



Egypt as a Country of Origin



About This Report

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Cover photo: German NGO vessel Sea-Eye 4 docked in the port of Augusta with 106 migrants rescued in the Central Mediterranean, 6 April 2022. [Photographer: Alessio Tricani. Shutterstock 2022.]

Three interviews were conducted in the research for this report. These interviews are referenced as Interview 1, Interview 2 and Interview 3.

Interviewee 1 is a director of migration at a foreign policy council.

Interviewee 2 is Dr Seán Columb, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Liverpool. Dr Columb has published a book on organ trafficking in North Africa and is an academic with expertise in the region.

Interviewee 3 is an external consultant for a migration programme at a foreign affairs council.



Key Developments

In March 2022, the number of Egyptian nationals applying for asylum in EU+ countries reached its highest levels since at least 2014. The vast majority of Egyptians lodging applications did so for the first time. For the first quarter of 2022, 24 % of first instance decisions for Egyptian nationals were positive, with positive decisions predominantly granted on the grounds of temporary protection.

Most Egyptian nationals who travel irregularly to the EU+ do so by boat along the Central Mediterranean route to Italy. Travel by boat along the Central Mediterranean route into Europe continues to present significant risks to the life and health of migrants, with the majority of deaths and disappearances in the Mediterranean occurring along this route. Most boats carrying Egyptian nationals to Italy depart from Libya, with a small proportion of boats departing from Turkey. Egypt has cracked down on irregular migrant boats leaving its own shores since 2016, and very few are known to have left Egyptian coastlines in the past six years.

Egyptian nationals have accounted for approximately one in every five disembarkations in Italy so far in 2022. While the monthly number of arrivals in 2022 has been lower than the peak period between August and November 2021 – when over 1 200 Egyptians were arriving each month – Egyptian arrivals as a proportion of total disembarkations peaked in February 2022, during which time one in every three arrivals were Egyptian.

Among Egyptian nationals who disembarked in Italy between January and April 2022, the majority (79 %) were adult men. Approximately one in five Egyptian arrivals in Italy during this period were unaccompanied or separated children, with a third of all unaccompanied and separated child arrivals in Italy between January and April 2022 hailing from Egypt.

Egyptians who migrate abroad are understood to be influenced primarily by economic factors and the search for employment. Employment rates in Egypt have risen in the first quarter of 2022, although Egyptian citizens are experiencing what the Egyptian Prime Minister recently described as the ‘worst crisis in a century’.¹ The currency has depreciated significantly since the start of the year following devaluation by the Central Bank, inflation has risen and food prices have increased despite government intervention to control the price of bread.

The human rights situation in the country is also likely to be an influencing factor for many Egyptian migrants wishing to travel to the EU+. International organisations continue to express concern over restrictions on freedom of expression, poor prison conditions, enforced disappearances, torture and extrajudicial killings in the country.

In the short term, economic and human rights factors are expected to remain as a push factor influencing Egyptian migratory decision-making, and so Italy can be expected to continue to experience significant levels of irregular migration from Egypt.

Migration Trends

Nature and Scale of Migration

According to the Italian Ministry of the Interior, 3 935 Egyptians were disembarked in Italy between 1 January and 13 June 2022.² Egyptians therefore accounted for 18 % of disembarkations during this period, outnumbered only by Bangladeshis.³ As indicated by data published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Egyptian nationals have represented a significant proportion of

¹ Al-Monitor, *Egypt to sell state-owned firms amid economic crisis*, 25 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

² Ministero dell’Interno, *Statistical dashboard of June 13 2022*, 13 June 2022, accessed 13 June 2022.

³ Ibid.



sea arrivals in Italy since August 2021.⁴ The highest monthly totals of Egyptian arrivals were recorded between August and November 2021, with over 1 200 Egyptians arriving each month and a peak of 1 893 arrivals in November.⁵ Between January and May 2022, the highest monthly number of Egyptian arrivals in Italy occurred in May, with 1 188 arrivals.⁶ Over this period, the highest rate of Egyptian arrivals as a proportion of total sea arrivals in Italy was recorded by UNHCR in February 2022, when one in three sea arrivals were Egyptian.⁷ The majority of Egyptian nationals who arrive in Italy by sea departed by boat from Libya.⁸

According to the most recent data published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there were 117 156 Egyptian migrants in Libya between December 2021 and January 2022, with Egyptian nationals constituting the second largest migrant population in the country, accounting for 18 % of the total migrant population.⁹ In the same period, 52 % of the Egyptian migrant population in Libya resided in the East of the country, while 43 % resided in the West and 5 % in the South.¹⁰ Not all migrants in Libya will travel to Europe; some Egyptian migrants are known to stay in Libya for longer periods of time, with 46 % of Egyptian migrants surveyed by IOM reporting that they had been in Libya for over two years.¹¹

Libya is known to return Egyptian irregular migrants. Although official data on the number of returned Egyptian migrants in recent months are not available, local media reports show a number of Egyptian irregular migrants have recently been returned by the Libyan authorities. For example, in March 2022, 135 migrants were reported to have been returned through the Emsaed border crossing in the north.¹² Between 2019 and 2020, at least 5 693 Egyptian migrants from detention centres in Libya were returned to Egypt via the Emsaed border crossing by the Libyan Department for Combatting Illegal Migration.¹³

In the most recent data published by Frontex, there was a total of 3 292 detections of Egyptian nationals along the Central Mediterranean route into the EU between January and May 2022.¹⁴ Egyptians were therefore the most common nationality detected along the Central Mediterranean route during this time period, accounting for 20 % of Central Mediterranean detections over the first five months of 2022.¹⁵ Between January and April 2022, there was a total of 2 601 detections of illegal border-crossings by Egyptian nationals, accounting for 4 % of all detections during this period.¹⁶ Of the 2 601 detections of Egyptian nationals reported by Frontex in the first four months of 2022, 2 355 (91 %) occurred along the Central Mediterranean route into Europe.¹⁷

Between January and April 2022, there were also a number of Egyptians detected along the Eastern Mediterranean land and sea routes (169, accounting for 6 % of all detections of Egyptians) and along the Western Balkan route (54, 2 %).¹⁸ Comparison with previous data indicates that there has been a slight increase in the proportion of Egyptian nationals detected along the Eastern Mediterranean route, but otherwise no significant change in the routes taken by Egyptian migrants attempting to irregularly enter

⁴ UNHCR, *Italy Sea Arrival Dashboard May 2022*, 24 June 2022, accessed 5 July 2022; UNHCR, *Italy Sea Arrival Dashboard December 2021*, 14 February 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ UNHCR, *Italy Sea Arrival Dashboard May 2022*, 24 June 2022, accessed 5 July 2022.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ IOM DTM, *IOM Libya Migrant Report Round 40 Dec 2021 - Jan 2022*, 16 March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022, p. 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 36.

¹² The Libya Update, *135 migrants repatriated through Libya-Egypt border crossing*, 28 March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹³ OHCHR, *Unsafe and Undignified: The forced expulsion of migrants from Libya*, 24 December 2021, accessed 16 June 2022, p. 24.

¹⁴ Frontex, *Migratory Map*, n.d., accessed 5 July 2022.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Frontex, *Detections of illegal border-crossings statistics download (updated monthly)*, 3 June 2022, accessed 5 July 2022.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.



the EU+; in 2021, 92 % of the detections of Egyptian nationals at the EU external border occurred along the Central Mediterranean route, with 3 % occurring along the Eastern Mediterranean and 4 % occurring along the Western Balkan routes.¹⁹

For the period 1 March to 14 June 2022, the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) intercepted 340 Egyptian nationals travelling irregularly in Turkey.²⁰ Egyptian nationals therefore accounted for 3 % of TCG interceptions during this timeframe.²¹

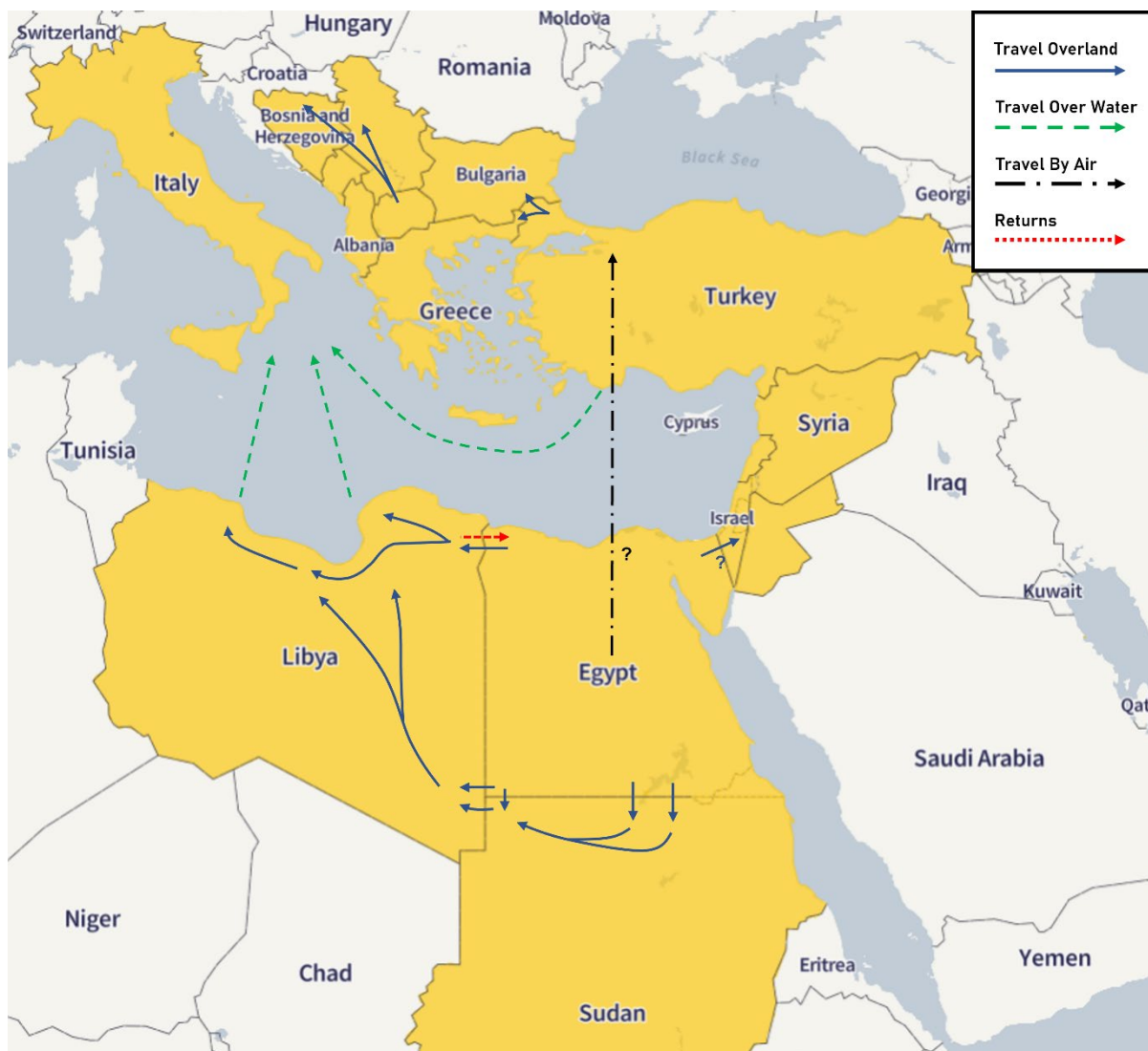


Figure 1: Routes to Europe taken by Egyptian migrants
Sources: Frontex, IOM, OHCHR, TCG and UNHCR, as well as local media reports

In March 2022, some 1 400 applications for asylum were lodged by Egyptian nationals in EU+ countries.²² This represents the highest monthly total of applications since at least 2014.²³ Over the first quarter of 2022, EU+ countries received a total of 3 480 asylum applications lodged by Egyptian nationals, a 338 %

¹⁹ Ibid. The remaining 1 % were detected along other routes.

²⁰ Turkish Coast Guard Command, *Latest Activities*, 14 June 2022, accessed 15 June 2022.

²¹ Ibid.

²² EUAA, *Latest asylum trends- March 2022*, 24 May 2022, accessed 8 June 2022.

²³ Ibid.



increase compared to the first quarter of the previous year.²⁴ The majority of Egyptian asylum applications in the first quarter of 2022 were lodged in Italy, which received 2 140 applications accounting for 61 % of the total.²⁵ Italy was followed at a distance by Greece (415 applications, accounting for 12 % of the total), France (260, 7 %), Germany (215, 6 %), Austria (150, 4 %) and the Netherlands (70, 2 %).²⁶ The proportion of Egyptian nationals lodging applications in Italy has increased significantly: in comparison to the 61 % of Egyptian applications lodged in Italy so far in 2022, 41 % of EU+ asylum applications by Egyptian nationals were lodged in Italy in 2021.²⁷ In contrast, there has been a significant decrease in the share of Egyptian applications lodged in Austria, from 15 % in 2021 to just 4 % for the first quarter of 2022.²⁸ In the first quarter of 2022, 95 % of the asylum applications by Egyptian nationals in the EU+ were from first-time applicants.²⁹

There were 1 375 first instance decisions issued to Egyptian nationals by EU+ countries in the first quarter of 2022, of which 335 (24 %) were positive decisions.³⁰ This represents an increase on the proportion of positive decisions from 2021, in which 13 % of first instance decisions for Egyptian nationals were positive.³¹

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) International Migrant Stock, there were 3 610 461 Egyptian migrants worldwide in 2020, 81 % of whom resided in Northern Africa and Western Asia.³² The countries with the largest Egyptian migrant populations in 2020 were Saudi Arabia (962 432, accounting for 27 % of total Egyptian migrants), United Arab Emirates (899 612, 25 %) and Kuwait (421 025, 12 %).³³ In 2020, the largest Egyptian diaspora in Europe was in Italy (128 857, 4 % of all Egyptian migrants) and a total of 8 % of all Egyptian migrants resided in EU+ countries.³⁴ Besides Italy, other notable diasporas within the EU+ were found in France (35 390), Greece (28 834), Germany (25 905), the Netherlands (15 893) and Austria (14 779).³⁵ As noted by one interviewee, migration is common among the Egyptian population, particularly labour migration, with Egyptians typically leaving their home country to make money and then return.³⁶

Egypt is the largest remittance-receiving country in the Middle East and North Africa region, with an inflow of 32 billion USD in 2021.³⁷ The most recent data from the Central Bank, from March 2022, indicate that remittance flows to Egypt have increased over the past year.³⁸ In total, 3.3 billion USD were sent home by Egyptians working abroad in March 2022, a 13 % increase on the 2.9 billion USD sent in March 2021.³⁹

²⁴ Eurostat, *Asylum applicants by type of applicant, citizenship, age and sex - monthly data (rounded)*, 7 June 2022, accessed 8 June 2022.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Eurostat, *First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex - quarterly data (rounded)*, 13 July 2022, accessed 14 July 2022.

³¹ Ibid.

³² United Nations Population Division, *International Migrant Stock 2020 [Destination and Origin]*, 2020, accessed 15 June 2022.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Interview 3, 13 June 2022. In the literature, see, for example: Middle East Institute, *Regulation of Migration in Egypt*, 20 April 2010, accessed 16 June 2022.

³⁷ World Bank, *A war in a pandemic: Implications of the Ukraine crisis and COVID-19 on global governance of migration and remittance flows*, 10 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022, p. 14.

³⁸ Reuters, *Remittances from Egyptians abroad in March up 12.8 % year over year*, 16 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

³⁹ Ibid.



The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre calculate that, at the end of 2021, there were 3 181 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Egypt due to conflict and 1 100 due to disasters.⁴⁰ As of 31 December 2021, Egypt was host to 271 102 refugees and asylum seekers, 50 % of whom were Syrians.⁴¹

Routes and Modes of Transport

Regular Migration

In 2021, there were 59 307 applications for uniform Schengen visas at consulates in Egypt, with a total of 45 207 uniform visas issued, including 28 380 multiple entry uniform visas.⁴² Applications at consulates in Egypt therefore had a 76 % success rate in 2021.⁴³

Irregular Migration

Since 2016, when multiple large boats carrying irregular migrants from Egypt to Europe were shipwrecked resulting in hundreds of deaths,⁴⁴ Egypt has stepped up efforts to secure its maritime borders.⁴⁵ Since then, almost no boats carrying irregular migrants are considered to have left Egypt's coast.⁴⁶

Of the 2 355 Egyptian nationals noted by UNHCR to have reached Italian shores by boat during the period January to April 2022, 1 858 (79 %) are known to have departed from Libya, while 471 (20 %) are known to have departed from Turkey.⁴⁷

In a survey conducted by IOM between December 2021 and January 2022, 90 % of Egyptian migrants in Libya were found to have travelled to Libya directly from Egypt.⁴⁸ Some 4 % of Egyptian migrants in Libya travelled first through Sudan, while 6 % of Egyptian migrants had travelled to Libya by other routes including through the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Turkey, Tunisia, Kuwait and Jordan.⁴⁹ For travel between Egypt and Libya, the majority (79 %) of migrants travelled by road, including 57 % who travelled by private transport and 22 % who travelled by public transport.⁵⁰ A further 11 % reported travelling to Libya by plane, while 9 % travelled by foot.⁵¹

There is a lack of data to indicate what routes and modes of transport Egyptian migrants use to travel to Turkey prior to attempting to cross the EU external border. There are, however, restrictions on movement across Egypt's eastern land borders,⁵² and it is therefore likely that some migrants attempting to enter the EU+ over sea from Turkey first travelled by plane. Egypt has 12 international airports.⁵³ Cairo International Airport, the country's largest airport, offers direct flights to Istanbul seven days a week.⁵⁴

⁴⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Egypt Country Profile*, 2021, accessed 8 June 2022.

⁴¹ UNHCR Egypt, *Monthly Statistical Report as of 31 December 2021*, 3 January 2022, accessed 8 June 2022.

⁴² Schengen Visa Info, *2021 Schengen visa statistics by third country*, n.d., accessed 17 June 2022.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ The Guardian, *Death toll in migrant shipwreck off Egypt rises to 300*, 23 September 2016, accessed 15 June 2022; Reuters, *The forgotten shipwreck*, 6 December 2016, accessed 16 June 2022.

⁴⁵ Rose Luxemburg Stiftung, *Black Box Egypt: Egypt's Opaque Detention and Deportation Practice against Refugees*, April 2022, accessed 16 June 2022, p. 4; Interview 3, 13 June 2022.

⁴⁶ Rose Luxemburg Stiftung, *Black Box Egypt: Egypt's Opaque Detention and Deportation Practice against Refugees*, April 2022, accessed 16 June 2022, p. 4.

⁴⁷ UNHCR, *Italy Sea Arrival Dashboard April 2022*, 10 June 2022, accessed 14 June 2022.

⁴⁸ IOM DTM, *IOM Libya Migrant Report Round 40 Dec 2021 - Jan 2022*, 16 March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022, p. 24.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵² See *Situation at Border and in Transit Countries* section for further details.

⁵³ WFP, *Logistics Capacity Assessment: Egypt*, n.d., accessed 17 June 2022.

⁵⁴ Flight Connections, *Direct flights from Cairo (CAI)*, 17 June 2022, accessed 17 June 2022; World Data, *The 10 largest airports and airlines in Egypt*, n.d., accessed 17 June 2022.



Profile of Migrants Targeting the EU+

Over the first quarter of 2022, 93 % of Egyptian asylum applicants in EU+ countries were male.⁵⁵ Female Egyptian asylum seekers were most highly represented in the under 18 age category, where they accounted for 28 % of Egyptian applications.⁵⁶ Among Egyptian applications, female applicants accounted for 3 % of 18–34 year olds and 7 % of 35–65 year olds.⁵⁷ In total, 71 % of Egyptian asylum applicants in the EU+ in the first quarter of 2022 were between the ages of 18 and 34.⁵⁸

In a survey conducted by IOM between December 2021 and January 2022, the majority of Egyptian migrants in Libya – a key transit country for irregular migration to Europe – were single males with a middle-school or higher level of education; some 99 % of Egyptian migrants in Libya were male.⁵⁹ Among both male and female Egyptian migrants in Libya, 59 % were single, never married, separated or divorced.⁶⁰ In IOM's survey, most Egyptian migrants in Libya originated from North-East Egypt, with notable proportions hailing from the Governorates of Menia, Assiut, Fayoum and Behera.⁶¹ Data on the main areas of origin of Egyptians in Libya who then choose to travel onwards to Europe are unavailable.

Of the 2 355 Egyptian arrivals in Italy between January and April 2022, 1 853 (79 %) were adult men, 2 (<1 %) were adult women, 41 (2 %) were accompanied children and 459 (19 %) were unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).⁶² There was a total of 1 409 UASC arrivals in Italy between January and April 2022, with Egyptians accounting for 33 % of UASC arrivals during this period.⁶³ Among the 502 UASC arriving in Italy by boat in April 2022, 187 were Egyptian.⁶⁴

Push Factors

Security Situation

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reported a total of 1 000 new displacements due to conflict and violence in Egypt between 2020 and 2021.⁶⁵ The 'war on terror' in the Sinai peninsula has led to the deaths of 3 277 security personnel and the wounding of 12 280 more between 2013 and April 2022.⁶⁶

In early May 2022, at least 11 members of the Egyptian military were killed in an armed attack in the Sinai region.⁶⁷ In the month of April, Sinai Foundation for Human Rights reported that a child and an adult were injured during an armed attack by the Sinai Province organisation – an Egyptian branch of the so-called Islamic State (IS or ISIS)⁶⁸ – in western Sinai.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the Sinai Foundation for Human Rights

⁵⁵ Eurostat, *Asylum applicants by type of applicant, citizenship, age and sex - monthly data (rounded)*, 7 June 2022, accessed 8 June 2022.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ IOM DTM, *IOM Libya Migrant Report Round 40 Dec 2021 - Jan 2022*, 16 March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022, p. 36.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 37.

⁶² UNHCR, *Italy Sea Arrival Dashboard April 2022*, 10 June 2022, accessed 14 June 2022.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Country profile: Egypt*, n.d., accessed 17 June 2022.

⁶⁶ INSS, *On the 40th anniversary of Israel's withdrawal from Sinai: is the Peninsula becoming integrated into Egypt?*, 19 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

⁶⁷ Al Jazeera, *Egyptian soldiers killed in armed attack in Sinai: Army*, 7 May 2022, accessed 13 June 2022.

⁶⁸ Jamestown Foundation, *Egypt's growing militant threat*, 24 July 2015, accessed 17 June 2022.

⁶⁹ Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, *The most prominent human rights violations that took place in April 2022*, 27 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.



recorded multiple instances of kidnappings by the Sinai Province organisation in 2022, in which civilians were kidnapped and subsequently interrogated or had a ransom demanded for their release.⁷⁰

Human Rights Watch stated in 2021 that the military had demolished over 12 300 buildings in the North Sinai governorate to create buffer zones, including the destruction of many homes, which would 'likely amount to war crimes' due to the absence of evidence showing absolute military necessity.⁷¹

The National Security Agency has been accused of a number of extrajudicial executions in recent years as part of their efforts to combat terrorism in the country.⁷² Human Rights Watch published a report in September 2021 examining nine alleged shootout incidents in mainland Egypt between January 2015 and December 2020, and found that the alleged armed militants killed by the Agency posed no immediate threat to life and, in each case, the individuals appeared to already be in custody at the time they were shot.⁷³

Human Rights

In March 2021, 31 states delivered a joint declaration at the UN Human Rights Council expressing 'deep concern' on the human rights situation in Egypt, highlighting the 'restrictions on freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly, the constrained space for civil society and political opposition, and the application of terrorism legislation against peaceful critics.'⁷⁴ In December 2021, President Al-Sisi reconstituted the National Council of Human Rights and appointed its first female president.⁷⁵ The Diplomatic Service of the European Union have recognised this among signs of progress in the field of human rights made by Egypt in 2021, however have additionally noted that concrete and meaningful progress is still needed in many areas relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms.⁷⁶ More recent research by non-governmental organisations suggests that the human rights situation in the country remains poor.⁷⁷

Human Rights Watch reported in 2021 that the government has used Emergency State Security Courts, whose decisions are not subject to appeal, to prosecute dissidents.⁷⁸ Detainees are reported to frequently be remanded in custody without prosecutors presenting any evidence against them or providing them with the opportunity to present a defence.⁷⁹ Amnesty International reported that in 2021 hundreds of detainees were subjected to enforced disappearances by Egyptian authorities, with the National Security Agency reportedly removing prisoners, notably those held for political reasons, from their usual places of detention and concealing their whereabouts for up to three months.⁸⁰

The poor conditions within Egypt's prisons have been highlighted by a number of international non-governmental organisations,⁸¹ with prisoners allegedly deprived of access to healthcare, sunlight, exercise and visitors.⁸² Amnesty International has reports of torture at the hands of Egypt's security services, including 'beatings, electric shocks, suspension in contorted positions and indefinite solitary

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Human Rights Watch, *Egypt: Events of 2021*, n.d., accessed 16 June 2022.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Human Rights Watch, "*Security forces dealt with them*", 7 September 2021, accessed 16 June 2022.

⁷⁴ H.E. Ambassador Kirsti Kauppi of Finland, *Statement by Finland on behalf of a group of countries. 46th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council*, 12 March 2021, accessed 17 June 2022.

⁷⁵ European Union External Action, *EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2021 Country Updates*, 19 April 2022, accessed 22 July 2022, p. 39

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Egypt: No end to systematic repression*, 13 January 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Egypt: Events of 2021*, n.d., accessed 16 June 2022.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Amnesty International, *Egypt 2021*, March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

⁸¹ See, for example: Human Rights Watch, *Egypt: Events of 2021*, n.d., accessed 16 June 2022; Amnesty International, *Egypt 2021*, March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

⁸² Human Rights Watch, *Egypt: Events of 2021*, n.d., accessed 16 June 2022.



confinement in dire conditions.⁸³ At least 60 detainees died in custody in Egypt in 2021, including four deaths following reports of torture.⁸⁴ Al Jazeera reported in May 2022 that, despite the recent release of 44 prisoners including prominent journalists, writers and activists, thousands of political prisoners remain in Egyptian jails.⁸⁵ Moreover, a number of activists and lawyers are known to be charged with the offence of 'spreading false news'.⁸⁶

In the first half of 2021, approximately half of the 80 people executed in Egypt had been charged in cases of alleged political violence.⁸⁷ Amnesty International noted that the death penalty is extensively imposed in Egypt, 'including on the basis of statements obtained through torture'.⁸⁸ Recorded executions in Egypt reportedly dropped by 22 % in 2021, but Egypt remains in the top three countries worldwide for state executions.⁸⁹

Egypt is ranked among the lowest in the world for press freedom, at 168 out of 180 countries in the Reporters Sans Frontières 2022 Index.⁹⁰ Almost all the media is under direct control of the state.⁹¹ Amnesty International reported that the authorities block at least 600 news, human rights and other websites in the country.⁹²

One expert interviewed for this report cited oppression by the Egyptian government as a push factor for Egyptian migrants targeting the EU+.⁹³ In a survey of Egyptian migrants in Libya in December 2021 and January 2022, 1 % cited violence or persecution as their top reason for migration.⁹⁴

Economic Situation

In a press conference on 15 May, the Egyptian Prime Minister stated that repercussions from Russia's invasion of Ukraine had worsened the economic situation in Egypt, with the country now facing the 'worst crisis in a century'.⁹⁵ The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development reported in June 2022 that the country's economic growth, estimated at 6.4 % before the invasion of Ukraine, had been revised to 5.5 %.⁹⁶ The Prime Minister announced plans to sell state-owned assets and list government-owned companies on the Egyptian stock exchange by the end of the year.⁹⁷

According to data published by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 0.9 % in May 2022 compared to April 2022.⁹⁸ This indicates a slowing of consumer price increases compared to previous months, with April's monthly increase of 3.3 % representing the highest rise since June 2018.⁹⁹

⁸³ Amnesty International, *Egypt 2021*, March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Al Jazeera, *Egypt releases three journalists ahead of Eid al-Fitr*, a May 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

⁸⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Egypt: Events of 2021*, n.d., accessed 16 June 2022.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Amnesty International, *Death sentences and executions 2021*, 24 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022, p. 8.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁹⁰ Reporters Without Borders, *Egypt*, 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Amnesty International, *Egypt 2021*, March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

⁹³ Interview 1, 7 June 2022.

⁹⁴ IOM DTM, *IOM Libya Migrant Report Round 40 Dec 2021 - Jan 2022*, 16 March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022, p. 37.

⁹⁵ Al-Monitor, *Egypt to sell state-owned firms amid economic crisis*, 25 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

⁹⁶ Egypt Today, *In figures: How Russia-Ukraine crisis affected Egypt's economic growth*, 9 June 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

⁹⁷ Al-Monitor, *Egypt to sell state-owned firms amid economic crisis*, 25 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

⁹⁸ CAPMAS, *Detailed indicators*, May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022; Egi-Africa, *Egypt's annual inflation jumps to 15 % in May*, 9 June 2022, accessed 5 July 2022.

⁹⁹ Focus Economics, *Egypt: Inflation rises to near three-year high in April*, 10 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.



The CPI of food and non-alcoholic beverages increased by 0.2 % in May 2022 from April 2022, with an annual increase of 27.9 % compared to May 2021.¹⁰⁰ Although the monthly CPI for food and non-alcoholic beverages in rural areas decreased by 0.1 % in May 2022, rural areas have seen a greater annual increase in food prices; prices had increased by 30.5 % in rural areas and 24.8 % in urban areas in May 2022 compared to May 2021.¹⁰¹ Disruptions to wheat imports following Russia's invasion of Ukraine resulted in the price of bread increasing by up to 25 % in some bakeries by mid-March.¹⁰² This led the Prime Minister to announce a set price for unsubsidised bread, a product on which 30 % of Egypt's population relies, beginning in the second half of March and lasting for three months.¹⁰³

The highest monthly percentage increases in the May 2022 CPI were for Restaurants and Hotels (+ 3.2 %) and for Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels (+ 2.6 %).¹⁰⁴ The Prime Minister announced in June 2022 that proposed increases in electricity prices – part of a plan to phase out electricity subsidies – would be postponed for six months until the end of 2022.¹⁰⁵ For annual CPI increases since May 2021, the largest percentage increase was in Recreation and Culture, with a 30.3 % annual increase in May 2022.¹⁰⁶

On 19 May, the Central Bank of Egypt increased all key rates by 200 basis points in an attempt to control inflation.¹⁰⁷ Inflation was 13.1 % in April and 10.5 % in March 2022, with the annual average in April 2022 calculated to be 7.1 %.¹⁰⁸ Estimations produced by Focus Economics predict that inflation will average 10.7 % in 2022.¹⁰⁹

Egypt has experienced a shortage of foreign currency since the COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic decrease in the number of tourists.¹¹⁰ The Central Bank of Egypt reportedly announced in early June that the country's net foreign reserves had decreased by 1.63 billion USD in May 2022.¹¹¹ Foreign exchange reserves decreased for two months in a row to 35.5 billion USD in May following a 2 million USD external debt payment.¹¹²

The Central Bank devalued the Egyptian pound by 14 % on 21 March in a bid to tackle rising inflation,¹¹³ resulting in a depreciation against the US Dollar from 15.74 to the dollar on 20 March to 18.53 to the dollar on 22 March.¹¹⁴ Reuters reported that the Egyptian pound reached a five-year low against the US Dollar in early June, at 18.71 to the dollar.¹¹⁵ Trading Economics foreign exchange data indicate that the Egyptian pound has not yet improved, reaching 18.74 to the dollar on 15 June.¹¹⁶

In the first quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate was 10.5 % in urban areas and 4.5 % in rural areas.¹¹⁷ The number of employed citizens increased by 1.1 % between the fourth quarter of 2021 and the first

¹⁰⁰ CAPMAS, *Detailed indicators*, May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Reuters, *Egyptian prime minister sets fixed price for unsubsidised bread*, 21 March 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ CAPMAS, *Detailed indicators*, May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹⁰⁵ Egypt Today, *Egypt postpones electricity prices increase for 6 months*, state to bear LE10B, 15 June 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹⁰⁶ CAPMAS, *Detailed indicators*, May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹⁰⁷ Focus Economics, *Egypt: Central Bank hikes rates further in May meeting*, 19 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹⁰⁸ Focus Economics, *Egypt: Inflation rises to near three-year high in April*, 10 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Reuters, *High oil, wheat prices to burden Egypt with over \$10 billion finance minister says*, 12 June 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹¹¹ Zawya, *Egypt's net foreign reserves at \$35.5bln by end of May 2022*, 7 June 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Reuters, *Egypt devalues currency 14 % after Ukraine war prompts dollar flight*, 21 March 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹¹⁴ Trading Economics, *Egyptian Pound*, 16 June 2020, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹¹⁵ Reuters, *Egyptian currency touches five-year low of 18.71 to dollar*, 8 June 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹¹⁶ Trading Economics, *Egyptian Pound*, 16 June 2020, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹¹⁷ Egypt Today, *Employment rises in Egypt by 1.1 % in Q1 of 2022 compared to Q4 of 2021*, 16 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.



quarter of 2022, from 27 453 000 to 27 750 000.¹¹⁸ The increase in employment was driven predominantly by an increase in workers in construction (165 000 new workers), agriculture and forestry (81 000) and transformative industries (65 000).¹¹⁹ In 2021, the national unemployment rate was 7.4 %.¹²⁰

There is water scarcity in Egypt, caused by increased water demand due to population growth, as well as factors related to climate change and the impacts of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.¹²¹ Some 80 % of Egypt's water usage is consumed by the agricultural sector,¹²² with declining water availability previously predicted to have significant impacts on the livelihoods of agricultural sector workers.¹²³ In January 2022, Egypt announced that it had officially entered a state of water poverty.¹²⁴

One interviewee for this report noted that economic factors, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, are a significant push factor for Egyptian migrants.¹²⁵ Among Egyptian migrants in Libya in December 2021 and January 2022, the vast majority of migrants cited economic concerns as their top reason for migration; 65 % stated that their top reason for migration was due to insufficient income in Egypt, 28 % cited a lack of job opportunities or stated that they left in search of job opportunities abroad, while 3 % stated that their top reason for migration was their limited ability to meet their food needs.¹²⁶

Enabling Factors

Ease of Travel

Data on the number of Egyptian passports issued are not publicly available. In 2020, Egypt's Interior Ministry developed services to issue passports within 24 hours through their website.¹²⁷ In 2022, the fee for a first-time passport application was 335 Egyptian pounds, equivalent to approximately 17 EUR.¹²⁸

For travel through Turkey, Egyptian passport holders can apply online for a 30-day single-entry e-Visa for tourism or commerce purposes if they meet certain requirements, notably if they are under the age of 20 or over the age of 45, or if they hold a valid visa or residence permit for the Schengen area, the United States of America, the United Kingdom or Ireland and they travel to Turkey with Turkish Airlines or Egypt Air.¹²⁹ The rate of issuance of such visas to Egyptian citizens is not known. Egyptian citizens are additionally required to hold valid visas for travel to the neighbouring countries of Libya, Sudan and Israel.¹³⁰

In June 2022, the Hellenic Police, supported by Europol, are reported to have dismantled a criminal network facilitating the illegal entry of migrants from Egypt to the EU through the production and dissemination of forged documents.¹³¹ The Hellenic Police seized 362 forged documents including 153 passports.¹³² While it was established that the forged documents were used for irregular migration from

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Egypt Today, *CAPMAS: Egypt's unemployment rate records 7.4 pct in 2021*, 16 April 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹²¹ Atlantic Council, *Egypt has a water problem – and no, it's not only the GERD*, 2 June 2021, accessed 5 July 2022.

¹²² Al-Monitor, *Egypt officially enters state of water poverty*, 25 January 2022, accessed 5 July 2022.

¹²³ Atlantic Council, *Egypt has a water problem – and no, it's not only the GERD*, 2 June 2021, accessed 5 July 2022.

¹²⁴ Al-Monitor, *Egypt officially enters state of water poverty*, 25 January 2022, accessed 5 July 2022.

¹²⁵ Interview 2, 7 June 2022.

¹²⁶ IOM DTM, *IOM Libya Migrant Report Round 40 Dec 2021 - Jan 2022*, 16 March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022, p. 37.

¹²⁷ Egypt Independent, *Egypt's Interior Ministry develops services to issue passports within 24 hours*, 1 September 2020, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹²⁸ Public Service Map, [*How to get an automated passport for the first time*], 22 December 2022, accessed 4 July 2022; European Commission, *Exchange Rate (InforEuro)*, July 2022, accessed 4 July 2022.

¹²⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Visa Information for Foreigners*, n.d., accessed 14 June 2022.

¹³⁰ Visa Index, *Egypt passport ranking*, n.d., accessed 16 June 2022.

¹³¹ Europol, *Eight arrests for printing fake documents in Greece*, 6 June 2022, accessed 23 June 2022.

¹³² Ibid.



Egypt to Greece and from Egypt through the Western Balkan route towards the EU,¹³³ the rate at which Egyptian nationals made use of such services is not known.

In 2021, the journey from Egypt to Libya was reported by IOM to cost migrants around 1 060 USD.¹³⁴ The cheapest route to Libya was to travel directly from Egypt, at an average cost of 869 USD, while journeys travelling first through Sudan cost Egyptian migrants an average of 2 044 USD, and other journeys to Libya, including through the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Turkey, Tunisia, Kuwait, Jordan and Sudan, cost an average of 2 991 USD.¹³⁵ The majority of Egyptian migrants surveyed by IOM between December 2021 and January 2022 reported that they had been in Libya for two years or less; 16 % of Egyptians had been in Libya for less than six months, 14 % had been in Libya for between six months and one year, and 24 % had been in Libya for between one and two years.¹³⁶

Situation at Borders and in Transit Countries

As noted previously, almost no boats are known to have departed from Egypt towards Europe since 2016. One interviewee for this report noted that departing directly from the Egyptian coast may be considered a safer route for migrants attempting to reach Europe by boat, but it is also more expensive.¹³⁷ Departing from Libya, as most Egyptian irregular migrants do, is believed to be cheaper but more dangerous.¹³⁸

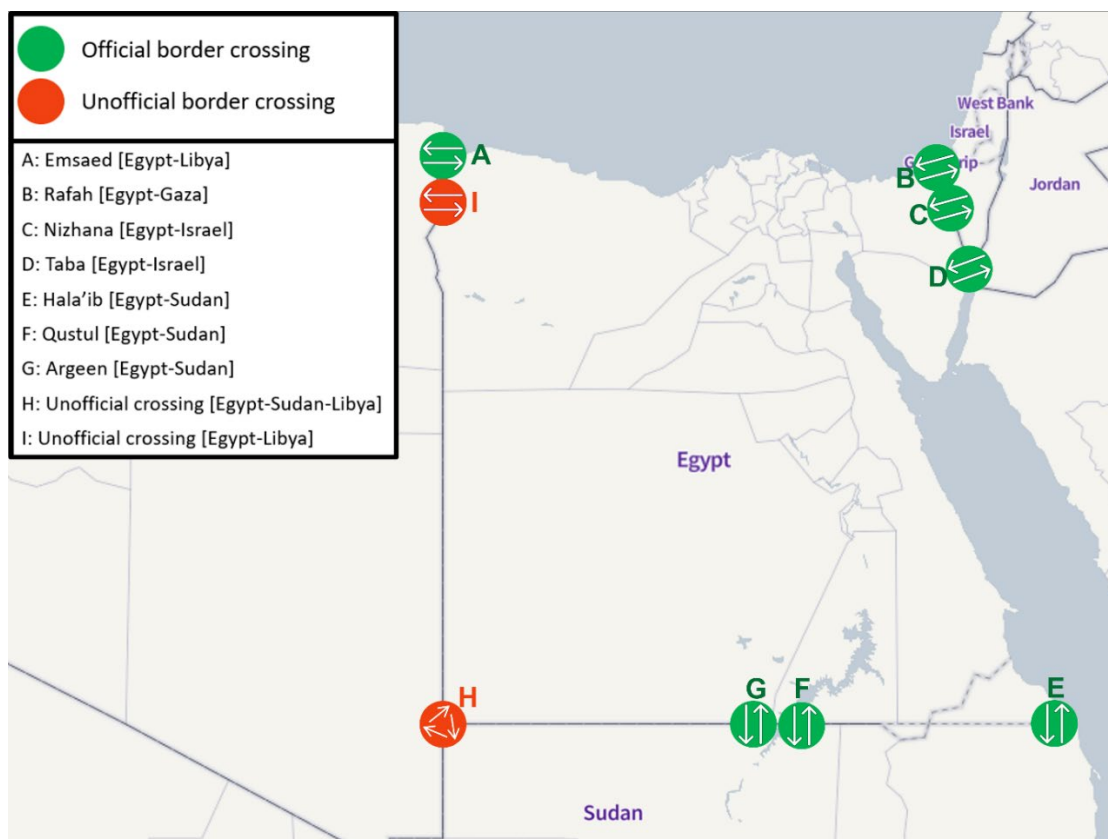


Figure 2: Egypt's land border crossings as per sources cited in this report

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ IOM DTM, *IOM Libya Migrant Report Round 40 Dec 2021 - Jan 2022*, 16 March 2022, accessed 16 June 2022, p. 36.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Interview 2, 7 June 2022.

¹³⁸ Ibid.



Egypt has one official border crossing with Libya, the Mosaid-Salloum crossing (also known as the Emsaed crossing) in the north of the country by the Mediterranean coastline.¹³⁹ According to the website Al-Monitor, Libya began construction of a 1 km border wall around the Emsaed border crossing in 2019.¹⁴⁰ As previously noted by the news website Middle East Online, the terrain along much of the 785 km southern stretch of the Egypt-Libya border forms a natural barrier, while the northern 265 km of the Egypt-Libya border is actively defended by Egyptian and Libyan forces.¹⁴¹ Research from 2020 suggests that in addition to the official Emsaed border crossing, there are two unofficial land border crossings between Egypt and Libya; at Al Jaghbub just south of the official crossing in Emsaed and in Awinat at the southern border point shared by Egypt, Libya and Sudan.¹⁴²

Migrants travelling through Libya and attempting to travel by boat to Europe are at risk of detention not just by the Libyan authorities but also by militia groups who control territory within Libya.¹⁴³ IOM reports that, at the end of May 2022, there were at least 69 Egyptian migrants held in detention centres in Libya.¹⁴⁴ Migrants travelling through Libya are at risk of kidnapping by gangs and armed militias who may then demand a ransom to secure their release. In December 2021, for example, local media Daily News Egypt reported that 13 young Egyptian men had been kidnapped in Libya, with kidnappers demanding an initial ransom of 8 000 USD for each man.¹⁴⁵ This was later lowered to 5 000 USD per man.¹⁴⁶

There are three official land border crossings between Egypt and Sudan, straddling the east and west banks of the Nile River as well as on the Red Sea coast at Halaib.¹⁴⁷ There is a short section of border wall by the Halaib crossing point.¹⁴⁸

A 245 km border wall along the Egypt-Israel border was completed by the Israeli government in 2013.¹⁴⁹ The Israeli-Egypt border is extensively monitored by the Israeli Defense Force.¹⁵⁰ There are two official land border crossings between Egypt and Israel. The El-Ouja – Nizhana border crossing in the North Sinai region is the main land border crossing for cargo and goods between Egypt and Israel and is not open to passenger traffic.¹⁵¹ The Menahem Begin Border Terminal, in the south of Israel on the Gulf of Aqaba, is therefore the main passenger crossing.¹⁵² Egyptian citizens require a visa to travel to Israel. This requires confirmation from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the exception of tourists entering through the Taba land border who are permitted to stay for up to 14 days provided that they remain in southern Israel and do not travel north of Be'er-Sheva.¹⁵³

¹³⁹ IOM DTM, *COVID-19 Movement Restrictions: Libya mobility restriction dashboard #8 (1 – 30 September 2020)*, 6 October 2020, accessed 16 July 2022.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Monitor, *Egypt unimpressed by Libya's border wall*, 6 March 2019, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁴¹ Middle East Monitor, *Scepticism abounds over Egypt-Libya border wall*, 5 February 2019, accessed 16 June 2022; Egypt Today, *Libyan interior security force arrives at Musaid border crossing with Egypt to impose security*, 27 January 2021, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁴² IOM DTM, *COVID-19 Movement Restrictions: Libya mobility restriction dashboard #8 (1 – 30 September 2020)*, 6 October 2020, accessed 16 July 2022.

¹⁴³ Interview 2, 7 June 2022.

¹⁴⁴ IOM, *Libya – Detention Centre Profile Generator (May 2022)*, 2 June 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁴⁵ Daily News Egypt, *21 Egyptian arrested in Libya for illegal immigration*, 27 December 2021, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Le Monde Diplomatique, *North Africa's great walls of sand*, October 2021, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Israel Defense Force, *The Israeli-Egyptian Border*, 28 March 2021, accessed 16 June 2022; Egypt Independent, *Israel finishes building order fence with Egypt*, 4 December 2013, accessed 16 June 2022; Los Angeles Times, *Israel completes most of Egypt border fence*, 2 January 2013, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁵⁰ Israel Defense Force, *The Israeli-Egyptian Border*, 28 March 2021, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁵¹ Israel Airports Authority, *Land border crossings: about Nizhana*, n.d., accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁵² Israel Airports Authority, *Land border crossings: about Menachem Begin*, n.d., accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁵³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *List of countries exempt from entry visas to Israel*, 7 April 2022, accessed 5 July 2022, p. 6.



Egypt additionally shares a 14 km land border with Gaza, along which the Egyptian government began the construction of a new 3 km border wall in February 2020 as an addition to existing barriers.¹⁵⁴ The Rafah land border crossing is the only official crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.¹⁵⁵ The Rafah crossing was mostly closed between 2013 and 2018 but has since been open more regularly.¹⁵⁶ The Egyptian government announced in February 2021 that the Rafah border crossing would be opened 'indefinitely'.¹⁵⁷ The border crossing was subsequently closed in August 2021,¹⁵⁸ but has since reopened.¹⁵⁹ Given the lack of onwards travel options from the Gaza Strip, it is unlikely any Egyptians use this border crossing for the purposes of migration.

Smuggling Networks

As noted by one interviewee for this report, Egypt is a key transit country for many migrants from the Horn of Africa travelling both to Europe and to Gulf countries.¹⁶⁰ There are therefore smuggling networks, used predominantly by other African migrants, that may be used by Egyptian migrants who intend to leave the country irregularly.¹⁶¹ One interviewee noted that increased investment in border security and border reinforcements by the Egyptian government may lead more migrants to depend on intermediaries for irregular migration journeys, exposing migrants to potential exploitation.¹⁶²

The U.S. Department of State note in their 2021 Trafficking Profile that human traffickers exploit Egyptian and foreign victims within Egypt, as well as Egyptian victims abroad.¹⁶³ Children and adults may be subjected to sex trafficking, forced labour or organ trafficking.¹⁶⁴

Potential migrants are generally understood to make contact with people smugglers through family and friends.¹⁶⁵ Previous research by IOM found that, in rural Egypt, irregular migration was facilitated by a broker who is usually well known in the community.¹⁶⁶ Migrants would either contact the broker directly or be referred by family or friends.¹⁶⁷ In urban areas, IOM found that brokers would openly approach both children and adults to offer their services and publicise their contact details on social media to attract customers.¹⁶⁸ More recent research is required in order to understand the impact that recent legislative changes have had on the modus operandi of brokers.

Pull Factors

Local Perceptions on What is Happening in Destination Countries

One expert interviewed for this report stated that Egyptian diasporas in destination countries act as a significant pull factor for potential Egyptian migrants.¹⁶⁹ The EU+ countries with the largest number of Egyptian migrants in the UNDESA International Migrant Stock (Italy, France, Greece, Germany, the

¹⁵⁴ AL-Monitor, *Egypt builds a wall on border with Gaza*, 12 February 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁵⁵ WFP, *Logistics Capacity Assessment: Egypt border crossing of Rafah*, n.d., accessed 5 July 2022.

¹⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Gaza: Israel's 'open air prison' at 15*, 14 June 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁵⁷ Al Jazeera, *Egypt 'indefinitely' opens Rafah border crossing with Gaza Strip*, 10 February 2021, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁵⁸ AP News, *Officials: Egypt closes Gaza border amid tensions with Hamas*, 23 August 2021, accessed 16 July 2022.

¹⁵⁹ Egypt Today, *Egypt resumes operation of Rafah border crossing*, 23 December 2021, accessed 16 July 2022.

¹⁶⁰ Interview 3, 13 June 2022.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Interview 2, 7 June 2022.

¹⁶³ U.S. Department of State, *2021 Trafficking in persons report: Egypt*, 1 July 2021, accessed 5 July 2022.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ IOM, *Egyptian unaccompanied migrant children: a case study on irregular migration*, 15 March 2016, accessed 17 June 2022, p. 8.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Interview 1, 7 June 2022.



Netherlands and Austria)¹⁷⁰ were also the top six EU+ countries for Egyptian asylum applications in the first quarter of 2022.¹⁷¹

Discouraging Factors

Local Prevention Initiatives

Egypt introduced legislation to prevent irregular migration in 2016 and on 13 April 2022, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi signed into law an amendment introducing tougher penalties on people smuggling.¹⁷² Under the new amendment, those found to commit, attempt, or mediate the smuggling of migrants will be sentenced to rigorous imprisonment and a fine of between 200 000 and 500 000 Egyptian pounds, equivalent to approximately 10 000 and 25 000 EUR.¹⁷³ A number of factors can result in a potentially larger fine and temporary hard labour, including: cases involving organised criminal groups; cases involving transnational smuggling; cases in which there are multiple perpetrators or the use of weapons; cases in which the offender is a public servant who has exploited their position to commit the crime; cases in which the life or health of smuggled migrants was threatened or which represent inhuman or degrading treatment; cases involving the smuggling of women, children or persons with disabilities; cases involving forged travel or identity documents; cases in which a ship was used in violation to its assigned purpose; and repeat offences.¹⁷⁴

The National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Irregular Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM&TIP) was established in 2017, following the introduction of anti-trafficking legislation in 2016.¹⁷⁵ Since the introduction of the 2016 legislation, hotlines have been established through which members of the public can report trafficking cases,¹⁷⁶ and the Ministry of Social Solidarity runs shelters which accommodate Egyptian and foreign national victims of human trafficking in Egypt and provide medical, social and psychological support.¹⁷⁷

One interviewee noted that it seems the majority of funds aimed at tackling irregular migration from Egypt appear to go towards border security and border reinforcements, rather than tackling the causes of irregular migration.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, a number of international agencies conduct capacity building activities in Egypt in cooperation with the Egyptian government.¹⁷⁹ In addition to this, previous initiatives, such as the 2017 'Your Family, Your Dream, Your Life' joint initiative between IOM and the NCCPIM&TIP,

¹⁷⁰ United Nations Population Division, *International Migrant Stock 2020 [Destination and Origin]*, 2020, accessed 15 June 2022.

¹⁷¹ EUAA, *Latest asylum trends- March 2022*, 24 May 2022, accessed 8 June 2022.

¹⁷² Egypt Today, *Sisi signs law on combating illegal migration, smuggling of migrants*, 13 April 2022, accessed 14 June 2022.

¹⁷³ Ibid; European Commission, *Exchange rate (InforEuro)*, July 2022, accessed 5 July 2022.

¹⁷⁴ Egypt Today, *Sisi signs law on combating illegal migration, smuggling of migrants*, 13 April 2022, accessed 14 June 2022.

¹⁷⁵ Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations Office, WIO and International Organisations in Geneva, *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Half day general discussion on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration*, 22 February 2019, accessed 22 July 2022.

¹⁷⁶ Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report July 2022*, 19 July 2022, accessed 22 July 2022, p. 2016; UNODC ROMENA, *Egypt: Joining hands to better serve victims of human trafficking. Capacity Building Workshop for Social Workers operating at MOSS's Shelters on the Provisions of Protection and Assistance Services to Victims of Human Trafficking*, 11 April 2022, accessed 22 July 2022.

¹⁷⁷ UNODC ROMENA, *Egypt: Joining hands to better serve victims of human trafficking. Capacity Building Workshop for Social Workers operating at MOSS's Shelters on the Provisions of Protection and Assistance Services to Victims of Human Trafficking*, 11 April 2022, accessed 22 July 2022.

¹⁷⁸ Interview 2, 7 June 2022.

¹⁷⁹ See, for example: United Nations Egypt, *IOM Egypt and NCCPIM&TIP Launches Capacity Building Workshops for Media Professionals and Journalists on "Combating Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking of Persons"*, 31 January 2022, accessed 22 July 2022; EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, *Enhancing the Response to Migration Challenges in Egypt (ERMCE)*, 23 May 2017, accessed 22 July 2022.



have raised awareness on the dangers of irregular migration among Egyptian youth.¹⁸⁰ In 2019, the Egyptian Government launched the ‘Lifeboats Initiative’ to tackle irregular migration through the provision of job opportunities in villages which experience significant rates of irregular out-migration.¹⁸¹ News website Ahram Online report that 250 million Egyptian Pounds have been allocated for the implementation of the initiative in 70 villages, equivalent to approximately 12 600 000 EUR.¹⁸² The impact that the initiative has had on migration rates in these villages is not known.

Discouraging Factors in the EU+

Egypt cooperates with the EU in the prevention of irregular migration.¹⁸³ Egypt is part of the Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community and takes part in information exchange programmes and capacity building projects on border control.¹⁸⁴ The EU-Egypt Migration Dialogue was launched in December 2017, with subsequent rounds of dialogue taking place in July 2019 and November 2021.¹⁸⁵ Through the dialogue, the EU and Egypt have held detailed discussions on issues relating to migration and on the ongoing cooperation between the EU and Egypt on these matters.¹⁸⁶ The EU funds projects such as the Egyptian Migration Hub at the American University in Cairo.¹⁸⁷

Outlook and Implications

The increased security of Egypt’s maritime borders and new legislation against people smuggling, first introduced in 2016 and subsequently amended in April this year, have succeeded in the aim of significantly reducing irregular migration across the Mediterranean from Egypt’s coastline. The ongoing success of these prevention activities will depend on the continued efforts of the Egyptian government.¹⁸⁸ As noted in this report, there are a number of ongoing initiatives and projects run by the Egyptian government, together with international agencies, aimed at tackling irregular migration.

Egyptians continue to utilise the Mediterranean route into Europe departing from Libya, and this is likely to remain the most common route for Egyptian irregular migrants to enter the EU+. Egyptian migrants will continue to face dangers along this route, and migrants travelling through Libya will continue to be at risk of kidnapping and extortion. Migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean will continue to be at risk from unsuitable and overloaded boats. Some 842 migrants were recorded as dead or missing in the Mediterranean in the period between 1 January and 13 June 2022¹⁸⁹ and this number will likely continue to rise as more migrants attempt to reach Europe through this dangerous route.

There is a significant population of Egyptian migrants within Libya. As noted by one interviewee, people who migrated to Libya with the intention to stay there may change their plans and decide to attempt to

¹⁸⁰ IOM, *National Awareness Raising Campaign on the Dangers of Irregular Migration Launched in Egypt*, 25 September 2017, accessed 22 July 2022.

¹⁸¹ Ahram Online, *Hungary asks EU to provide Egypt with financial support to confront irregular migration*, 23 February 2022, accessed 16 June 2022.

¹⁸² Ibid; European Commission, *Exchange rate (InforEuro)*, July 2022, accessed 5 July 2022.

¹⁸³ Council of the EU, European Council, *EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities 2017-2020*, 16 June 2017, accessed 22 July 2022, p. 8; Interview 3, 13 June 2022.

¹⁸⁴ Interview 3, 13 June 2022 ; Frontex, *Frontex launches capacity building project for Africa during AFIC meeting*, 29 September 2017, accessed 17 June 2022.

¹⁸⁵ EU Neighbours, *Second meeting of the Migration Dialogue between the European Union and Egypt*, 12 July 2019, accessed 22 July 2022; EU Neighbours, *Joint Press Statement: The third EU-Egypt Political Dialogue on Migration*, 17 November 2021, accessed 22 July 2022.

¹⁸⁶ EU Neighbours, *Joint Press Statement: The third EU-Egypt Political Dialogue on Migration*, 17 November 2021, accessed 22 July 2022; Delegation of the European Union to Egypt, *Second meeting of the Migration Dialogue between the European Union and Egypt*, 11 July 2019, accessed 22 July 2022.

¹⁸⁷ The American University in Cairo, *The Egyptian Migration Hub (EHUB)*, n.d., accessed 22 July 2022; Egypt Independent, *AUC launches the Egyptian Migration Hub in cooperation with EU*, 7 June 2022, accessed 22 July 2022.

¹⁸⁸ Interview 3, 13 June 2022.

¹⁸⁹ IOM Missing Migrants Project, *Mediterranean focus*, 13 June 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.



reach Europe due to security or other concerns within Libya.¹⁹⁰ The future rate of Egyptian irregular migration to the EU+ will therefore be tied not only to the situation within Egypt, but also to the conditions faced by migrants within Libya.¹⁹¹

Although Egypt has recorded an increase in employment in the first quarter of 2022, economic factors and a desire for decent employment are likely to continue to be the key push factor for Egyptian migrants. Egyptians will likely continue to experience difficulties due to the increased cost of living; the inflation rate is predicted to average 10.7 % in 2022,¹⁹² and the impacts that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has had on wheat imports and subsequent food prices is unlikely to subside in the short-term.

In addition to economic factors, the human rights situation in Egypt is likely to continue to contribute to migration sentiments among the population. Despite the recent release of some prisoners, including journalists and activists, many more remain detained and there are still significant restrictions on freedom of expression in Egypt.

¹⁹⁰ Interview 3, 13 June 2022.

¹⁹¹ Interview 3, 13 June 2022.

¹⁹² Focus Economics, [*Egypt: Inflation rises to near three-year high in April*](#), 10 May 2022, accessed 17 June 2022.

