



Egypt – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 17 November 2016

Information on treatment of Muslim Brotherhood members on return to Egypt.

A report published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia, in a section titled “Protections for Returnees” (paragraphs 5.44 to 5.47), states:

“5.44 Egypt accepts involuntary returnees. The International Organisation for Migration runs a program in Egypt that assists voluntary returnees, in cooperation with the country from which they are returning. Such voluntary returnees are met at the airport, provided training or other assistance to enable them to find legal work or begin their own business in Egypt. DFAT understands that Egyptian authorities cooperate with the IOM in these arrangements.

5.45 DFAT assesses that people who return to Egypt after several years' absence will not face any adverse attention on their return on account of their absence. Likewise, DFAT assesses that failed asylum seekers will not face adverse attention on account of their failed application for asylum when they return to Egypt.

5.46 Egyptian officials generally pay little regard to failed asylum seekers upon their return to the country, though it is possible that some individuals will be questioned upon entry or have their entry delayed. Many thousands of Egyptians enter and leave the country every day. Those Egyptians that out-stay their work or tourist visas in other countries are regularly returned to Egypt with no attention paid them by authorities. DFAT does not believe the return of failed asylum seekers will be reported by airport authorities to the Ministry of the Interior or any of the security services beyond the normal processes whereby returning Egyptian nationals have their entry into and exit from the country recorded.

5.47 DFAT does not believe political activity whilst out of Egypt will be noted by Egyptian embassies or other officials. Only particularly high-profile cases (i.e. one which gained media notoriety in Egypt) would potentially be of interest to Egyptian authorities. Egypt is in a state of flux, and has been since the January 2011 revolution, with competing political interests inside the country the primary focus of attention.” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australia (28 January 2014) *DFAT Country Report: Egypt*)

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to a request for information on the treatment of Muslim Brotherhood members, in a section titled “Treatment of Returnee Members”, refers to information provided by a legal advisor from the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) as follows:

“The EIPR legal advisor indicated that the risk of return would depend on the profile of the Muslim Brotherhood member and whether the member plans on ‘carrying out any public political activities on behalf or in support of the brotherhood’. He said that high profile members are ‘definitely at a risk of being sent to jail upon return’. He added that ‘high profile’ does not just mean someone who has been in the media, or someone who is a national leader, such as a member of the Bureau of Guidance, which is the supreme body of the Muslim Brotherhood. According to him, it also means anyone who plays any leading roles within the Muslim Brotherhood's structure and anyone who is a public figure within his or her ‘small circle’ of Muslim Brotherhood supporters. He said that someone who is active in the regional Muslim Brotherhood structure in the governorates, or someone leading any thematic divisions of the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the division of women, education, or charity work, or one of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in the student body would be at a ‘high risk’ of arrest upon return. Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The EIPR legal advisor indicated that some members of the Muslim Brotherhood who are not ‘high profile’ are monitored by the security apparatus. According to the EIPR legal advisor, whether or not they are monitored by authorities, if Muslim Brotherhood members who are not ‘high profile’ return and participate in any demonstrations or other ‘public expressions’ such as vocalizing their opinions in a classroom or on Facebook, they are also at a risk. In terms of expressing one's political opinion, he explained that the risk of arrest exists, even though not every single person who does this is arrested. He said that some people have been arrested for making a four finger salute in solidarity with the demonstrators killed on 14 August 2013 in Rabaa al-Adawiya [rabaa means four in Arabic]. He added that there is a ‘very high risk’ associated with attending demonstrations because shootings are arbitrary. Similarly, in correspondence to the Research Directorate, a representative of AI indicated stated that

There is a strong likelihood that Mursi supporters will face discrimination that can amount to persecution by state-actors and possible non-state actors. This would be particularly true if that person attempted to exercise his/her right to freedom of expression and assembly; such as publicly protesting or criticising the government, even if done in peaceful way. Mursi supporters can face arbitrarily arrest and lack of due process, or face injury or death during protests due to excessive and unnecessary use of lethal force against protestors. Hence, they can be persecuted for their political opinion, if returned back to Egypt and participated in protests and demonstrations.

The EIPR legal advisor indicated that Muslim Brotherhood members who do not have a public profile and do not wish to participate in political expression are at a lower risk than the other members identified, however they could be targeted because of their associations, such as if they have friends who are active members of the group.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (4 November 2013) *Egypt: Treatment of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, including leaders, returnee members and suspected members, by authorities following the removal of President Mohamed Morsi (3 July 2013-30 October 2013)*)

A report from Human Rights Watch on the disappearance of members of former president Mohamed Morsy's administration states:

"Several relatives of the disappeared detainees told Human Rights Watch that they feared the government was detaining their relatives to use as leverage for future negotiations with the Muslim Brotherhood. A relative of al-Tahtawy said he fears the authorities will continue to hold al-Tahtawy until a new president is elected. Mona al-Qazzaz, al-Qazzaz's sister, said she believed her brother was being 'kept in the fridge' for use by the government as a negotiating lever with the Muslim Brotherhood." (Human Rights Watch (1 December 2013) *Egypt: Morsy's Ex-Aides Forcibly Disappeared*)

This report also states:

"Mona al-Qazzaz said that she had learned from her detained brother that authorities in mid-November had printed her picture and a tweet of hers that had criticized the interim government and handed it to him, in an attempt to silence her. She and Abdullah al-Haddad, both based in London, worry that, as a result of their political activism, they may never be able to return to Egypt to see their families." (ibid)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

References:

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australia (28 January 2014) *DFAT Country Report: Egypt*

<http://www.ein.org.uk/print/members/country-report/dfat-country-report-egypt>

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Human Rights Watch (1 December 2013) *Egypt: Morsy's Ex-Aides Forcibly Disappeared*

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Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (4 November 2013) *Egypt: Treatment of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, including leaders, returnee members and suspected members, by authorities following the removal of President Mohamed Morsi (3 July 2013-30 October 2013)*

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Sources Consulted:

Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Lexis Nexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
UNHCR Refworld