decades has combined relative tolerance of (or indifference toward) its religious and social activities with a hostile media discourse and steady stream of security crackdowns against political activists. But the 2005 elections marked a quantitative and qualitative change: the regime dramatically increased the number of arrests of rank-and-file members whenever the Muslim Brothers contested an election or took part in public protests, imposed travel bans on most of their senior leaders and curtailed their public activities and contacts with other opposition and civil society figures. The new policy also included long-term detention (without charges under the Emergency Law) of prominent members and targeting the Society's key financiers and most influential leaders. Muslim Brothers and external observers describe the crackdown as the most widespread campaign against the group since the 1960s, even if the level of brutality is far less and its aim is to control and contain rather than eradicate the group." [28a] (p9)

The ICG paper noted: "The pattern appeared to be that the security services would crack down every time the Muslim Brothers took to the streets (whatever the reason) or contested an election. While arrests have taken place continually between the second round of the 2005 parliamentary elections and mid-2008, the following were the most notable ...". [28a] (p9) The ICG paper continued by listing significant incidents in 2006, 2007 and 2008 including: "In the run-up to the April 2008 municipal elections, over 830 potential candidates and their supporters were arrested and only 498 out of 5,754 Muslim Brother candidates were able to register due to administrative and police obstruction. On the eve of the elections, the Society announced its boycott in protest at the arrests." [28a] (p10)

The British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) Timeline, last updated on 25 May 2009, reported that Egypt's military courts sentenced 25 leading Muslim Brotherhood members to jail terms during an April 2008 crackdown aimed at the organisation's funding. [40b]

Human Rights Watch's (HRW) World Report 2009 stated: "In an April 2008 hearing closed to defense lawyers and the public, a military tribunal sentenced Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Supreme Guide Khairat al-Shatir and 24 other civilians, seven of them in absentia, to prison terms of up to 10 years and ordered the seizure of millions of dollars in assets. A regular criminal court had acquitted 17 of the defendants in January 2007 but the next month President Mubarak transferred their cases, along with 23 others, to the military tribunal." [17a] **(Freedom of Association)** Amnesty International's (AI) Annual Report 2009 added: "Fifteen defendants were acquitted and released but banned from travel abroad. All were tried on terrorism-related and money laundering charges, which they denied. They appealed." [16a] **(Justice system - Military and special courts)**

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WOMEN

Freedom House's survey, 'Freedom in the World 2008', released on 2 July 2008, reported: "Although the constitution provides for equality of the sexes, some aspects of the law and many traditional practices discriminate against women." [18a] **(Political Rights and Civil Liberties)**

Amnesty International's Annual Report 2009, released on 28 May 2009 recorded: "Amendments to the Child Law in June [2008] banned FGM and marriage under 18, allowed women to register children under their own family name...". [16a] **(Legal developments)** Human Rights Watch's (HRW) World Report 2009, released in January 2009, stated: "At this writing, the government has yet to issue implementing regulations for the new law." [17a] **(Women's and Children's Rights)** The USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2008, released in February 2009, noted: "The government made significant and effective efforts to combat female genital mutilation (FGM). These efforts included education, outreach, and the passage and enforcement of legislation criminalizing FGM. In addition, courts issued the first two convictions on sexual assault charges." [13b]

HRW's World Report 2009 stated:

"The Egyptian government has failed to create a legal environment that protects women from violence, encourages victims to report attacks, or deters perpetrators from committing these abuses. A 2008 survey by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights found that 83 percent of Egyptian women have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime. In October a mob of men and boys sexually assaulted women in Cairo while they were celebrating the Eid holiday marking the end of Ramadan. Eight men are reported to have been arrested and face prosecution. These attacks mark a repeat of similar violence two years earlier when police officers were videotaped doing nothing to stop the mob attacks." [17b] **(Women's and Children's Rights)**

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