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Austrian Centre for Country of Origin  
& Asylum Research and Documentation

# Egypt: COI Compilation

## November 2025

(Reporting period: July 2024 to August 2025)



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Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation

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This report serves the specific purpose of collating legally relevant information on conditions in countries of origin pertinent to the assessment of claims for asylum. It is not intended to be a general report on human rights conditions. The report is prepared within a specified time frame on the basis of publicly available documents as well as information provided by experts. All sources are cited and fully referenced.

This report is not, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Every effort has been made to compile information from reliable sources; users should refer to the full text of documents cited and assess the credibility, relevance and timeliness of source material with reference to the specific research concerns arising from individual applications.

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## List of abbreviations

ABM	Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis (also referred to as IS-SP, IS-WS or WS)
CAPMAS	Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EGP	Egyptian pounds
EJS	Egyptian Journalist Syndicate
ESSC	Emergency State Security Courts
ESSSC	Emergency Supreme State Security Court
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation/cutting
GBV	Gender-based violence
HASM	Harakat Sawa'd Misr
ID card	Identity Card
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IS-SP	Islamic State Group-Sinai Province (also referred to as IS-WS, WS, or ABM)
IS-WS	Islamic State Wilayat Sinai (also referred to as IS-SP, WS, or ABM)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MP	Member of Parliament
NCCM	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
NCW	National Council on Women
NEA	National Election Authority
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSA	National Security Agency
NTRA	National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority
NUL	National Unified List
SCMR	Supreme Council for Media Regulation
SSSP	Supreme State Security Prosecution
TCC	Terrorism Circuits Courts
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USD	US Dollar
WS	Wilayat Sinai (also referred to as IS-SP, IS-WS, or ABM)

# 1 Background information

## 1.1 Demographics

On 16 August 2025, Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization And Statistics (CAPMAS) announces in a press release that the country's population has reached 108 million people,<sup>1</sup> thus having grown by one million within a period of 287 days, starting from 2 November 2024, when the population had reached 107 million (CAPMAS, 16 August 2025; Ahram Online, 16 August 2025). As of 1 January 2025, CAPMAS had estimated the country's total population at 107 271 260, including 52 156 442 women and 55 114 818 men (CAPMAS, June 2025(a), p. 4). When adding up the numbers of population estimates per age group, more than half of the country's population, 56.7 per cent, fall into the age group of 0 to 29 years old (CAPMAS, June 2025(a), p. 6).

Governorates with the largest population shares were Cairo (10 390 238 million), Giza (9 702 318 million) and Sharkia (8 057 634 million). Of the total population, 61 358 727 people were estimated to live in rural areas, and 45 912 533 in urban areas (CAPMAS, June 2025(a), pp. 4-5).

In its August 2025 press release, CAPMAS points to an ongoing slowdown in population growth due to declining birth rates as the two previous population increases by one million, from 106 to 107 and from 105 to 106 million, had occurred within shorter periods of time (268 and 250 days, respectively). In 2024, the fertility rate was 2.41 children per woman (CAPMAS, 16 August 2025; Ahram Online, 16 August 2025). According to the Minister of Health and Population quoted by Daily News Egypt, the country records a daily number of 5 378 births as of July 2025 and rates remain high in Upper Egypt (Daily News Egypt, 14 July 2025). The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) mentions in a June 2025 press release that the average life expectancy is 73.9 years for women and 70.8 for men (EIPR, 18 June 2025).

In the period from April to June 2025, the general unemployment rate was 6.1 per cent of the total labour force. Among women, it was 15.8 per cent. In terms of age groups, the unemployment rate was highest among those from 20 to 24 years old (28.9 per cent). The majority of those unemployed (78.2 per cent) hold "intermediate, above-intermediate, or university qualifications", according to a report by CAPMAS from August 2025 quoted by Ahram Online (Ahram Online, 15 August 2025).

According to 2006 estimates, Egyptians constitute 99.7 per cent of the entire population, while 0.3 per cent belong to other ethnic groups. The country's official language is Arabic (CIA, last updated 1 October 2025). Minority languages include Coptic, Nubian and Berber (or "Amazigh") languages, such as the Siwi language spoken by the Amazigh community living in the Siwa Oasis in the country's Western Desert (Al-Monitor, 20 July 2025).

According to the CIA World Factbook, 90 per cent of the population are – predominantly Sunni – Muslim, while 10 per cent adhere to different branches of Christianity, such as Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Catholic, Maronite, Orthodox, and Anglican (CIA, last updated 1 October 2025). Other minorities include Jews, Baha'is, Jehovah's Witnesses, atheists and non-

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<sup>1</sup> Other sources estimate Egypt's population at 111.2 million as of 2024 (CIA, last updated 1 October 2025) and more than 118 million in July 2025 (Al-Monitor, 20 July 2025).

Sunni Muslims (USCIRF, February 2025, p. 1). For further information on religious minorities, please see [section 3.4.4](#).

As of May 2025, Egypt hosted 982 000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers, 73 per cent of them Sudanese nationals, followed by Syrians (14 per cent) (UNHCR, May 2025, p. 2). In February 2025, Reuters reports that 100 000 Palestinians were living in Egypt (Reuters, 3 February 2025).

## 1.2 Political situation

In its Freedom in the World report for 2024, an annual report on political rights and civil liberties, Freedom House determined Egypt's status as "Not Free" and notes the following:

"President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who first took power in a 2013 coup, has governed Egypt in an authoritarian manner. Meaningful political opposition is virtually nonexistent, as expressions of dissent can draw criminal prosecution and imprisonment." (Freedom House, 2025, Overview)

In its annual report on the human rights situation in Egypt in 2024, Human Rights Watch (HRW) makes a similar observation:

"President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's government entered its second decade in power by continuing wholesale repression, systematically detaining and punishing peaceful critics and activists and effectively criminalizing peaceful dissent." (HRW, 16 January 2025)

Several other sources also mention the repression of dissent (El-Hamalawy, Hossam, 23 December 2024; Amnesty International, 29 April 2025; Sayigh, 12 May 2025), the suppression of civil society (Sayigh, 12 May 2025), and the arrest of dissidents (Al-Azzawi, Jasmin, 6 September 2025), and others, such as "journalists, lawyers, protesters, [...], opposition politicians and those critical of the government's human rights record and handling of the economic crisis" (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025).

In a commentary for the Atlantic Council, Amr Salah Mohamed, a scholar and lecturer at the Georg Mason University describes the impact of Hamas' attack on Israel on 7 October 2023<sup>2</sup> and the ensuing Israel-Hamas war in Gaza on Egypt's domestic politics. He notes that while there had been "tentative signs of political opening" in early 2023, any public debate on political reforms had died down by the end of that year and the leadership's focus had shifted to national security, amidst debates of a possible displacement of Palestinians from Gaza to Egypt, growing polarisation among intellectuals, public distrust towards liberal democracy perceived as promoting Western double standards (Mohamed, 3 July 2025), and narratives of Egypt siding with Israel at the expense of Palestinians promoted by movements such as the Muslim

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<sup>2</sup> On 7 October 2023, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), in a coordinated operation, attacked Israel by land, sea and air from the Gaza Strip on a Jewish holiday marking the end of the thanksgiving festival Sukkot. About 1 200 people, mainly Israeli citizens, were killed in the attack and more than 240 people were taken hostage and brought into the Gaza Strip by at least 1 500 militants violently crossing into Israel (Encyclopaedia Britannica, last updated 8 October 2025).

Brotherhood (Mohamed, 3 July 2025; The Arab Weekly, 22 July 2025). Amr Salah Mohamed concludes:

“Ultimately, the post-October 7 era has not only demolished Gaza. It also disrupted Egypt’s fragile political opening: deepening polarization, weakening opposition forces, and temporarily consolidating the public standing of the president and military amid heightened insecurity. The erosion of the foundations of democratic narratives, widening fractures among intellectuals, and the simmering threat of Islamist mobilization leave Egypt’s political opening increasingly elusive, with the country seemingly sliding back into political stagnation.” (Mohamed, 3 July 2025)

In terms of the country’s economic development, Gregory Aftandilian, a non-resident fellow at the Arab Center Washington DC, explains that while the situation appears to improve in 2025, with inflation falling to 14.9 per cent in June 2025 (Aftandilian, 23 July 2025) – from around 26 per cent as of October 2024, according to Deutsche Welle (DW) (DW, 19 October 2024) –, the national currency’s value stabilising and the economy expected to grow by 4.2 per cent, some economic challenges remain, including a decline in Suez Canal revenues since the start of the Israel-Hamas conflict in October 2023, natural gas supply shortages and dependency on wheat imports. Moreover, the military controls a “not insignificant” share of the country’s economy (Aftandilian, 23 July 2025). In a report of July 2025, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mentions “roughly 80” military-owned companies involved in several economic sectors, including industry (73 per cent), services, construction and mining. They benefit from special privileges and advantages and publicly available information on their financial situation is “limited” (IMF, 15 July 2025, pp. 92, 94). Repeated requests by the IMF for structural reforms remained without result (Sayigh, 7 January 2025; Hassan, 20 January 2025).

In a report from May 2025, Yezid Sayigh, senior fellow at the Malcom H. Kerr Middle East Center, analyses the political and economic changes introduced by President Sisi since he took power and points to the military’s role in both aspects:

“The presidency and principal security agencies remain the country’s main political bodies, thanks to their control of the distribution of rewards in exchange for loyalty. Political parties serve primarily as vote-getting vehicles, whether to help pass presidential legislation in parliament or to enhance the appearance of sweeping public support for Sisi ahead of key events. [...]

Sisi holds all the levers, but the EAF [Egyptian Armed Forces] is obviously at the heart of his power. Debates about whether he or the EAF is the country’s real hegemon distract from the convergence, indeed fusion, of their perceptions and interests. Sisi enables the EAF’s reshaping of Egypt in its own image, while the EAF’s acquisition of commercial stakes and its economic expansion are as much a logical consequence and manifestation of the system Sisi is building, as they are a pecuniary interest.” (Sayigh, 12 May 2025)

Senate elections were held in the period from 4 to 5 August 2025. Voter turnout was 17.1 per cent according to the country’s National Election Authority (NEA), and 195 of the 200 seats allocated through elections were decided in the first round. Of these, 100 seats are reserved

for closed party lists and 100 for individual candidates.<sup>3</sup> The National Unified List (NUL), the only party list competing, won all 100 seats by passing the 5 per cent threshold of valid votes (Ahram Online, 12 August 2025). The NUL is a collation of 12 parties (Egyptian Streets, 2 August 2025) and more than half of its candidates belong to the pro-government Mostaqbal Watan (Future of the Homeland) and Homat Al-Watan (Guardians of the Homeland) parties (Egypt Today, 28 August 2025). Overall, four pro-government parties – Mostaqbal Watan, Homat Al-Watan, the National Front, and the People’s Republican Party – secured 174 of the 200 contested seats, including party and individual seats, according to Ahram Online (Ahram Online, 14 August 2025).

The National Front Party was reportedly established in December 2024 by former government officials with the support of businessmen, among them Ibrahim Al-Argani (also: Al-Organi) (Mada Masr, 30 December 2024), leader of the “Sons of Sinai” organisation (Zawia3, 5 August 2025; Mada Masr, 4 March 2025; Orient XXI, 19 February 2025). For further information on Al-Argani, please see [section 2.1](#).

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<sup>3</sup> The remaining 100 seats of the 300-member Senate are appointed by the president (Ahram Online, 12 August 2025).



## 2 Security situation

For information on the security situation in Egypt from January 2023 to June 2024, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

### 2.1 North Sinai

Security forces have reportedly been carrying out military operations against armed groups in North Sinai for over a decade (Amnesty International, 11 February 2025; Africanews, 13 August 2024). In the summary of an October 2024 report on the security situation in Egypt, the Country of Origin Information (COI) unit of the Belgian Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS-CEDOCA) reports that “[l]iterature and Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)-based research suggests that both in North Sinai and the rest of the country, violence has declined significantly in recent years”, partly because of intensified military operations by the Egyptian army (CGRS-CEDOCA, 7 October 2024, p. 2). Sources report that President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi announced the Sinai Peninsula free of terrorism in January 2023 (MEE, 1 July 2024) and declared the end of the military operations in North Sinai in April 2023 (Amnesty International, 11 February 2025). However, as of early 2025, “despite a relatively calm situation” (HRW, 16 January 2025), North Sinai remained a de facto military zone (Amnesty International, 11 February 2025; HRW, 16 January 2025). Large areas were reportedly kept under military jurisdiction by several presidential decrees, including Decree No. 444 of 2014<sup>4</sup> and Decree No. 420 of 2021<sup>5</sup> (Amnesty International, 11 February 2025). For the period between 1 July 2024 and 31 August 2025, ACLED<sup>6</sup> lists 20 security-related incidents in Egypt’s North Sinai, coded as battles (1), explosions/remote violence (1), violence against civilians (1), protests (15) and strategic developments (2), resulting in 4 fatalities<sup>7</sup> (ACLED, as of 31 August 2025).

The US Department of State’s Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) reports in March 2025 on its website that “a small pocket of insurgents” was believed to exist in the northeastern part of North Sinai and that terrorist attacks have occurred in North Sinai, particularly in that area. OSAC notes that most attacks in North Sinai targeted military installations and personnel of the Egyptian government and that “Operation Sinai 2018”<sup>8</sup> had resulted “in a significant intensification of counterterrorism military activity” there (OSAC, 3 March 2025). Regarding Islamic State Group-Sinai Province (IS-SP, or Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis, ABM) activity in North Sinai, CGRS-CEDOCA elaborates in the above-mentioned report that the Egyptian government “was able to virtually eliminate WS [Wilayat Sinai; also IS-SP] activity in the area by combining a sustained counter-insurgency strategy by the army, cooperation with local tribal militias, and the adoption of amnesty measures in the final stages of the conflict” (CGRS-CEDOCA, 7 October

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<sup>4</sup> Presidential Decree No. 444 of 2014 classifies „border areas and areas adjacent to the border [...] as military zones where presence is prohibited” (RPE, 21 July 2025).

<sup>5</sup> Decree No. 420 of 2021 “amended the earlier Presidential Decree No. 444 of 2014, expanding the scope of border militarization” (RPE et al., June 2025, p. 22).

<sup>6</sup> For detailed information on ACLED’s methodology, please see their Codebook (ACLED, undated).

<sup>7</sup> Please note that ACLED does not differentiate between civilian and non-civilian casualties (ACLED, undated).

<sup>8</sup> “Operation Sinai 2018” is a “comprehensive” military operation launched by the Egyptian Armed Forces in early 2018 aiming to “end terrorism” in the Sinai peninsula’s northern and central parts (Mada Mary, 9 February 2018).

2024, p. 2). The COI unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA Staatendokumentation) notes in a June 2025 report on terrorism in North Africa that “[t]errorist attacks can occur throughout the country, although in recent years they have been concentrated in the north of the Sinai Peninsula”, further elaborating that while terrorist activities and clashes with the army decreased over the last few years, North Sinai remained „a hotspot“ (BFA Staatendokumentation, 5 June 2025, p. 5).

According to an article published in early August 2025 by the independent website Zawia3, despite the decrease of declared terrorist operations in the Sinai, armed tribal formations continued “to play security and logistical roles on the ground and have expanded into the economic field, managing crossings and commercial activities”. The article notes that the killing of a young man from the Al-Rumaylat tribe on 30 July 2025 in North Sinai by a militant belonging to one of the armed groups of the Sinai Tribal Union, a union of local fighters led by the businessman Ibrahim Al-Argani, closely associated with the government, “and the reality of the continued activities of irregular armed entities possessing weapons and influence, operating alongside state institutions” contradicted “the official narrative declaring the end of the war on terrorism”. According to various sources interviewed by Zawia 3 after the incident, earlier in July, clashes had occurred between locals and Al-Argani’s forces, while a tribal source reported “widespread anger among the tribes due to the recurrence of such incidents and the ongoing clashes between the tribes and armed factions associated with the so-called ‘Tribal Union’” (Zawia3, 5 August 2025).

Following the Israel-Gaza conflict that erupted after 7 October 2023<sup>9</sup>, sources report an increased military buildup in North Sinai close to the Rafah border with Gaza (AW, 26 August 2025; MEE, 19 August 2025; Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, 15 July 2025), including the mobilisation of heavy equipment and the enforcement of national troops (AW, 26 August 2025). According to the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, which describes itself as an “independent research institute, serving as Israel’s global embassy for national security and applied diplomacy” (Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, undated), the “Egyptian military buildup in Sinai and near the Rafah border with Gaza has not been a recent development” but “began in 2014 as part of a long-term effort to stabilize Sinai, integrate it into Egypt’s national fabric, and prevent it from becoming a safe haven for militants” (Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, 15 July 2025). In an August 2025 article, the Middle East Eye (MEE), a London-based online news outlet, cited a senior military source stating that Egypt insisted that its deployment of additional forces along the Gaza border was defensive and occurred “amid rising fears that Israel’s planned occupation of the strip could push Palestinians into North Sinai”. According to the cited source “about 40,000 soldiers [were] now deployed in North Sinai, almost double the number allowed under the 1979 Egypt–Israel peace treaty<sup>10</sup>”, including “[a]rmoured vehicles, air defence systems, special forces and M60 battle tanks [...] deployed [...] near the border with Gaza” (MEE, 19 August 2025). The Israeli

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<sup>9</sup> On October 7, 2023, the militant group Hamas, which was at the time in control of the Palestinian Gaza strip, “launched what would become the deadliest terrorist attack in Israeli history” from Gaza (CFR, undated).

<sup>10</sup> The 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel ended the state of war between them, addressing among others the “recognition of international boundaries, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the parties, the zone of limited force, [and] navigation and free passage in the Suez Canal” (UN, undated).

army reportedly stated in late August that Egypt's military reinforcements to North Sinai were being "coordinated with the Israeli army" and were "in line" with the 1979 treaty (International Crisis Group, August 2025). In an August 2025 article, the Arab Weekly (AW), a weekly magazine published in the United Kingdom, the US and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), notes that "[s]enior commanders have [...] signalled that their readiness is not directed at a specific adversary", further elaborating that while "threats from Gaza are considered the most serious", the country also faces threats from the west, "where extremist groups remain active in Libya" and "from the south, where Sudan's violent conflict creates a fluid security close to the Egyptian border, not to mention the southern Red Sea, where Houthi attacks have disrupted navigation through the Suez Canal" (AW, 26 August 2025).

## 2.2 Extremist groups

For information on extremist groups in North Sinai and their activity, please refer to [section 2.1](#). In its aforementioned June 2025 report, the COI unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum notes the following with regard to extremist groups active in Egypt:

"Various terrorist groups are active in Egypt, the most significant being Islamic State Wilayat Sinai (IS-WS) [IS-SP]. However, there are others such as Harakat Sawa'd Misr (HASM) and Liwa al-Thawra<sup>11</sup>. Terrorist attacks can occur throughout the country, although in recent years they have been concentrated in the north of the Sinai Peninsula. The number of attacks, the number of military confrontations between the army and Islamists, and the number of casualties have steadily decreased in the last few years due to intensified counterterrorism operations. In 2024 there was only one attack in Alexandria. However, in addition to North Sinai, the desert area to the west up to the Libyan and south to the Sudanese border remains a hotspot." (BFA Staatendokumentation, 5 June 2025, p. 5)

IS-SP was reportedly present in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula (ICCT, 11 July 2025; UN Security Council, 6 February 2025, p. 11). During the period covered by this report, the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team reported to the UN Security Council that counter-terrorism efforts of the Egyptian government contained IS-SP activity (UN Security Council, 22 July 2024, p. 11) and "significantly weakened" the group (UN Security Council, 6 February 2025, p. 11). According to the UN Security Council's July 2024 report, the group is "deprived of sources of revenue, with smuggling routes effectively controlled" and their strength "assessed to be a few hundred fighters, mostly locals, who avoid direct confrontation" (UN Security Council, 22 July 2024, p. 11). The February 2025 report notes that the groups operational capabilities were confined to the Sinai and that the group tried "to rebuild while avoiding direct clashes with

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<sup>11</sup> HASM and Liwa Al-Thawra reportedly both emerged from the Muslim Brotherhood (Youm7, 21 June 2025; see also Asharq Al-Awsat, 21 July 2025). The Muslim Brotherhood was classified by the Egyptian government as a "terrorist" group in 2013 (Hassan, 3 December 2024). The organisation "is said to have helped form about 13 affiliated groups, which participated in acts of violence throughout Egypt" including HASM, "which Egyptian authorities allege functions as the Brotherhood's military wing" (GTSC, 28 July 2025). The Muslim Brotherhood itself has repeatedly denied involvement in violent activities (Al Manassa, 20 July 2025). HASM was designated a terrorist group by the USA (GTSC, 28 July 2025) and Egypt (Al Manassa, 20 July 2025).

security forces.” The report also states that “[i]ncreased troop deployments, tribal reconciliation initiatives led by the Egyptian military and disrupted smuggling routes further strained the group, leading to defections and severe resource shortages, including trading ammunition for food” (UN Security Council, 6 February 2025, p. 11). According to the July 2025 report, the group was not active in Egypt in the first half of 2025 and “[h]eightedened security measures in Sinai restricted operational movements”. The report further notes that while “propaganda was used to try to exploit the Gaza and Israel conflict to incite attacks against Egyptian authorities, counter-terrorism pressure constrained activities” (UN Security Council, 24 July 2025, p. 11).

According to a July 2025 article published by the Government Technology and Services Coalition’s Homeland Security (GTSC), which describes itself as a “nonprofit, non-partisan association of [...] small and midsized company CEOs that create, develop, and implement solutions for the Federal homeland and national security sector” of the USA, overall, 311 terrorist incidents were documented between 2018 and 2024 in Egypt, showing a significant decline of frequency and fatality numbers over the years. Five of the incidents occurred in 2024. The source further notes:

“Most of these incidents were linked to ISIS-Sinai [IS-SP]. HASM [Harakat Sawa’d Misr], which GTTAC [Global Terrorism and Trends Analysis Center] classifies as affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, was responsible for 10 incidents: seven in 2018 and three in 2019. No attacks attributed to HASM have been reported since 2019. Importantly, the 2024 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) did not mention either the Muslim Brotherhood or HASM in its final report.” (GTSC, 28 July 2025)

In mid-July 2025, Egyptian security forces reportedly thwarted a planned terrorist attack in Giza by the HASM movement (MENAFN, 22 July 2025). A civilian bystander was accidentally killed in the process. In a statement, the country’s Interior Ministry elaborates that “one of the group’s operatives [...] attempted to infiltrate Egypt illegally to carry out sabotage activities” highlighting “growing concerns over the country’s volatile borders, which security sources say are being exploited by armed groups to stage attempted ‘hostile operations’”. According to the statement, the government reportedly received intelligence information indicating that the HASM leaders were operating from Türkiye and “preparing to revive the group’s militant activities, targeting economic and security installations” across Egypt (Asharq Al-Awsat, 21 July 2025). In a July 2025 article, FDD’s Long War Journal, a project of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), a Washington, DC-based research institute focusing on national security and foreign policy, states that it remains unclear whether “HASM can return to its previous operational strength in Egypt and the region”. However, “its renewed propaganda efforts, alleged leadership activity in Turkey, and the deadly exchange in Giza suggest that Egyptian authorities no longer view the group as dormant” according to the article (FDD’s Long War Journal, 22 July 2025). No further information on the presence of extremist groups and no information on human rights abuses committed by these groups during the period covered by this report could be found within the time constraints of the research.

## 2.3 Human rights violations during counterterrorism operations

Reports indicate that counterterrorism operations in North Sinai have resulted in human rights abuses (OSAC, 3 March 2025). In a July 2025 report, the Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, an independent, non-governmental human rights organisation, reports that the government's counterterrorism approach since 2013 has over the past decade led to:

“[...] a systematic policy of oppressive security measures in the Sinai Peninsula, most notably through sweeping campaigns of arbitrary arrests that have targeted thousands of men, women, and children. Many of those detained were subjected to brutal torture during varying periods of enforced disappearance. Some eventually resurfaced in prisons or returned to their families, others were extrajudicially killed, while many remain unaccounted for, with their families still unaware whether they are alive or dead.” (Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, 21 July 2025)

The source also states that it has verified and documented 863 cases of people who have been forcibly disappeared, and whose fate was still unknown as of July 2025. “Meanwhile, a representative sample of activists and tribal figures in Sinai estimate that the number of forcibly disappeared persons ranges between 3,000 and 3,500”, the Sinai Foundation for Human Rights further elaborates (Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, 21 July 2025).

According to a July 2024 MEE article, counterterrorism operations have “killed hundreds of civilians, displaced thousands and resulted in the arbitrary detention of many residents who protested against the indiscriminate nature of the war”, while “entire villages [were] wiped out and the city of Rafah [was] almost completely razed to the ground.” (MEE, 1 July 2024; see also CIHRS et al., 23 December 2024).

In its October 2024 report to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), the Egyptian government states that “[c]ompensation and alternative housing units were being provided to residents affected by terrorist acts and counter-terrorism operations in North Sinai” (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 20). Freedom House, a US-based NGO, which conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom, and human rights, notes in its report on political rights and civil liberties in 2024 that authorities have denied people who have been displaced by the government's military campaign against IS-SP in the Sinai the right to return home (Freedom House, 2025, G1; see also HRW, 16 January 2025).

Two sources report that several civilians from North Sinai were sentenced to prison terms of three to ten years for largely peaceful protests demanding the right to return home. (CIHRS et al., 23 December 2024; Freedom House, 2025, G1). Amnesty International reports in February 2025 that the Egyptian government continues to maintain a “strict media blackout on the security situation in North Sinai”, preventing “media, human rights organizations and independent observers from accessing the region” (Amnesty International, 11 February 2025; see also HRW, 16 January 2025).

No further information on human rights violations during counterterrorism operations during the period covered by this report could be found within the time constraints of the research.

For further information on the situation of human rights defenders, please see [section 3.1.3](#) and for more details on the situation of journalists and other media professionals, please see [section 3.1.4](#).

## 3 Human rights situation

### 3.1 Freedom of expression

#### 3.1.1 Legal framework

Egypt's **Constitution** covers issues related to freedom of expression in several articles, including Article 65 (freedom of thought and opinion), Article 70 (freedom of the press, printing and publishing), Article 71 (ban of censoring newspapers and media outlets, except in periods of wartime and general mobilisation, and limitations to custodial punishments for offenses related to publication), and Article 72 (independence of press institutions and media outlets) (ECRF, 3 August 2025; Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 18 January 2014, with amendments up to 23 April 2019). These provisions, however, have no “tangible effect”, according to the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), and journalists and media professionals were facing an “arsenal of laws” that restricted their work. Moreover, the country's Penal Code (**Penal Code Law No. 58 of 1937, 21 July 1937, with amendments up to 15 August 2021**)<sup>12</sup> continues to contain provisions that foresee custodial sentences for journalists (ECRF) (ECRF, 3 August 2025), such as Articles 80 (d), 102 (bis), 184, and 188. Other provisions impose fines for the publication of images that potentially “tarnish the country's reputation” (Article 178) (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 8) and criminalise specific forms of defamation and slander (Article 306 (bis a)) (EIPR, August 2025, p. 4). Amendments made in 2021 increased punishment for journalists reporting on criminal trial sessions without prior approval and make disclosing classified information punishable with up to five years in prison (Freedom House, 2025, Section D1). The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) notes that digital expression became increasingly restricted over the previous 12 years:

“A range of previously legal acts have been criminalized, special penalties introduced, and existing penalties increased if crimes are committed online. The Anti-Terrorism Law No. 94 of 2015, the Press and Media Regulation Law No. 180 of 2018, and the Cybercrime Law No. 175 of 2018 are full of examples of this clampdown.” (EIPR, August 2025)

The **Anti-Terrorism Law No. 94 of 2015**<sup>13</sup> criminalises the creation and management of websites intended to promote “ideas and beliefs calling for the commission of terrorist acts” (Article 29) (EIPR, August 2025, p. 34), punishable with a minimum prison sentence of five years (Anti-Terrorism Law No. 94 of 2015, Article 29), while “whoever intentionally, by any means, publishes, broadcasts, displays, or promotes false news or statements on terrorist acts inside the country or anti-terrorism operations contrary to the official statements released by the Ministry of Defense” (Article 35) is punishable by a fine (EIPR, August 2025, p. 49).

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<sup>12</sup> An Arabic version of the law can be found at Manshurat, a project of the Law and Society Research Unit affiliated to the School of International Affairs and Public Policy of the American University in Cairo: Penal Code Law No. 58 of 1937, 21 July 1937, with amendments up to 15 August 2021 [Arabic], <https://manshurat.org/node/14677>

<sup>13</sup> Anti-Terrorism Law No. 94 of 2015 [Arabic], with amendments up to 3 March 2020, available at Manshurat, <https://manshurat.org/node/14679>



**Telecommunications Regulation Law No. 10<sup>14</sup>** punishes with imprisonment or a fine the act of using or helping to use “illegitimate means to conduct telecommunication” or of deliberately disturbing/harassing others by “misusing telecommunication equipment” (Article 76) (EIPR, August 2025, p. 33).

In an analysis of the **Anti-Cyber and Information Technology Crime Law No. 175 of 2018<sup>15</sup>** from August 2025, the EIPR states that the law’s extensive – and sometimes even unconstitutional – restrictions of freedom of expression online reflected the authorities’ view of “the internet as a threat” (EIPR, August 2025, p. 35). EIPR also points to the law’s ambiguous language in defining the grounds for restrictions, such as the violation of “family principle or value” addressed in Article 25<sup>16</sup> (EIPR, August 2025, p. 43) and further notes:

“The Cybercrime Law is devoid of any standard, even if arbitrary, and its articles 25, 27, and 34 criminalize the acts of any user if the judge sees them as a threat to any of the grounds given. This inability to determine necessity has resulted in a tendency to apply the law arbitrarily.” (EIPR, August 2025, p. 49)

CIHRS and other human rights organisations make a similar observation in their December 2024 joint report:

“48. Articles 25 and 26 of the same law [the Anti-Cyber and Information Technology Crimes Law, note ACCORD] criminalize acts that ‘violate family values’ without specification, [...] facilitating the imprisonment and prosecution of content creators. Activists and HRDs [human rights defenders] can be charged with managing websites and accounts for the purpose of committing a legally punishable crime, under the law’s article 27.” (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 9)

**Media Regulation Law No. 180 of 2018<sup>17</sup>** bans the creation or management of any website in or outside Egypt without a license from the Supreme Council for Media Regulation (SCMR). Executive regulations issued in February 2020 contained further “strict administrative requirements” for media licensing and journalists. Moreover, the law “imposes broad and vague restrictions on publishing and distributing content”, according to CIHRS and co-authors. It grants the SCMR the right to ban the import of publications on grounds of “national security” or if deemed unconstitutional (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 8), as well as the right to block websites without judicial order (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 8; Masaar, 4 August 2025). SCMR’s oversight and regulatory rules also apply to social media accounts with more

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<sup>14</sup> Telecommunications Law No. 10 of 2003, translated by the National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA), available at NTRA, <https://www.tra.gov.eg/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Law-No-10-of-2003.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Anti-Cyber and Information Technology Crime Law No. 175 of 2018 [Arabic], 14 August 2018, available at Manshurat, <https://manshurat.org/node/31487>

<sup>16</sup> According to EIPR, it is unclear whether the act criminalized in article 25 (“infringing a family principle or value of the Egyptian society”) refers to the infringement on family values and principles in general or on acts of infringement of the privacy of individuals in particular (EIPR, August 2025, p. 43).

<sup>17</sup> Press and Media Regulation Law and the Supreme Council for Media Regulation No. 180 of 2018 [Arabic], 27 August 2018, available at Manshurat, <https://manshurat.org/node/31481>

than 5 000 followers (Masaar, 4 August 2025). The SCMR is an independent body tasked with supervising print, audiovisual and digital media, and has the exclusive right to issue licenses to new media outlets (Ahram Online, 3 December 2024).

In April 2025, the Egyptian parliament approved a new **Criminal Procedures Code**, following months of discussion (Mada Masr, 29 April 2025). According to a joint statement by Article 19 and other human rights organisations released in February 2025, Articles 79 and 80 of the code permit investigating judges to issue orders – for renewable 30-day-periods – that allow authorities to monitor and intercept various communication channels, including personal digital communication, to record such communication and to confiscate phones and other devices that store such communication or put these devices and online accounts under state surveillance (Article 19 et al., 12 February 2025). Moreover, Article 116 allows for members of the Public Prosecution to issue such an order without judicial oversight, thereby undermining the principle of “separation between prosecutorial and judicial functions” (Article 19 et al., 12 February 2025; UN Special Procedures mandate-holders, 8 November 2024, p. 4). On 21 September 2025, President Al-Sisi returned the draft law to the House of Representatives for review (Mada Masr, 21 September 2025). In October 2025, the House voted to postpone the enforcement of the new Criminal Procedures Code until October 2026 (Ahram Online, 16 October 2025).

### 3.1.2 *Censorship*

Egypt takes rank 170 out of 180 in terms of press freedom, according to the World Press Freedom Index for 2025 by Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) (RSF, 2025), “due to the frequency of censorship, police raids, arrests, shutdowns, sham trials, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions” (RSF, 28 May 2025). Freedom House notes that the authorities denied independent journalists the chance to “comment on, oversee, or influence state policies” through censorship and other means (Freedom House, 2025, section C3). RSF also points to the authorities’ direct control over media:

“Virtually all media are directly controlled by the state, the intelligence agencies or a handful of wealthy, influential businessmen who are under the government’s thumb. By contrast, media outlets that refuse to submit to censorship are blocked, as is the case with Mada Masr, an independent news site that has been inaccessible in Egypt since 2017.” (RSF, 2025)

Carnegie senior fellow Yezid Sayigh similarly mentions the authorities’ attempt to dominate the public space by seeking ownership of media outlets, controlling editorial policy and media content and censoring or banning dissenting views (Sayigh, 12 May 2025), as did several human rights organisations and journalists in a joint statement from November 2024:

“Freedom of expression and press freedom continue to be almost nonexistent in the country as government-affiliated entities and individuals control the almost totality of television channels, news websites, newspapers and advertisement agencies, and reshape their editorial policies to serve the ruling regime. [...]

Independent media outlets like Mada Masr and Al-Manassa are frequently subjected to censorship. Hundreds of websites, including major independent news portals and



prominent human rights sites remain blocked and face legal and security persecution. Additionally, there are numerous restrictions on the freedom of flow of information, access to sources, and reaching the local audience. This impacts not only local journalists but also those working in exile.” (EuroMed Rights et al., 26 November 2024)

Freedom House states in its Freedom in the World report for 2024 that hundreds of websites and news platforms have been blocked on the basis of laws that allow authorities “to censor and block online content” at their own discretion (without judicial consent) if they consider it a threat to national security (Freedom House, 2025, section D1). Amnesty International notes in its human rights report for 2024 that at least 562 human rights, news and other websites remain blocked by the authorities, according to the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE), an Egyptian rights group (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). Al Manassa describes in April 2025 the state of press freedom in Egypt as “a decade of censorship”, with online censorship turning into “the third pillar of press repression” (Al Manassa, 26 April 2025). Blocked websites include for example Mada Masr, Al Manassa (EFHR, 11 August 2025), Brussels-based Zawia3 and Cairo 24 (CPJ, 21 February 2025).

In an article from February 2025, AFTE points to the SCMR’s policy of sanctioning media outlets over accusations of spreading fake news – including into these accusations critical reports by independent media outlets – while local legislation does not provide for a precise definition of fake news (AFTE, 17 February 2025). In August 2025, two sources reported on the Ministry of Transport’s threat to take legal action against the news website Veto over a critical report (Zawia3, 28 August 2025; Hafeez, 8 September 2025). In the same month journalist Islam El-Raghy was detained and referred to a criminal court on charges of defamation and insult on social media. The complaint was filed by a local official after the journalist had criticised village issues, such as the lack of street lighting, in a post on social media (Zawia3, 28 August 2025). At least 29 online content creators were arrested and prosecuted between late July and late August 2025, including at least 19 women and an underage girl, on charges of “violating family principles or values in Egyptian society” under Article 25 of the Anti-Cyber and Information Technology Crime Law No. 175 of 2018 (see [section 3.1.1](#)), accused of violating “public morals” and “money laundering” through “indecent” videos posted on TikTok (HRW, 10 September 2025). Human Rights Watch and the EIPR state that this law (HRW, 10 September 2025), and specifically Article 25 (EIPR, 4 August 2025), have become “one of the key tools” for criminalising free expression in Egypt (HRW, 10 September 2025; EIPR, 4 August 2025). The Law and Democracy Support Foundation (LDSF), a Berlin-based NGO founded by exiled Egyptian human rights defenders and German academics, makes a similar observation:

“The Foundation stresses that this is part of a long-running pattern, wherein state bodies—especially the Public Prosecution and the Ministry of Interior—are used to criminalize digital expression. This is being carried out through the overbroad application of Article 25 of Law No. 175/2018 on Cybercrime, which penalizes any content that diverges from state-imposed norms of appearance, behavior, and expression.” (LDSF, 3 August 2025).

### 3.1.3 *Situation of human rights defenders*

#### 3.1.3.1 Prosecutions and convictions of human rights defenders

In January 2025, Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, points to the repeated use of terrorism-related charges against human rights defenders and the authorities' practice to hold them in detention for extended periods of time:

“Although there has been some progress with the release of some detainees and the development of a national human rights strategy, Egypt persists in routinely misusing counter-terrorism legislation and recycling criminal charges against human rights defenders,” said Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

‘What is particularly striking is the continued detention of human rights defenders past their release date by repeatedly charging them with similar, if not identical, terrorism-related accusations, in a practice commonly known as “rotation” or “recycling”<sup>18</sup>,’ Lawlor said.” (OHCHR, 15 January 2025)

Volker Türk, head of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), similarly draws attention to this practice in a statement from August 2025:

“These fresh charges, often under counter-terrorism laws, are usually similar to those for which they had already been charged or convicted, and often lack substantive foundation.” (OHCHR, 26 August 2025)

CIHRS and 12 other Egyptian NGOs note in their joint human rights report from December 2024 that the SSSP “arbitrarily detains rights defenders through terrorism charges often together with accusations of social media misuse and ‘spreading false news’” (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 6). The Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF) also mentions the practice of bringing political detainees before terrorist courts:

“In the last quarter of 2024, the Supreme State Security Prosecution referred no less than 90 political cases to terrorism courts, a number that exceeds the total number of cases brought to the same courts by the Prosecution over a period of roughly a decade (2013-2023). [...]

The cases referred to terrorism courts include those of human rights lawyers Hoda Abdel Moneim, Ibrahim Metwally, Walid Selim, and Ahmed Nazeer El-Helw [...]” (EHRF, 26 January 2025)

Moreover, in their submissions to the UN Human Rights Council for the UPR on Egypt in January 2025, several NGOs mention the practice of including human rights defenders on terrorist lists (HRC, 6 November 2024), which leads to the confiscation of property and travel bans (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 7). In her statement, UN Special Rapporteur Mary Lawlor explicitly mentions three cases of human rights defenders held in detention on repeated charges of

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<sup>18</sup> For further information on the practice, see also [section 3.1.3](#) and [section 3.6.1](#).

terrorism, including Hoda Abdel Moneim, Aisha Al-Shater, and Ibrahim Metawally. The latter's charges include the offense of "conspiring with foreign entities", which, according to the expert, appears to be related to his cooperation with the UN (OHCHR, 15 January 2025).

In January 2025, an investigation was opened against human rights defender and executive director of the EIPR, Hossam Bahgat, on charges of "spreading false news" and "aiding and funding a terrorist group", based on complaints by "regular citizens" and the National Security Agency (NSA), according to Amnesty International (Amnesty International 27 January 2025). The news site Daraj notes that already in 2011, a "foreign funding" case had been opened against Bahgat. He had been banned from travelling and, as of January 2025, his assets had been frozen since 2016 (Daraj, 30 January 2025). In August 2025, human rights lawyer Mahienour El-Massry was summoned for interrogation by the SSSP in the fourth case opened against her since 2019. Previous cases had been opened on charges of spreading false news, misusing social media as well as on terrorism-related charges (EIPR, 17 August 2025). She was released the following day on bail after being charged with spreading false news in Egypt and abroad and "harming the public interest and undermining the prestige of the State" on the basis of complaints filed against her by citizens from several governorates, according to EIPR (EIPR, 18 August 2025).

### 3.1.3.2 Treatment of family members of human rights defenders by state actors

Human Rights Watch notes that relatives of dissidents living in exile continue to be harassed and detained by the Egyptian authorities (HRW, 31 January 2025). LDSF similarly points to transnational repression of human rights defenders abroad by targeting their families:

"Furthermore, the authorities have resorted to arresting family members as hostages to exert pressure on their relatives abroad.

It is worth noting that justified fear has led many victims of these violations to refuse to disclose their names or provide testimony. This reluctance stems either from their continued presence in unsafe countries that coordinate security measures with Egypt, or from fears for the safety of their family members back home." (LDSF, 1 January 2025, p. 3)

In a joint report published in November 2024, the Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF) and the Egyptian Front for Human Rights (EFHR) describe some of the measures taken against relatives of human rights defenders, including surveillance, interrogations, threats, dismissals/denials of promotions, arrests and the opening of legal cases, restrictions on movement and travel bans (EFHR & EHRF, November 2024, pp. 36-38).

Oqba Hashad, an Egyptian student, has been held in pre-trial detention on terrorism-related charges since 2019 "as punishment" for the human rights activism of his exiled brother, Amr Hashad, according to Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 27 March 2025). Oqba Hashad, who has a disability, has reportedly been forcibly disappeared and has experienced torture, beatings, and electric shocks while in detention. Moreover, he has been denied adequate healthcare, including the provision of a prosthetic leg as he lost one of his legs after a childhood accident (Amnesty International, 27 March 2025; CFJ, January 2025, p. 1).

### *3.1.4 Situation of journalists and other media professionals*

As of May 2025, RSF notes that there were 20 journalists imprisoned in Egypt, among them Alaa Abd El-Fattah, a British-Egyptian blogger (RSF, 28 May 2025). The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) mentions with reference to the Egyptian Journalist Syndicate (EJS) that 22 journalists were held in detention as of early June 2025 (IFJ, 5 June 2025). In its prison census for 2024, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) describes Egypt as “frequently one of the top 10 jailers” of journalists globally. The CPJ further states that the country uses “enforced disappearances [...] to intimidate and silence journalists before formally detaining them” and that Egypt was among those countries where “a significant portion” of imprisoned journalists was held based on “[o]ften-vague charges or convictions for terrorism or ‘extremism’” (CPJ, 16 January 2025). Freedom House states in its Freedom in the World report for 2024 that “independent reporting is suppressed through restrictive laws and intimidation” and that “[c]harges like terrorism affiliation or spreading false news, often unsupported by evidence, are used to silence dissent” (Freedom House, 2025, section D1). Journalists often face extended periods of pretrial detention “as retribution for their activities” (Freedom House, 2025, section F2), as well as “arbitrary international travel bans”. Moreover, journalists have been sentenced to prison for defending the right of people displaced from Sinai (see section 2.1) to return to their homes (Freedom House, 2025, section G1).

Journalists continue to be criminalised for “dissenting forms of expression”, according to Amnesty International’s human rights report for 2024 (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). In a January 2025 press release, the organisation points to a “renewed crackdown on peaceful dissent through arbitrary detentions and politically-motivated criminal investigations” in the run-up to the UN’s Universal Periodic Review on 28 January 2025. Those targeted included TikToker Mohamed Allam (known as “Rivaldo”), who had posted content critical of the government, as well as Nada Mogheeth, the wife of detained cartoonist Ashraf Omar, and Ahmed Serag, a journalist working for the independent website Zat Masr, who had interviewed Nada Mogheeth a few weeks earlier. Investigations were opened against all three of them by the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) on charges of “spreading false news” as well as on terrorism-related charges (Amnesty International, 27 January 2025). RSF referred to the SSSP as “a counterterrorism court regularly used against journalists” (RSF, 13 August 2025). Human Rights Watch described it as “an abusive branch of Egypt’s public prosecution [...] responsible for keeping thousands of peaceful activists and journalists in pretrial detention for months or years without evidence of wrongdoing. It has detained many journalists on spurious charges often related to their work.” (HRW, 16 January 2025)

While Nada Mogheeth was later released on bail, Ahmed Serag was kept in detention (Daraj, 30 January 2025), and was reportedly released in June 2025 (Al Manassa, 5 June 2025).

Ashraf Omar was arrested in July 2024 after publishing a cartoon critical of the government. In the same month, a journalist working for the news website Arabic Post, Khaled Mamdouh, was also detained (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). Both were detained and held at unknown locations (HRW, 16 January 2025; EuroMed Rights et al., 9 September 2024; Amnesty International, 25 July 2024) and appeared before the SSSP several days after their arrest (EuroMed Rights et al., 9 September 2024). They face charges of spreading false news as well as terrorism-related charges (EuroMed Rights et al., 9 September 2024; Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). Ashraf Omar was tortured in detention and threatened with electric shocks, according to his family (HRW, 16 January 2025; EuroMed Rights et al., 9 September 2024),

while Khaled Mamdouh's son was physically assaulted by security forces during his father's detention (EuroMed Rights et al., 9 September 2024). Both men remained in pretrial detention as of June 2025 (IFJ, 5 June 2025). On 25 August 2025, Ashraf Omar's pre-trial detention was renewed for a further period of 45 days by the Second Chamber of Terrorism in the Cairo Criminal Court (ECRF, 6 September 2025).

The EFHR mentions the case of journalist Rasha Qandil, who was charged by the SSSP with spreading false news over social media posts that addressed the cases of activist Alaa Abd El-Fattah and blogger Mohamed Oxyen, among other issues, before being released on bail in May 2025 (EFHR, 25 May 2025). Both men remained imprisoned as of early June 2025 (IFJ, 5 June 2025).

Alaa Abd El-Fattah, a British-Egyptian activist and blogger was arrested in September 2019 and sentenced to five years in prison in December 2021, including on charges of spreading false news. He was reportedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment while in custody (Amnesty International, 26 September 2024). In February 2025, a group of independent human rights experts called for the immediate release of El-Fattah, noting that he has spent "most of the last 14 years either in pre-trial detention or serving harsh sentences for terrorism and national security offences, which are widely used by Egyptian authorities to silence dissent". They further stated that he remained imprisoned despite having completed his sentence in September 2024 as the authorities refused to count the time he spent in pre-trial detention as part of his sentence and said he would be released in January 2027. The experts pointed to the "arbitrary and unlawful nature of his detention" and noted that El-Fattah's mother's life was at risk after being on hunger strike for almost five months to protest her son's continued imprisonment (OHCHR, 27 February 2025). El-Fattah was released from prison on 23 September 2025, after being pardoned President Al-Sisi (Arab News, 23 September 2025). In August 2025, Lina Attalah, chief editor of Mada Masr news website, was interrogated by the SSSP over accusations of spreading false news, according to RSF. The organisation notes that she was released on bail but faces a fine and prison sentence of up to five years. Moreover, she was accused of operating an unlicensed website, as license applications have not yet been answered by the authorities and the outlet's website has been blocked "almost continuously" since 2017 (RSF, 13 August 2025). Several human rights organizations note that the journalist was summoned for questioning two days after the website published a report on detention conditions and human rights violations in Badr 3 prison (EIPR, 3 August 2025; CIHRS et al., 11 August 2025). A representative of the Press Syndicate was denied attending the hearing (CIHRS et al., 11 August 2025). RSF and EIPR point out that Lina Attalah's case is the fifth prosecution in five years against Mada Masr's journalists (RSF, 13 August 2025; EIPR, 3 August 2025).

### **3.2 Situation of political opposition members**

Freedom House notes in its Freedom in the World Report for 2024 that "[m]eaningful political opposition is virtually nonexistent, as expressions of dissent can draw criminal prosecution and imprisonment" (Freedom House, 2025, Overview). Freedom House further explains:

"Political parties are legally allowed to form and operate, but in practice activists, opposition parties, and political movements that criticize the regime face arrests, harsh prison terms, death sentences, extrajudicial violence, and other forms of pressure. Former

political prisoners have also been threatened with rearrest for their criticism of the regime. The Egypt-based families of exiled activists have faced persecution by state authorities.” (Freedom House, 2025, section B1)

Amnesty International explains that in 2024, the authorities arrested 1 594 persons, among them also opposition politicians and dissidents (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). Human Rights Watch notes that in 2024, the Interior Ministry police and NSA “continued to arbitrarily detain, forcibly disappear, and torture critics and dissidents in official and unofficial places of detention” (HRW, 16 January 2025).

As an Egypt researcher at Amnesty International states in the context of the arrest of several critics in January 2025: “The government is sending a crystal clear message that it has no intention of tolerating any form of dissent or improving its abysmal human rights record” (Amnesty International, 27 January 2025). The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights points to the practice of re-arresting political opponents and other individuals, or of preventing their release by bringing new charges against them (known as “rotation”), which are often based on counter-terrorism laws and similar to previous charges (OHCHR, 26 August 2025). For more information on “rotation” or the “recycling of cases”, please see [section 3.1.3](#) and [section 3.6.1](#).

Since the Terrorist Entities Law was passed in 2015, Egyptian authorities have placed thousands of people, including opposition politicians, human rights defenders and activists on the “terrorist list”. In 2024, 768 individuals were added to the list, and 137 persons in the first half of 2025, according to EuroMed Rights. Severe constraints resulting from this designation include travel bans, asset freeze, restrictions on holding an elected or appointed office and a ban on political and civic participation for up to five years (EuroMed Rights, July 2025, p. 31).

LDSF reports several cases of transnational repression targeting political dissidents and others living abroad. Such repressions include hacking of social media accounts, and launching hate campaigns, as well as arresting family members who remained in Egypt (LDSF, 1 January 2025, pp. 2-3).

Freedom House states in its Freedom of the World Report for 2024 that “the executive branch exerts influence over the courts”, which “often disregarded due process and other basic safeguards in cases against the government’s political opponents” (Freedom House, 2025, section F1).

In July 2024, opposition politician Yehia Hussein Abdelhady was arrested after publishing a post on Facebook critical of the government and the army. He was charged with publishing “false news” and terrorism-related charges (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). As of June 2025, he remained in pretrial detention, while the SSSP brought new charges against Yehia Abdelhady, according to the Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR) (AOHR, 25 June 2025).

In May 2025, opposition politician and publisher Hisham Kassem was sentenced in absentia to six months in prison and a fine (Amnesty International, 26 June 2025) on charges of “defamation, slander, and disturbing public peace” brought against him by a former minister (OMCT, 21 May 2025). He had previously been convicted, sentenced and imprisoned for publishing a social media post in July 2023 on the alleged corruption of two former ministers (Amnesty International, 27 January 2025). He was released in February 2024 after completing



a six-months prison term and subsequently left Egypt (Amnesty International, 26 June 2025). The new charges were based on the same social media post and on the complaint filed by one of the two respective ministers, according to Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 27 January 2025).

In August 2025, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk points to the continued arbitrary detention of political activist and former spokesperson for the 6<sup>th</sup> of April Youth Movement, Mohammad Adel Fahmy Ali, noting that he was among those affected by the practice of “rotation” (OHCHR, 26 August 2025). Mohammad Adel Fahmy Ali (also Mohamed Adel) was held in pretrial detention between June 2018 and September 2023 on several charges. In September 2023, he was sentenced to four years in prison on charges of “spreading false news on social media”. He went on a hunger strike twice, in August 2024 (EIPR et al. 9 September 2024) and in May 2025 (AOHR, 14 May 2025).

Former opposition presidential candidate Ahmed Tantawy was released from his one-year sentence on 28 May 2025 (ICJ, 3 June 2025; The National, 29 May 2025). However, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) notes in its statement of June 2025 that one month before his release, Tantawy was interrogated regarding two new criminal cases. Furthermore, his wife, journalist Rasha Qandeel, was interrogated in the context of charges of “spreading and broadcasting false news and information that could harm the public interest both inside and outside the country” (ICJ, 3 June 2025).

Since September 2024, the number of state security cases referred by the SSSP to the courts as of May 2025 has “increased exponentially”, according to EIPR. The organisation further notes that in several cases the defendants were facing new trials on the same charges for which they were already held in pre-trial detention or serving a sentence, or on similar charges, including, for example, the former presidential candidate and leader of the Strong Egypt Party Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh and his deputy Mohamed Al-Qassas, both serving lengthy prison sentences of 15 and 10 years, respectively (EIPR, 18 May 2025). As of February 2025, Aboul Fotouh had reportedly been held in solitary confinement since his arrest in February 2018 (The New Arab, 15 February 2025). Aboul Fotouh’s son Ahmed was arrested in April 2025 and based on an earlier in-absentia conviction, was convicted to ten years in prison in the same case as his father. Both men had been convicted on charges of “spreading false news” and “joining a terrorist group” (The New Arab, 20 April 2025).

Middle East Eye (MEE) notes in August 2025 that while any political opposition had been suppressed since President Al-Sisi’s coming to power, repressions against persons related to the Muslim Brotherhood had been particularly severe and extended also to their family members. These included, for example, Anas Al-Beltagy, the son of former MP Mohamed Al-Beltagy, imprisoned for already 11 years, as well as Aisha Khairat Al-Shater, daughter of Muslim Brotherhood leader Khairat Al-Shater, and her husband. Both were sentenced to 15 in prison in March 2025, reportedly on “family affiliations”-related charges (MEE, 27 August 2025).

### 3.3 Freedom of assembly and freedom of association

#### 3.3.1 *Situation of civil society organisations (CSOs)*

##### 3.3.1.1 Legal framework

The 2014 Constitution allows citizens to establish associations (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 18 January 2014, with amendments up to 23 April 2019, Article 75). This constitutional right is severely restricted by the Law Regulating the Exercise of Civil Work passed in 2019 (Law No. 149 on Regulating the Exercise of Civil Work, 19 August 2019), which imposes harsh restrictions on civil society work (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 19 March 2024, p. 9). This legislation as well as further legislation restricting civil society work is addressed in further detail in the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

##### 3.3.1.2 Treatment by state and non-state actors

Due to the abovementioned NGO law (Law No. 149) restricting the work of NGOs and proscribing severe punishments for noncompliance (HRW, 16 January 2025; Freedom House, 2025, section E2), as well as NGOs having faced office raids and members being subjected to judicial harassment, civil society space was deemed to have been ‘significantly weakened’ (Freedom House, 2025, section E2). During the reporting period, members of civil society organisations were subjected to prolonged pretrial detention (EIPR, 24 September 2025; EIPR, 14 September 2025) and restrictions to freedom of movement (AFTE, 21 May 2025; ECRF, 4 December 2024). For more information on such cases, please refer to [section 3.1.3](#).

The Egyptian news outlet Youm7 reported in August 2025 that many Egyptian human rights organisations have increasingly lost their foreign funding after 2011, forcing many of them to slim down their programming or shut down completely, with the US as a major donor discontinuing 147 out of 149 development grants disbursed via USAID in January 2025 (Youm7, 2 August 2025).

No information could be found relating to the treatment of CSOs by non-state actors.

#### 3.3.2 *Treatment of protesters*

The 2014 Constitution guarantees the right to organise public meetings, marches and demonstrations and all forms of peaceful protest upon prior notification (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 18 January 2014, with amendments up to 23 April 2019, Article 73). Despite these constitutional rights, the Interior Ministry has the prerogative to relocate, postpone or ban protests and disperse unauthorised gatherings of more than ten people forcefully (Freedom House, 2025, section E1).

Under a combination of the 2013 protest law, the 1914 law on illegal assembly as well as various provisions of the Penal Code, protesters can face imprisonment as well as high fines for offenses such as “violating public order,” “impeding public interests,” or “obstructing traffic”, while authorities can further make use of the laws on counterterrorism and fake news for harsher penalties (ICNL, last updated 6 September 2025). For the legal framework stipulated by the 2013 Law No. 107 on the Regulation of the Right to Public Assemblies, Marches and Peaceful Demonstrations, please refer to section 3.3.2 of the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on](#)



[Egypt](#). The crackdown on protests and arrest of protesters has made occurrences of demonstrations rare (Freedom House, 2025, section E1). In July 2024, more than 100 individuals were pre-emptively detained in connection to calls published online for people to protest price hikes and power cuts, while the protests themselves never took place (HRW, 16 January 2025).

There were notable cases of protesters subjected to unfair trials and long duration in pretrial detention: Badr Mohamed, who had first been arrested at a protest in 2013 when he was 17 years old, and later re-arrested in 2020 and retried in a mass trial under the same charges, as of February 2025 was still held in inhumane conditions in Badr prison after having completed his prison sentence (Amnesty International, 5 February 2025). In October 2025, the Alexandria Criminal Court finally acquitted Osama Abdel Aal, who had been sentenced on charges of murder, show of force, possession of weapons and other counts after having been arbitrarily arrested at a protest in 2014 which saw clashes with security forces. Abdel Aal spent five years in pretrial detention (EIPR, 23 October 2025).

### *Pro-Palestinian protesters*

The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) between October 2023 and October 2024 documented 150 arrests of people peacefully expressing their solidarity with Palestine and opposing Israeli occupation. All of them were charged under the Anti-Terrorism Law, while some faced additional charges. As of October 2024, 108 of them remained in pretrial detention, among them 2 minors (EIPR, October 2024, p. 4). The Egyptian authorities continued to suppress public solidarity with Gaza in 2025, in June renewing the pretrial detention of several defendants arrested in May for hanging banners expressing support for Gaza in public spaces and indicting them for “joining a terrorist group” and “spreading false news” (Al Manassa, 10 June 2025). In another incident in June 2025, more than 200 international pro-Palestinian activists were arrested at Cairo airport and hotels around Cairo (France24, 12 June 2025) ahead of a planned protest march from Arish to the Gazan border (Euronews, 12 June 2025). According to Amnesty International, several Egyptian nationals planning to take part in the march were also swept up in the arrests, three of them reportedly being subjected to arbitrary detention, incommunicado detention, and ill-treatment, with one testimony by an Egyptian detainee also reporting torture (Amnesty International, 8 July 2025). In September 2025, at least three Egyptian members of an international activist group planning to sail boats to Gaza to break Israel’s siege were arrested in Cairo (Mada Masr, 30 September 2025). In October 2025, a police officer arrested for climbing an advertising billboard to raise the Palestinian flag was released after having spent a year and a half in pretrial detention, while dozens more arrested for supporting Palestine were still detained and some neared the legal two-year limit for the duration of pretrial detention (EIPR, 12 October 2025).

### *3.3.3 Trade unions*

While the Constitution guarantees the right to form syndicates and trade unions (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 19 January 2014, with amendments up to 23 April 2019, Articles 76-77), the government only recognised unions affiliated with the state-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation (Freedom House, 2025, section E3). Independent trade unions faced “significant and onerous obstacles” when trying to register and apply for legal status (USDOS,

12 August 2025, section 2b). The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) reported that in 2025, 14 independent unions which had been trying to re-register following the dissolution of independent unions in 2018, remained unable to operate despite meeting the legal requirements (ITUC, undated). On its annually published Trade Union Freedom Index, the Arab Trade Union Confederation gave Egypt the worst rating (5) for the year 2024 (Mada Masr, 13 March 2025; Zawia3, 24 March 2025), in part due to the government's violation of previously signed international conventions as well as the contradiction between the legal text and the practical application of the Trade Union Law (Zawia3, 24 March 2025).

Even though the Constitution guarantees the right to peaceful strikes (Freedom House, 2025, section E3; USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2b), they were not tolerated in practice and the protest law prohibits gatherings that impede labour and production (Freedom House, 2025, section E3). According to ITUC, in 2024 and 2025, at least four members of trade unions were arbitrarily arrested and charged for "affiliation to a terrorist organisation" (ITUC, undated). At the textile and weaving factory in Samanoud, workers in August 2024 began a strike to demand the minimum wage, which reportedly led to worker suspensions and several workers being arrested for the strike and later released (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2b, see also Al Manassa, 18 May 2025). In May 2025, a renewed strike at the factory was ended only hours after its commencement due to threats from members of National Security to arrest strikers (Al Manassa, 18 May 2025). The Geneva-based non-governmental organisation Committee for Justice (CFJ) in September 2025 reported on the precarious situation of imprisoned unionist Hazem Mohamed Farouk. Farouk, who was arrested in 2013 for charges in different cases and received a 15-year prison sentence, has reportedly been deprived of family visits and medical care and subjected to solitary confinement (CFJ, 8 September 2025).

### 3.4 Freedom of religion

As mentioned above, 90 per cent of the population are – predominantly Sunni – Muslim, while 10 per cent adhere to different branches of Christianity such as Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Catholic, Maronite, Orthodox, and Anglican (CIA, last updated 1 October 2025). Other minorities include Jews, Baha'is, Jehovah's Witnesses, atheists and non-Sunni Muslims (USCIRF, February 2025, p. 1). For more information on religious minorities, please [section 3.4.4](#) of this report.

#### 3.4.1 Legal framework – the Constitution

The Minority Rights Group (MRG) notes that Egypt's constitution and legal framework establish a hierarchy between "revealed" and "unrevealed" religions and beliefs, and do not provide the same rights to both groups. Articles 2 and 3 of the constitution recognize only the three "revealed" (MRG, 20 January 2025) or "heavenly" religions, that is, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (USCIRF, March 2025, p. 51). According to Article 2 of Egypt's constitution, Islam is the state religion, and the principles of Sharia are the main source of legislation. Article 3 grants Christian and Jewish communities the right to regulate personal status and religious affairs and to choose spiritual leaders according to their communities' respective laws. Article 53 prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion or belief and stipulates that discrimination and incitement to hatred are offenses punishable by law. Article 64 of the constitution provides for "absolute" freedom of belief. However, the right to practice their religion and to create places

of worship is granted only to the three so-called revealed or heavenly religions (BAMF, July 2025, p. 1; Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 18 January 2014, with amendments of 23 April 2019; USCIRF, March 2025, p. 51). The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) similarly states that the constitution does not recognize any other religions than these three officially recognised “Abrahamic religions” (ECRF, 2 July 2025).

For additional information, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

### *3.4.2 Blasphemy legal framework*

MRG notes that “Articles 98(f), 160 and 161 of the Penal Code ban ‘blasphemy’ or ridicule of religions or religious observances” (MRG, 20 January 2025). USCIRF equally mentions Article 98(f) of the country’s Penal Code:

“Provision 98(f) of the Egyptian Penal Code criminalizes ‘insulting [the three] heavenly religions’ as ‘contempt for religion’ (i.e., blasphemy). The government has not exhibited significant political will to repeal or revise this law or end the active prosecution of blasphemy cases. State security, judicial authorities, and the courts have continued to investigate, arrest, detain, prosecute, and in some cases convict and sentence individuals for alleged breaches of the blasphemy law.” (USCIRF, February 2025, p. 2)

The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) notes in a July 2025 report that Article 161 of the Penal Code punishes discrimination based on religion or belief with imprisonment and fines in the amount of EGP 30 000 to EGP 50 000 (approximately USD 616 to USD 1 026, as of August 2025<sup>19</sup>). In case of discrimination by public officials, the maximum fine is EGP 100 000 (approximately USD 2 052 as of August 2025), together with a minimum of three months’ imprisonment. Incitement to hatred against religious or ethnic groups may be punished with imprisonment (Article 176). However, in practice these articles are frequently used in the context of blasphemy charges rather than to protect against discrimination, according to the BAMF (BAMF, July 2025, p. 2).

### *3.4.3 Application of blasphemy laws*

Freedom House notes in its Freedom in the World report for 2024 that “[r]eligious minority groups are often persecuted for expressing their beliefs publicly and are sometimes charged with blasphemy by the authorities” (Freedom House, 2025, section D2). The MRG similarly points to blasphemy laws “being used against members of religious minorities, to criminalize their expression or their religious practices” (MRG, 20 January 2025). The BAMF states with reference to several sources that blasphemy charges are primarily brought against religious minorities, atheists and Muslims allegedly threatening social unity and/or insulting one of three recognized religions. Moreover, (social) media posts critical of the officially recognised interpretation of Sunni Islam can be prosecuted under blasphemy laws, and followers of non-recognised religions are at risk of being accused of blasphemy when publicly practising or

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<sup>19</sup> All currency calculations in this report are based on the exchange rate from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), undated, [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro\\_de](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_de), accessed November 2025.

speaking about their religion or owning literature that advertises their faith (BAMF, July 2025, p. 3).

According to a compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and published by the Human Rights Council (HRC) in November 2024, religious and belief minorities “continued to face [...] restrictions on the public practice of their faith, including prosecution under blasphemy laws” (HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 5). In a second report published in the same month, which summarises stakeholders' submissions on Egypt to the UN, one stakeholder is quoted observing that several individuals “have been arrested and detained on accusations of blasphemy, insulting religious figures, and converting from Islam to Christianity”. Stakeholders reportedly “recommended decriminalising blasphemy and review all cases involving charges of insulting religion or showing contempt for ‘divine’ religions, and related charges under Article 98(f) of the Penal Code” (HRC, 6 November 2024, pp. 5-6).

In January 2025, USCIRF notes that two Christian men who had been arrested in 2021 on blasphemy charges were released from prison. According to USCIRF, Abdulbaqi Said Abdo, a Yemeni Christian convert, was detained for making his conversion public online, while Nour Gerges was charged with leading a Facebook group for Muslims wishing to convert to Christianity (USCIRF, 31 January 2025). Morning Star News, a US-based Christian media site, further explains that both men were charged with “joining a terrorist group with knowledge of its purposes” and “contempt of the Islamic religion” for being members of a private Facebook group for converts from Islam, and were held for three years without trial. Said Abdo was reportedly held in solitary confinement (Christian Morning Star, 4 February 2025), while Nour Gerges experienced torture and abuse (USCIRF, undated (a)). USCIRF emphasises that despite their release, charges against both men have not been dropped. Of two other men imprisoned on blasphemy charges, Marco Girgis remains in prison (USCIRF, 31 January 2025), while Ahmed Mohamed (Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed Khalifa) was released in June 2025 (USCIRF, undated (b)). A Christian conscript was reportedly sentenced to three years in prison on blasphemy charges in July 2024 (USCIRF, February 2025, p. 6; for more information, please see [section 3.4.4.3](#)).

### *3.4.4 Treatment of religious minorities*

Amnesty International notes in its human rights report for 2024 that religious minorities “experienced discrimination, violence and prosecution for exercising their human rights” (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). A compilation of information prepared by the OHCHR and published by the UN HRC expresses concern over the observation that

“[...] religious and belief minorities, including Coptic Christians, Shi’a Muslims, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Baha’is and atheists, continued to face varying forms of discrimination, such as restrictions on the building and operation of places of worship and burial sites, restrictions on the public practice of their faith, including prosecution under blasphemy laws, and acts of violence and sectarian attacks carried out with impunity, including by armed groups [...]” (HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 5)

#### *3.4.4.1 Shia Muslims*

For information on the situation of Shia Muslims as of July 2024, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

Shia Muslims continue to face discrimination (Freedom House, 2025, section B4; HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 5), as well as “widespread persecution and violence” (Freedom House, 2025, section D2), and restrictions in terms of practising their faith in public (MRG, 20 January 2025). USCIRF notes that the authorities continue to “place severe prohibitions on the legal status, worship, and free expression of non-Sunni Muslim minorities” (USCIRF, February 2025, p. 6). The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) explains in a Bulletin on Freedom of Belief and Citizenship from June 2025 the constitutionally defined role of Al-Azhar University<sup>20</sup> and its impact on Muslim minorities:

“Article 7 of the Constitution obliges the Muslim majority to adhere to the teachings of a single religious institution, Al-Azhar, which is defined in the article as ‘the main reference in religious sciences and Islamic affairs.’ This opens the door for justifying violations against other Muslim religious minorities such as Shiites, Quranists, and the Ahmadiyya community.

Courts also seek Al-Azhar’s opinion in cases of alleged religious contempt, and its approval is a prerequisite for any other Islamic religious groups to publicly perform their religious practices.” (ECRF, 2 July 2025)

The BAMF writes with reference to older sources that Shia Muslims who pray or speak about their faith in public or who own Shia literature risk being charged with blasphemy and sentenced to years-long imprisonment. Moreover, Shia pilgrims are regularly interrogated by security agencies, while holy Shia sites such as the Al-Hussein Mosque are closed by the authorities on Shia holidays (BAMF, July 2025, p. 14).

Shia Waves, a Shia news agency owned by the Imam Hussein Media Group, reports in July 2024 that the Egyptian State Security Criminal Court sentenced an unnamed defendant to ten years in prison with hard labour for his involvement in the murder of Shia cleric Hassan Shehata and three of his followers in a retrial of the case (ShiaWaves, 1 July 2024). In January 2025, ECRF reports that the Appeals Division of the Badr Criminal Court reduced the sentence of a man named Khatib Abdel Zaher Mahmoud, who had previously been sentenced to ten years in prison for participating in the murder of Hassan Shehata (presumably the same person as the unnamed defendant mention above, remark ACCORD), from ten to three years of hard labour (ECRF, January 2025).

#### 3.4.4.2 Baha’i

For information on the situation of Baha’i as of July 2024, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

The Associated Press (AP) notes in July 2024 that in Egypt legal recognition to the Baha’i community has been denied since 1960 (AP, 4 July 2025). Ishak Ibrahim, researcher at EIPR, explains in a comment for the news site Al Manassa in April 2025 that historically, the Baha’i had been recognized by the Egyptian authorities, with the community’s first National Spiritual Assembly (a governing council-like body) established in 1924. However, repressions began after

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<sup>20</sup> Al-Azhar is “considered the foremost institute of Sunni scholarship”, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Encyclopaedia Britannica, last updated 23 September 2025).

1960, following the issuance of Law No. 263 of 1960<sup>21</sup> that stipulated the dissolution of the community's administrative institutions and confiscations of their properties (Ibrahim, 13 April 2025).

In its Freedom in the World report for 2024, Freedom House states that several (minority) groups, including the Baha'i community as well as other religious minorities "face various forms of discrimination and harassment" (Freedom House, 2025, section F4). MRG points out that Baha'i and other religious minorities are not allowed to practice their faith in public but have to gather in private places (MRG, 20 January 2025). Ishak Ibrahim notes that the situation of Egypt's Baha'i has "worsened" and that the community is facing "extensive" legal and social restrictions as well as limitations related to their personal freedom (Ibrahim, 13 April 2025). In April 2025, in the framework of the special procedures of the UN HRC, several independent human rights experts (UN Special Procedures mandate holders)<sup>22</sup> addressed the Egyptian authorities in the context of information received on "alleged patterns of continuous discrimination against Baha'i, living in or visiting Egypt" as well as the alleged arbitrary detention of a foreign national and senior Baha'i official. In their communication, the experts pointed to the lasting effects of Decree 263 of 1960 (see above) with regard to issues such as identity documentation, marriage and civil status, personal freedom and dedicated burial space (UN Special Procedures mandate holders, 1 April 2025, pp. 1-3).

Since a 2009 court ruling, Baha'i have been able to obtain a national identity card with a dash ("-") in the field indicating their religious affiliation, instead of having to choose one of the three officially recognised religions (USCIRF, February 2025, p. 4). However, discrimination allegedly continues:

"The demarcation on the identity cards has allegedly been used as a tool of exclusion and of discrimination against Bahá'ís in their daily life, including in their possibility to earn a livelihood, gain employment, access education, health and other rights. This also leads to harassment from security officials in day-to-day activities. According to the information received, obtaining an identity document is further challenged by the fact that there is only one single office in the entire country where Bahá'ís can request a national identity card and other forms of identification." (UN Special Procedures mandate holders, 1 April 2025, p. 2)

Moreover, other documents such as Baha'i marriage certificates are not recognised by the authorities (MRG, 20 January 2025), "even when these are customary (Urfi) and deliberately omit any reference to religious identity" (Ibrahim, 13 April 2025). Individuals concerned continue to be registered as "single" in official documents (UN Special Procedures mandate

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<sup>21</sup> Law No. 263 of 1960 on Organising the dissolution of Baha'i Assemblies [Arabic], 19 July 1960, available at Manshurat, <https://manshurat.org/node/35254>

<sup>22</sup> Including the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

holders, 1 April 2025, p. 3). Ibrahim and the UN experts point to some of the ensuing challenges:

“This refusal gives rise to serious social challenges, including obstacles in obtaining birth certificates—which must include both parents' names and religious affiliations—resulting in difficulties with school enrollment. It also leads to legal complications in matters of divorce, guardianship, custody, and inheritance.” (Ibrahim, 13 April 2025)

“The non-recognition of Bahá'í marriages impedes other areas of daily life. For example, the children of these married couples are seen as illegitimate, in the eyes of the law, and they are not able to obtain birth certificates, and at times even Egyptian nationality. This has put children at risk of statelessness. There are also challenges in securing residency for non-Egyptian spouses. In addition, the women and children in this situation cannot be included in the husband or father's insurance policies and they cannot access his pension or the inheritance he leaves to them.” (UN Special Procedures mandate holders, 1 April 2025, p. 3)

Moreover, the legal ban on establishing burial sites for any other than the three recognised religions forces Baha'i to bury their dead at the only cemetery available to the community in Cairo. In reply to an enquiry by the Alexandria Governorate, the Islamic Research Academy of Al-Azhar University concluded that the allocation of burial space “for those who mark their religious affiliation as (-) or otherwise is impermissible, as it would promote division and social fragmentation”, according to Ishak Ibrahim. Baha'i reportedly also experience security harassments, particularly targeting individuals offering social and cultural services to the community, including placement on travel watch lists, travel bans, and security detentions (Ibrahim, 13 April 2025). The UN experts mention “an increasing number” of Baha'i who are “allegedly being added to the ‘on-arrival’ watch list, which leads them to being held for questioning at the airport upon their return” to Egypt (UN Special Procedures mandate holders, 1 April 2025, p. 3). Friends and associates are pressured to sever ties with their Baha'i counterparts, according to a November 2024 statement of the Baha'i International Community (BIC) (BIC, 19 November 2024). Baha'i parents and guardians are reportedly “forced to sign a declaration stating, ‘their children have no objection to taking Islamic or Christian religious education exams in public schools’” (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 17).

In its response to the UN Special Procedures mandate holders' communication, the Egyptian authorities state that “the State does not impose any restrictions on personal belief or religious affiliation, including adherence to the Baha'i faith, as long as it is done with respect for public order and the rights of others” (Government of Egypt, 29 May 2025, p. 2).

#### 3.4.4.3 Copts/Christians

For information on the situation of Copts/Christians as of July 2024, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

As of 2023, about 15 per cent of the country's 105 million inhabitants were Christians, according to Pope Tawadros II, the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church, quoted by Ahram Online, with five Christian denominations officially recognised, including Orthodox, Protestant, Catholic, Roman Orthodox and Syriac Orthodox Christians (Ahram Online, 17 December 2024).



Jehova's Witnesses are not recognised by the Egyptian state (USCIRF, February 2025, p. 2; BAMF, July 2025, p. 12).

The East Africa Centre for Law and Justice (EACLJ) states that "Coptic Christians in Egypt have historically been marginalized, facing discrimination and violence" (EACLJ, 15 December 2024). According to Freedom House, several (minority) groups, including Coptic Christians and other religious minorities face "various forms of discrimination and harassment" (Freedom House, 2025, section F4), as well as "widespread persecution and violence" (Freedom House, 2025, section D2). The HRC notes in a report dated 6 November 2024 that the European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ), by its own definition a "Christian legal advocacy group", reported on Christians facing "blasphemy charges, extremists attacks and harassments" (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 5).

### *Treatment by State Actors*

A number of sources point to the use of blasphemy laws against religious minorities (HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 5; MRG, 20 January 2025), including Christians (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 5; CSI, 25 August 2025; USCIRF, February 2025, pp. 2, 6; Open Doors International, January 2025, p. 8). According to Christian Solidarity International (CSI), a Christian human rights and advocacy organisation,

"Egypt's legal system contains rules that disadvantage Christians. So-called 'blasphemy laws' are used to punish people for offending religious sentiment, and the rules are often interpreted very broadly. Christians, as well as Muslims with non-orthodox views, can be targeted for something as simple as a social media post.

Recent cases show this is still happening. In July 2024, a military court sentenced a Christian soldier to three years in prison for supposedly committing blasphemy in a private text message. While two other Christians were released in early 2025 after spending years in prison on similar charges, the laws themselves have not changed." (CSI, 25 August 2025)

The Christian conscript reportedly had a dispute with a Muslim man via text messages while he was on leave from military service and back in his village. The Muslim man published parts of the chat, which led to tensions among the villagers until the village's mayor intervened. Upon return to his military camp, the Christian soldier was taken blindfolded to a National Security headquarter, where he was beaten and insulted during the interrogation before being transferred to a military court, according to EIPR (EIPR, 29 July 2024).

Sources also point to the situation of converts from Islam to Christianity, who were facing pressure from families (Christian Today, 12 April 2025; Open Doors International, January 2025, p. 8) as well as from authorities (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 5; Open Doors International, January 2025, pp. 8, 10). In July 2025, Saeid Mansour Abdulraziq, a Christian convert, was arrested in a police station when trying to get new identification documents confirming his conversion to Christianity and charged with "joining a terrorist organisation, stirring unrest and spreading false news" (CSW, 24 July 2025), as well as "contempt for Islam" (USCIRF, undated (c)).



Different personal status laws for Muslims and Christians “commonly” lead to the discrimination of Christians, according to Freedom House (Freedom House, 2025, section F4). Article 3 of the Constitution stipulates that for Christian and Jews matters of personal status are regulated by their respective community’s religious laws (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 18 January 2014, with amendments up to 23 April 2019). While a new draft of the country’s Personal Status Law was finalized at the beginning of 2025 (Egyptian Streets, 2 January 2025), it has not been submitted to the House of Representatives as of September 2025, according to the Egyptian news site Masr360. The source quotes an expert on Christian personal status issues saying that the delay was predominantly due to the lack of a Muslim Personal Status Law – a law that applies in those cases where Christian law has no specific provisions on issues that do not relate to questions of faith, such as “legal capacity, guardianship, custody, and marital property”. Issues of constitutionality and the need for the law to uniformly apply to all Christian denominations, for example in terms of divorce rights, might also have contributed to the delay (Masr360, 1 September 2025; see also Coptic Solidarity, 22 October 2025). The BAMF explains that some Christians convert to Islam to obtain a divorce and subsequently convert back to Christianity as regulations for divorce are less restrictive under Islamic law. The draft Law on Personal Status reportedly contains provisions to simplify divorce rules and thus curb that practice (BAMF, August 2025, p. 7; BAMF, July 2025, p. 6; see also Coptic Solidarity, 22 October 2025). Moreover, the draft law introduces the principle of (Christian) equality into inheritance, giving women and men the right to inherit equally (BAMF, July 2025, p. 5; Egyptian Streets, 15 December 2024). In contrast, the current law is based on Islamic sharia law, which grants a woman only half of the inheritance granted to a man (Northeastern Global News, 29 October 2025; BAMF, July 2025, p. 5).

By law, a Christian man wishing to marry a Muslim woman must convert to Islam, while a Christian woman marrying a Muslim man can keep her faith (CSI, 25 August 2025; UK FCDO, last updated 29 October 2025).

Freedom House mentions reports of attacks on Christian homes in in Al-Fawakhir (Minya governorate) in April 2024 and notes that “[c]ritics accused authorities of failing to protect minorities” (Freedom House, 2025, section D2). In the same context, Amnesty International notes that “security forces failed to protect Coptic Christian residents [...] from sectarian attacks” (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). According to Christian Today, “authorities often turn a blind eye” to incidents targeting Christians (Christian Today, 12 April 2025). Two other sources make similar observations and point to the practice of authorities engaging in “reconciliation” sessions rather than taking legal action:

“Christians also face obstacles to their right to access justice and to a remedy following mob violence or hate crimes, particularly as state authorities regularly engage in intercommunal customary sessions of reconciliations following incidents of communal violence against Coptic Christians, instead of holding perpetrators accountable through prosecution. These reconciliation sessions typically fail to offer effective remedies to victims and rather lead to the circumvention of justice and accountability.” (MRG, 20 January 2025)

“Egyptian authorities continue to resort to informal reconciliation sessions over the judiciary in sectarian violence cases between Christians and Muslims, sometimes leading to forced displacement. Sectarian attacks and incitement to hatred are ignored, with

neither the root causes of such issues addressed nor legislation enacted to combat religious hate speech.” (CIHRS et al., 17 Dezember 2024, p. 16)

USCIRF points to reports by Coptic families about the “reluctance or refusal” of local police and authorities to investigate the disappearance of young women, “including potential evidence of abduction or coercion” (USCIRF, February 2025, p. 5).

Amnesty International notes in its human rights report for 2024 that the construction and renovation of church buildings continued to be restricted by a law of 2016 that made such works dependent on approval from security agencies and other state bodies (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). MRG similarly points to “restrictive conditions” imposed by Church Building Law No. 80/2016 for obtaining permits for building and repairing churches. The source also mentions “administratively mismanaged” requests for the construction of new churches, with a few cases where such requests were left unanswered (MRG, 20 January 2025), while CSI notes that due to the difficulties in obtaining permits, many Christians are forced to worship in private buildings, such as homes and warehouses. In an interview with CSI, an Egyptian human rights activist describes a case in which, whenever a Christian community tried to buy land for a church, a mosque was built nearby, thus preventing the construction of a church (CSI, 25 August 2025). In October 2024, the authorities reportedly approved the legalisation of 293 churches and affiliated buildings upon recommendation by the Main Committee established under Law 80/2016. With this decision, 3 453 churches have been granted legal status (Egypt Today, 30 October 2024) of the total of 5 540 requests submitted since the law came into force, according to a government official quoted by Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025).

Several sources report on a conflict over the status and future of St. Catherine Monastery, a sixth century monastery at Mount Sinai run by monks from the Greek Orthodox Church, against the backdrop of an ongoing state-run large-scale tourism development project in the region. An Egyptian court ruled in May 2025 that the monastery was located on state-owned land (Euractiv, last updated 22 October 2025; BBC, 7 September 2025, Mada Masr, 8 June 2025) and that the monks still living there had to leave parts of the land and worship buildings, stating that they had been appropriated illegally. An out-of-court-agreement negotiated between Egyptian and Greek authorities to protect the status of the monastery was reportedly finalised but had not been signed as of October 2025 (The New Arab, 16 October 2025; Reuters, 16 October 2025).

### *Treatment by non-state actors*

In an interview with CSI, an Egyptian human rights activist points to social issues related to Muslims’ resistance against the construction of Christian churches:

“One major issue is poverty. In poor neighborhoods, Muslims often oppose the construction of new churches because that can change the power balance in those communities. Churches can provide their own social services, like healthcare, education, and even help finding jobs. When Muslims don’t have access to similar services, the church comes to be seen as giving Christians an unfair advantage, which causes resentment and reactivates religious hatred.

It's worth noting that mosques and Islamic organizations, including Salafi and Islamist groups that primarily function as charities, also provide extensive social services throughout Egypt. This suggests that the opposition to Christian community services may stem less from an actual lack of alternatives for Muslims than from deep-seated concerns about social hierarchy.

For some Muslims, the issue appears to be not the absence of services, but rather the perception that *dhimmis*, non-Muslim minorities who historically held subordinate status in Islamic society, are seen as improving their social standing." (CSI, 25 August 2025)

Freedom House states that "Coptic Christians in particular have suffered numerous cases of forced displacement, assaults, bombings, arson attacks" (Freedom House, 2025, section D2). Christian Today writes that "Christians, especially those in rural areas, can face anything from employment discrimination and bullying at school to sexual violence and bombing campaigns" (Christian Today, 12 April 2025). The EACLJ notes that Christians have "historically been marginalized, facing discrimination and violence" and that some Islamist groups have come to demand Jizya<sup>23</sup>-like payments from Christians (EACLJ, 15 December 2024):

"While the formal imposition of Jizya is not recognized by the Egyptian State, there are reports of similar coercive practices by extremist factions targeting non-Muslims, particularly Christians. These groups often threaten violence or social ostracism against those who refuse to comply with their demands.

The resurgence of such practices reflects ongoing discrimination against religious minorities in Egypt. Although the government isn't officially involved, the actions of these non-state actors create a climate where Copts and other non-Muslims may feel pressured to pay these taxes for protection and acceptance within their communities." (EACLJ, 15 December 2024)

Several sources point to the abduction, forced marriage and forced religious conversion of Coptic Christian women and girls (USCIRF, February 2025, p. 5; Open Doors International, January 2025, pp. 9, 28; HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 9; Coptic Solidarity, 29 January 2025; see also Zawia3, 11 December 2024) Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) reports on the disappearance of Julia Atef, a young Christian woman, on her way to church in Shubra Al-Khayma in October 2024 (CSW, 8 November 2024). As of August 2025, no further information could be found on the case.

### Attacks

While attacks on Christians are more frequent in Upper Egypt, particularly in Minya Governorate, which has the "highest number of attacks on Christians per capita", Christians in impoverished rural areas such as the Nile Delta villages and towns are also facing repressions

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<sup>23</sup> Historically, the Jizya is "a tax [...] paid by non-Muslim populations to their Muslim rulers", according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Encyclopaedia Britannica, last updated 3 April 2025).

by radical Muslims, according to Open Doors International, an evangelical Christian rights and advocacy organisation (Open Doors International, January 2025, p. 11).

CSW and Copts United, a Coptic news site, report on the stabbing of three Christian men inside a local pharmacy in Ashruba village, Minya province, in November 2024. “[S]ome” of the perpetrators were reportedly arrested by the police (CSW, 8 November 2024; Copts United, 5 November 2024). Sources also report on an attack on Christian homes and property in Nazlet Jelf village, Minya governorate, in October 2025, following rumours of a relationship between a Muslim girl and a Christian boy (Coptic Solidarity, 26 October 2025; CSW, 24 October 2025; Coptic Solidarity, 23 October 2025). EIPR explains that there were two versions of the incident: according to the girl’s family, the Christian boy kidnapped the girl by bringing her to his family’s house after she fainted in a grocery shop, where the girl’s family found her after being informed by a neighbour. According to the Christian side, the girl was a friend of the boy’s sister, was “romantically involved” with the boy and went voluntarily to his family’s house (EIPR, 27 October 2025). Following the attacks, a customary arbitration panel ordered the immediate expulsion of the Christian boy while his family was given five years to leave the village (Al Manassa, 26 October 2025). Moreover, the family was ordered to pay a fine of EGP 1 million (USD 20 000). The decision was criticised by several political parties (CSW, 29 October 2025; Masr360, 27 October 2025; Al Manassa, 26 October 2025; Daaarb, 26 October 2025; Mada Masr, 26 October 2025), as well as by the EIPR, which criticised the decision to displace the family from the village as unconstitutional and called on state agencies to stop supporting such decisions of customary reconciliation committees (EIPR, 27 October 2025).

#### 3.4.4.4 Ahmadis

For information on the situation of Ahmadis as of July 2024, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

The Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience (CAP) points in its submission to the UN HRC to “death threats against Ahmadis alongside risks of persecution, torture or other human rights violations” (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 5).

In October 2025, EIPR describes “accelerating security crackdowns” against individuals adhering to faiths and beliefs not recognised under the country’s laws or not in line with the views propagated by official religious institution, and notes that the organisation recorded the arrested of 39 individuals charged in connection with six different cases in 2025, including the arrest of 17 followers of the “Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light”. While one of those arrested – a Syrian refugee – was deported to Syria (see below), the others remain in detention as of October 2025 (EIPR, 20 October 2025).

EIPR notes that the crackdown began in March 2025 after a member of the Ahmadi community placed a banner advertising a TV channel affiliated with the Ahmadi Peace and Light religion on a pedestrian bridge in Giza Governorate and that at least 15 persons had been arrested by security forces in the period from March to the beginning of May 2025, including the owner of the print shop where the banner had been printed. According to EIPR, they had been subjected to torture and disappearance before being brought before the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) where they were charged with joining a group established in violation of the constitution and the law. The detainees reportedly complained to the SSSP about torture and ill-treatment during arrest and detention, including physical torture, coercion, denial of medicines and adequate and sufficient food, incitement against them in the detention facilities,

as well as about poor detention conditions including the refusal to accept money transfers from their families and threats from some prisoners (EIPR, 2 May 2025).

In April 2025, Amnesty International also points to the arrest of at least four members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light in three different governorates between 8 and 14 March 2025, including Ahmed Mohammed Al-Tenawi and his brother, Hussein Mohammed Al-Tenawi, two Syrian UNHCR-registered asylum seekers, as well as Omar Mahmoud Abdel Maguid and his brother-in-law, Hazem Saied Abdel Moatamed. After being held incommunicado for several days, one of them, Ahmed Mohammed Al-Tenawi, was deported to Syria in early April 2025, while the three other men were brought before the SSSP for interrogation after several weeks of enforced disappearance; they were also subjected to torture, according to their lawyers quoted by Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 24 April 2025).

### 3.5 Arrest procedures and detention

For information on arrest procedures and detention as of July 2024, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

Regarding the situation since the lifting of the state of emergency in October 2021, the Rapporteur for the Follow-up to the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee against Torture (CAT/C/EGY/CO/5) of December 2023 notes in a follow-up letter to the Egyptian authorities in May 2025:

“The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party that the state of emergency was lifted throughout the country in October 2021 and that the Emergency Act No. 162 of 1958, which has not been applied since then, is in line with international standards, prohibiting unlawful deprivation of liberty [...]. However, the Committee remains concerned [...] about the broad powers granted to the security forces to detain suspects indefinitely with barely any judicial oversight. Moreover, it is concerned about reports that, although the Emergency Act has not been applied since the state of emergency was lifted, other laws, in particular the Counter-Terrorism Act No. 94 of 2015 and the Terrorist Entities Act No. 8 of 2015, continue to provide the Government with extensive powers similar to those granted under the Emergency Act. Furthermore, it is concerned that the draft Criminal Procedure Code, which was recently approved by the House of Representatives and is pending presidential approval, reportedly contains provisions that [...] would further expand powers conferred to public prosecutors regarding police custody and pretrial detention [...]. Lastly, the Committee is concerned that the State party did not take any measures to amend the Emergency Act to ensure that state of emergency restrictions are expressed in clear and precise terms to guarantee respect for non-derogable rights, including due process and fair trial rights and the prohibition of torture, and to refrain from the blanket removal of legal safeguards and judicial review, in particular review of the legality of arrest and detention (2/C).” (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, pp. 1-2)

In a report published on 6 November 2024 summarising stakeholders’ submissions on Egypt to the HRC, three stakeholders explain that enforced disappearances in Egypt “have been a longstanding issue, involving the arrest, detention, or abduction of individuals by state authorities who refuse to disclose their fate or whereabouts” (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 4). A December 2024 joint report by several human rights NGOs, including the Cairo Institute for

Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and the Sinai Foundation for Human rights, on the human rights situation in Egypt, states that “[e]nforced disappearance is a systematic and widespread practice of the security agencies” (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 3). In late August 2025, several national and international NGOs issued a statement in which they mentioned cases of children being subjected to enforced disappearance in 2024 (MENA Rights Group et al., 28 August 2025). According to stakeholders quoted in the abovementioned HRC report, “political activists, journalists, human rights defenders, and minorities, including LGBTQ+ individuals and religious or ethnic minorities, are disproportionately affected” by this practice (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 4). Amnesty International reports that security forces subjected dozens of individuals held for political reasons to enforced disappearance for days to weeks (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). The aforementioned joint report by CIHRS et al. further notes that, between January 2021 and December 2024, citizens were frequently disappearing upon release, with security authorities routinely refusing to acknowledge that they were holding them until they became defendants in new cases under investigation, a practice known as ‘recycling’ (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 3). For further information on prolonged pre-trial detention and the practice of “rotation”, also called “recycling”, please see [section 3.6.1](#).

### 3.5.1 *Arbitrary arrests*

The Egyptian constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention. It states: “Personal freedom is a natural right which is safeguarded and cannot be infringed upon. Except in cases of in flagrante delicto, citizens may only be apprehended, searched, arrested, or have their freedoms restricted by a causal judicial warrant necessitated by an investigation” (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 18 January 2014, with amendments up to 23 April 2019, Article 54). In their alternative follow-up report to the UN CAT, CIHRS and other NGOs report that according to the government

“[...] administrative detention<sup>24</sup> was abolished after Article 3 of the Emergency Act was ruled unconstitutional and replaced by judicially sanctioned pretrial detention under Law No. 12 of 2017. However, this amendment introduced Articles 3 bis (b) and 3 bis (c), which effectively reinstate broad detention powers. Article 3 bis (b) allows security forces to arrest individuals and conduct searches without prior judicial approval, requiring only post-facto notification to the Public Prosecution within 24 hours, with detention extendable for up to seven days. Article 3 bis (c) permits State Security District Courts (SSDCs) to detain individuals deemed a ‘danger to public security’ for renewable one-month periods, allowing indefinite detention without trial—an unconstitutional practice that lacks due process safeguards. These provisions, with their vague definitions, enable arbitrary arrests and prolonged detentions.

In addition, administrative detention has also been replicated in Anti-Terrorism legislation. Initially introduced to combat terrorism, Anti-Terrorism Law No. 94 of 2015 remains in

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<sup>24</sup> “Administrative detention consists of deprivation of liberty, without charge or trial, based, in the main, on secret evidence, which can be renewed indefinitely. It entails significant limitations on the fundamental rights of detainees, at the stages of arrest, interrogation, imposition and renewal of an administrative detention order, and the treatment in, and conditions of, detention” (Edge Hill University, undated).



force and incorporates provisions similar to those under the Emergency Act. It grants sweeping powers to security forces, including the right to arrest individuals, monitor communications, freeze assets, and impose travel bans without adequate judicial oversight.” (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 8)

Sources reported cases of arbitrary arrest and detention by the authorities during the reporting period (MENA Rights Group et al., 28 August 2025; USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c; Amnesty International, 19 February 2025; HRW, 29 August 2024). Those arrested were reportedly sometimes subjected to enforced disappearance (Amnesty International, 24 April 2025) and incommunicado detention (Amnesty International, 25 July 2024; HRW, 29 August 2024; USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2a, 2c). In its 2024 annual report on political rights and civil liberties in Egypt, Freedom House notes that authorities have used incommunicado detention to “silence dissent” (Freedom House, 2025, D4).

For example, more than 110 individuals, including a child, were arbitrarily arrested in July 2024 for supporting online calls for anti-government protests (Amnesty International, 18 July 2024). Between 8 and 14 March 2025, four members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light were arbitrarily arrested (Amnesty International, 24 April 2025), as were three supporters of a Telegram group supporting a Gaza march<sup>25</sup> between 10 and 12 June 2025. They were reportedly accused by SSSP prosecutors of charges including “‘joining a terrorist group [the Muslim Brotherhood],’ ‘publishing false news,’ and ‘funding a terrorist group,’” (Amnesty International, 8 July 2025). The abovementioned statement of several national and international NGOs notes that at least 15 children aged 12-17 were arrested in 2024 and charged with belonging to a terrorist group based on their online gaming activity, resulting in the arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of children (MENA Rights Group et al., 28 August 2025).

In its 2024 report on human rights practices in Egypt, the USDOS states that authorities sometimes failed to present arrest or search warrants and that local and international rights groups had reported widespread and frequent arbitrary arrests and detentions. The report also notes that many of these individuals were reportedly detained in unspecified National Security Agency (NSA) offices and police stations but were not included in official police registers until they were presented to prosecutors or appeared before a court for a detention hearing (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c). In the aforementioned cases of the 15 children who were arrested by the Egyptian authorities in 2024 and charged with belonging to a terrorist group based on their online gaming activity, the joint statement by the MENA Rights Group et al. notes that “[i]n all cases, the children were taken from their homes without explanation, and were forcibly disappeared for multiple days—and in some instances, for months—before resurfacing” (MENA Rights Group et al., 28 August 2025). Sources also report the arbitrary arrests of political satirist Ashraf Omar and journalist Ashraf Mamdouh in July 2024. Both were arrested by security forces during late night home raids and subjected to enforced disappearance for several days (HRW, 29 August 2024; Amnesty International, 25 July 2024).

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<sup>25</sup> The “Global March to Gaza”, which saw activists from around the world march from Arish in Egypt’s North Sinai region to the Egyptian side of the border with Gaza at Rafah, was organised in the wake of the Israel-Gaza conflict (CNN, 12 June 2025).

With reference to the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression, Human Rights Watch (HRW) notes that security forces did not reveal their identity or present a judicial warrant during the raid on Khaled Mamdouh's house (HRW, 29 August 2024; see also Amnesty International, 25 July 2024). The SSSP investigated Omar on charges of "joining a terrorist group, publishing false news, and misusing social media" and Mamdouh "on charges of joining and funding a terrorist group and publishing false news" (Amnesty International, 25 July 2024; see also HRW, 29 August 2024).

With reference to Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC), the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) reports that many of the more than 60,000 political prisoners who remained in detention in Egypt as of June 2025, including women, children, journalists and human rights defenders, are held without trial or on vague charges (OCCRP, 27 August 2025).

### *3.5.2 Use of torture and inhuman, cruel or degrading treatment*

Both the Egyptian Constitution (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 18 January 2014, with amendments up to 23 April 2019, Articles 52, 55) and the Penal Code (Penal Code Law No. 58 of 1937, 21 July 1937, with amendments up to 15 August 2021, Articles 126, 282) prohibit torture. According to the 2024 USDOS report, the "law banned torture to induce a confession from a detained or arrested suspect but did not account for mental or psychological abuse against persons whom authorities had not formally accused, or for abuse occurring for reasons other than securing a confession" (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a; see also EFHR, July 2024, p. 2). The report further notes that while "the law authorized prison officials to use force against prisoners who resisted orders, it prohibited all officials from 'employing cruelty' or 'causing bodily harm' under any circumstances" (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a).

However, according to the USDOS, several reports indicate that officials employed torture or cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment on a systemic and regular basis, including against persons below the age of 18, in detention and as part of interrogation (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a). In the aforementioned cases of the 15 children who were arrested in 2024 based on their online gaming activity, the children were said to be facing torture and other ill-treatment while in detention (MENA Rights Group et al., 28 August 2025). According to another UN HRC report published in November 2024, there are "numerous and consistent allegations of the systematic use of torture and ill-treatment by police officers, prison guards and other members of the security forces, and the military", which happen "in police stations, correction and rehabilitation centres, national security detention centres, military bases and in unofficial places of detention" (HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 3; see also USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a; Amnesty International, 29 April 2025; EFHR, July 2024, p. 3). In its 2024 report on the human rights situation in Egypt, HRW states that Interior Ministry police and NSA officers "continued to arbitrarily detain, forcibly disappear, and torture critics and dissidents in official and unofficial places of detention" (HRW, 16 January 2025). Amnesty International describes torture and ill-treatment in security related facilities such as prisons and police stations as "routine" (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). The abovementioned HRC report published on 7 November 2024 notes that torture and ill-treatment take place "during the arrest, interrogation and investigation phases, often as a method of coercion to elicit information or to punish or intimidate real or perceived political opponents and critics of the Government" (HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 3; see also CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 3). Incommunicado



detainees are reportedly routinely tortured to extract confessions (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c). For information on confessions obtained under torture, please refer to [section 3.6.1](#).

Forms of torture and ill-treatment reported included for example threatening to use electric shocks (HRW, 29 August 2024) and use of electric shocks (Amnesty International, 8 July 2025), beating (Zawia3, 28 July 2025; Amnesty International, 19 February 2025), face slapping, forcing to strip naked (Amnesty International, 8 July 2025), continuous invasive searches and strip searches (ECRF, 2025, p. 10), sexual assault (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a), including during body searches, harassment during detention (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025), blindfolding (Amnesty International, 18 July 2024), psychological and verbal abuse as well as prolonged or indefinite solitary confinement (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a).

There are also reports by local and international rights groups of instances of persons tortured to death in prisons and detention centres (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 1a; Zawia3, 28 July 2025; see also OCCRP, 27 August 2025; Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). The USDOS notes that in 2024, “the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings while making arrests or holding persons in custody” (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 1a). HRW reports the death of Youssef El-Sarhani and Faraj Al-Fazary in April 2025 in Marsa Matrouh governorate hours after they were arrested. The source notes that there was “credible evidence that the men had turned themselves in to the police hours before they were killed and were in police custody when they died”, while the Egyptian Ministry of Interior claims that the two men were killed in a shooting (HRW, 14 May 2025). The Geneva-based rights monitor Committee for Justice (CFJ) has reportedly documented 1,321 deaths in custody in Egypt between July 2013 and August 2025 (OCCRP, 27 August 2025), including 69 between July 2024 and 30 October 2025 (CFJ, undated). OCCRP cites Usume Mehmetoglu, a spokesperson for the CFJ, stating that these “deaths appear to be politically motivated, particularly among those ‘perceived as critics of the state’” hinting towards a “pattern” that suggests that some deaths may have been the result of “deliberate mistreatment, torture, or medical neglect used as a form of violence or intimidation” reflecting an “entrenched system of punitive governance inside Egypt’s prisons” (OCCRP, 27 August 2025). The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) documented 50 deaths in police stations and official as well as unofficial places of detention in 2024, including deaths which occurred as a result of torture, medical neglect and poor living conditions (ECRF, 2025, p. 11). The ECRF notes that “given the lack of transparency from prison administrations and the Ministry of Interior”, the actual number of deaths in detention “may be higher”, while the “geographic spread of these deaths highlights a nationwide pattern of mistreatment, affecting both police stations and prisons” (ECRF, 2025, p. 13).

El Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, an NGO that has been working to rehabilitate victims of torture and monitored violations in custody and in prisons, leading to a government-enforced closure of their premises in 2017 (Mada Masr, 7 December 2018), publishes on its Facebook profile monthly figures on violations by state forces based on monitoring media coverage. For the year 2024, it documented 57 cases of death in custody, 55 cases of torture, 350 cases of enforced disappearance and 1,997 cases of reappearance following enforced disappearance (El Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, 25 January 2025). For the first half of 2025, it documented 20 cases of individual and 68 cases of collective torture (El Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, July 2025, p. 2). In a July 2025 report on banned documentation

and impeded litigation in torture cases in Egypt between January 2024 and June 2025, ECRF documented 38 torture cases in 2024 and 37 such cases in the first half of 2025 (ECRF, July 2025, p. 13). El Shehab for Human Rights, a voluntary human rights organisation which started its work in Egypt in 2006 and later moved to the United Kingdom (SHR, undated), published a report in January 2025 for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on human rights in Egypt, which documented 1,385 cases of enforced disappearance in 2024 (SHR, January 2025, p. 17).

In a December 2024 report, HRW states that the current Criminal Procedure Code<sup>26</sup> together with the Penal Code lacked “sufficient definitions and penalties for widespread, systematic crimes of torture and enforced disappearance” (HRW, 20 December 2024). USDOS notes with reference to rights groups that “the lack of accountability or investigations into abuse allegations allowed perpetrators to act with near absolute impunity” (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a). Amnesty International reports in April 2025 that prosecutors, “particularly SSSP prosecutors, dismissed or ignored most complaints of police torture”. The source continues to describe a “rare case”, in which a “regular prosecutor opened an investigation into a complaint made by a protester who said that a police officer beat her, but no information was made available on the progress of the investigation” by the end of 2024 (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). According to the USDOS report, sometimes “reported abuse led to investigations and charges against security officials”, as had been the case in December 2024, when “investigations into complaints of torture and use of cruelty resulted in disciplinary measures against employees of the Interior Ministry, including police officers, involved in 1,217 incidents between November 2019 and July 2024” (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a).

#### 3.5.2.1 Use of anal and vaginal exams

The USDOS report refers to human rights organisations stating that the Public Prosecutor’s Office ordered forced anal and vaginal examinations of detainees primarily in connection with debauchery charges levelled against individuals targeted on the basis of sexual orientation (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a), and further notes:

“Civil society organizations further alleged that the authority to undertake these abusive practices stemmed from internal guidelines rather than law, and that ‘evidence’ obtained from the ‘exams’ could only be used against detainees, never to exonerate them. Authorities regularly used the ‘results’ of forced anal exams as evidence against defendants, despite the opinions of independent international medical experts that there was no medical or evidentiary basis for such conclusions.” (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a)

In April 2025, the independent website Zawia3 publishes an article discussing the conditions of women in Egyptian prisons. The article cites feminist activist Ilham Eidawars, who noted that the issue of virginity was prevalent in female prisons despite an Administrative Court decision to ban virginity tests (Zawia3, 3 April 2025).

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<sup>26</sup> On 29 April 2025, the Egyptian parliament adopted a new Criminal Procedure Code (CIHRS, 30 April 2025). For further information on the new Criminal Procedure Code, please see 3.6.

No further information could be found regarding the use of anal and vaginal exams during arrest and detention and no information could be found on the documentation of such examinations during the reporting period.

### *3.5.3 Detention conditions*

For information on torture and ill-treatment in detention, please refer to [section 3.5.2](#).

In the aforementioned May 2025 follow-up letter to the December 2023 Concluding Observations of the UN CAT, the Committee's Rapporteur for Follow-up states that the Committee has taken note of the government's statement "regarding legislative and policy developments aimed at aligning its criminal justice and penitentiary systems with international standards, notably the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)", particularly of the steps taken "to reduce overcrowding in prisons, including the construction of additional detention facilities" and "the release of prisoners on health grounds". However, according to the UN CAT, reports of „overcrowding and poor material conditions of detention in places of deprivation of liberty“ remain persistent (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, p. 2). Freedom House describes prison conditions in Egypt as „very poor“ in 2024 (Freedom House, 2025, section F3).

Various sources report the following main issues in prisons and detention centres: (severe) overcrowding (Zawia3, 28 July 2025; CFJ, 16 February 2025; Freedom House, 2025, section F3; EIPR, 24 January 2025), medical negligence (Zawia3, 28 July 2025; CFJ, 16 February 2025; Freedom House, 2025, section F3; ECRF, 2025, p. 11; CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 4), and lack of proper sanitation and hygiene (Freedom House, 2025, section F3; EIPR, 24 January 2025). Sources also reported of cases of prisoners being subjected to physical (Freedom House, 2025, F3; CFJ et al., 12 December 2024, p. 3) and psychological abuse (CFJ et al., 12 December 2024, p. 3; USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a) as well as deprivation of sunlight (CFJ, 16 February 2025; Amnesty International, 6 March 2025) and constant exposure to bright lights in certain prisons (ECRF, 2025, p. 3; MEE, 27 August 2025). Lack of privacy due to constant camera and microphone monitoring was also reported (ECRF, 2025, pp. 3-4). Reportedly, constant exposure to bright lights in the Badr, Wadi Al-Natroun and 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan rehabilitation centres led to nervous breakdowns, insomnia and chronic migraines (ECRF, 2025, p. 3; CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 3).

Sources also report the use of solitary confinement (MEE, 27 August 2025; Hassan, 18 March 2025; ECRF, 2025, p. 2; CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, pp. 3-4; CFJ et al., 12 December 2024, p. 3). According to ECRF, this „has become a common practice for holding prisoners“ even in the absence of any violation of prison rules, with many prisoners being placed in solitary confinement immediately upon arrival (ECRF, 2025, p. 2). CIHRS et al. reports that prolonged solitary confinement “has been increasingly used over the past four years under Law 106/2015, which amended the Prisons Law to extend the maximum period from 15 to 30 days while in 'special high-security rooms' detention can last up to six months” (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, pp. 3-4). The USDOS notes that rights groups indicated that the authorities had “subjected prisoners accused of crimes related to political or security matters to physical and verbal abuse and prolonged or indefinite solitary confinement” (USDOS, 12 August 2025). Furthermore, the restriction or denial of visits was reported for both convicted prisoners (Amnesty International, 6 March 2025; CFJ et al., 12 December 2024, p. 3; EFHR, July 2024, p. 1) and individuals held in pretrial detention (ECRF, 2025, p. 5).

Several sources further highlighted the lack of access to adequate medical care (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025; CFJ et al., 12 December 2024, pp. 2, 3). According to CIHRS et al. “[m]edical neglect is widespread in prisons, including in newer facilities.” They note that medical emergencies are ignored, and medication is sometimes withheld, causing an increase in prisoner deaths (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 4). El Nadeem Against Violence and Torture documented 150 cases of medical negligence by state forces during 2024 (El Nadeem Against Violence and Torture, 25 January 2025). In a July 2025 article, Zawia3 reports to have documented 24 cases of death inside various police stations between January 2024 and July 2025 across several governorates, including as a result of torture or suspected torture, ill-treatment, and medical neglect (Zawia3, 28 July 2025).

Some prisoners reportedly staged hunger strikes to demand better conditions (ECRF, 2025, p. 10; Amnesty International, 6 March 2025). Freedom House reported „physical punishment for those protesting“ (Freedom House, 2025, section F3). According to Amnesty International, some prisoners who went on hunger strike at the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan Prison to protest against their conditions and demand the release of individuals held in prolonged pre-trial detention had their personal belongings confiscated as a punishment and were transferred to remote „prisons notorious for their harsh detention conditions“ (Amnesty International, 6 March 2025). This policy of exile (ECRF, 2025, p. 7) called *Taghriba* (internal exile) is described by sources as a „common punitive“ (Amnesty International, 6 March 2025) and “standard retaliatory measure” (ECRF, 2025, p. 7) used by the authorities to punish prisoners (Amnesty International, 6 March 2025; ECRF, 2025, p. 7) and make visits more costly and burdensome for their families (Amnesty International, 6 March 2025).

In an August 2025 article, MEE states that human rights groups have „long raised the alarm about rapidly deteriorating conditions at Badr 3“ (MEE, 27 August 2025), which forms part of the Badr Center for Reform and Rehabilitation (CFJ et al., 12 December 2024, p. 3). In their December 2024 report, CFJ et al. report that conditions in Badr 3, have “worsened significantly”, citing “intensified inspection campaigns, restrictions on visits, and the systematic deprivation of basic necessities”. In Borg Al-Arab Prison, a notorious National Security officer named ‘Hamza Al-Masri’ “escalated repressive measures, including cutting off access to clean water” forcing detainees to drink “contaminated tap water for days”, according to the source (CFJ et al., 12 December 2024, p. 3). MEE notes that the situation is particularly difficult for political prisoners, including members of the Muslim Brotherhood. According to MEE, unlike regular inmates, they are “routinely denied medical care and visitation rights and are often held in solitary confinement”. With reference to an ECRF report, MEE further notes that 13 detainees died at Badr 3 between January and May 2025, most of whom were political prisoners who died as a result of medical neglect (MEE, 27 August 2025). According to MEE, Badr 3 also experienced a surge in suicide attempts in the months preceding August 2025 with rights groups reporting in July that 15 prisoners had attempted suicide in just two weeks (MEE, 27 August 2025).

### 3.6 Trial Procedures

For information on Trial Procedures as of July 2024, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

As mentioned in [section 3.1](#), the Egyptian parliament approved a new Criminal Procedures Code in April 2025 (Mada Masr, 29 April 2025), which was sent back for review by President Al-Sisi in September 2025 (Mada Masr, 21 September 2025). The draft faced significant criticism (EIPR, 20 May 2025; HRW, 2 October 2024), including from the OHCHR, which cautioned that it would jeopardize the rights of all individuals in the criminal justice system and urged the president to reconsider the law before ratification (EIPR, 20 May 2025). In October 2025, the House of Representatives voted to delay the law's enforcement until October 2026. This decision followed a review by a special parliamentary committee of the articles objected by the president. The committee deemed the postponement necessary to allow adequate time for the technical, human, and technological preparations required for effective implementation, as reported by Ahram Online (Ahram Online, 16 October 2025). The proposed changes to the Code of Criminal Procedures are influenced by recommendations from a national dialogue on pretrial detention (Freedom House, 2025, section F2; CIHRS et al., 26 August 2024) and "in part influenced by [...] heightened concerns" regarding due process (Freedom House, 2025, section F2). Freedom House reports that rights groups have criticised draft changes for preserving practices that undermine fair trial protections and enable indefinite abusive pretrial detention (Freedom House, 2025, section F2). In the Follow-up to the Concluding Observations of the UN CAT of May 2025, the Rapporteur for the Follow-up notes that the draft aims to reduce the maximum duration of pretrial detention and expand alternatives to detention (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, p. 2). HRW highlighted that, while the draft law slightly reduces the maximum pretrial detention period, it continues to grant excessive powers to prosecutors over judges and allows security forces to operate without accountability (HRW, 20 December 2024; see also Freedom House, 2025, section F2). Additionally, the revised limits on pretrial detention remain excessively long and current practices enabling prosecutors to extend pretrial detention "without judicial oversight, including by ordering those detained into pretrial detention on similar charges in new cases, in a practice commonly referred to as 'rotation' or 'recycling'" (see [section 3.6.1](#)) would not be addressed (HRW, 2 October 2024). HRW also criticizes the draft law for not limiting pretrial detention to exceptional cases and for lacking provisions ensuring that detainees are promptly presented before a judge to assess the legality of their detention (HRW, 20 December 2024).

### *3.6.1 Legal protections and due process*

#### *Independence of judiciary, due process and fair trial*

In the Follow-up to the Concluding Observations of the UN CAT from May 2025, the Rapporteur highlights that although the state of emergency ended in October 2021 and the Emergency Act No. 162 of 1958 was no longer in effect, concerns persist regarding extensive powers retained by the President under this act. These powers include appointing judges, halting investigations, ordering retrials, and confirming, modifying, annulling or suspending verdicts issued by the Emergency State Security Courts (ESSC) (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, p. 1; see also CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 7). Additionally, the Committee highlights that the Counter-Terrorism Act No. 94 of 2015 and the Terrorist Entities Act No. 8 of 2015 still afford the government substantial powers akin to those under the Emergency Act (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, p. 2).

The ESSCs reportedly continued to handle cases referred to them during the state of emergency (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 7; UN CAT, 16 May 2025, p. 1; TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 1) and civilian trials before special Terrorism Circuits continued (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 8). In a joint report from January 2025, the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP), a Washington-based think tank, and co-authors note that cases were reportedly moved to emergency courts to secure convictions in politically sensitive matters (TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 1). Sources indicate that individuals tried before the ESSCs or in Terrorism Circuits face judicial processes that lack due process and fair trial rights (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, p. 1; CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, pp. 7-8). Article 19 of Emergency Act No. 162 of 1958 reportedly facilitates these trials, thereby contravening the principle that ordinary courts should handle criminal cases. Furthermore, Article 20 allows the president “to order retrials before ESSCs even after the emergency’s end and to confirm, modify, annul, or suspend verdicts issued by these courts”. CIHRS et al. identify this as a violation of the separation of power, which “further entrenches executive control over the judiciary and undermines judicial independence and due process” (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 7). TIMEP et al. note that ESSC judges, appointed by the president and relevant ministries, issue decisions that are not subject to appeal (TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 1). Sources report that judicial independence is further compromised by the president's power to appoint heads of judicial bodies, as highlighted in legal amendments passed between 2017 and 2019 (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 5; TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 1). TIMEP et al. note in that regard:

“Changes in the composition of the judiciary have led to perceptions of some judges’ independence being compromised by their ties to authorities. Judges in emergency and terrorism courts, in both pretrial and trial proceedings, have limited the ability of lawyers to defend their clients effectively, raising concerns that certain judges’ personal and political opinions may influence their rulings.” (TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 1)

In its 2024 human rights report, the USDOS with reference to rights groups highlights “systemic” issues with detainee rights, indicating that individuals were routinely unable to challenge their detention and that courts delayed decisions on these challenges. Specifically, the Badr Prison’s Terrorism Circuit Court reportedly postponed nearly 900 renewal hearings without justification, undermining fair trial standards (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c). Sources report impediment of detainees’ access to lawyers (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c; CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 5) or to lawyers of their choice (Amnesty International, 24 April 2025), and lawyers’ access to detainees’ case files during the reporting period (EIPR, 18 May 2025; CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 5). The USDOS notes in that regard that in some cases, “defendants faced political or legal obstacles to exercising the right to counsel and often could not secure regular access to lawyers”. Lawyers representing about 1,000 pretrial detainees withdrew from renewal hearings at Bad Prison’s Third Circuit Terrorism Court, citing the presiding judge's denial of due process and restricted access to their clients, which limited their ability to consult with them (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c). CIHRS et al. report in December 2024 that “[d]etainees are increasingly denied communication, even their lawyers are barred from reviewing their cases” (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 5). TIMEP et al. note that the SSSP “regularly impedes lawyers’ ability to defend their clients effectively. In state security cases, prosecutors prevent lawyers from accessing case files, using phones or taking notes during investigations, and restrict communication with clients” (TIMEP et al., 6 January



2025(a), pp. 1-2). The UN CAT raises concerns about the draft Criminal Procedure Code, highlighting provisions that give public prosecutors broad discretion to restrict lawyers' access to case files and investigation records if it is considered to be in the interest of the investigation (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, pp. 1-2).

The practice of remote pretrial detention renewal sessions, authorized by the Ministry of Justice in December 2021 (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 5) during the COVID-19 pandemic, continued during the reporting period (Freedom House, 2025, section F2; TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 2). This approach, as noted by TIMEP et al., hinders the rights of the accused to adequately engage in their defense and to communicate privately with counsel (TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 2; see also CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 5; HRW, 2 October 2024). Additionally, Freedom House highlights that detainees participate in these sessions under police supervision, raising concerns about the potential for abuse „for political prisoners, who are hesitant to report mistreatment in front of prison officials” (Freedom House, 2025, section F2; see also HRW, 2 October 2024). According to the UN CAT, the draft Criminal Procedure Code “reportedly contains provisions that would allow remote hearings without sufficient safeguards”. (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, pp. 1-2), while HRW reports that the draft law broadens the use of videoconferencing for court and prosecutorial hearings (HRW, 2 October 2024).

### *Prolonged pretrial detention*

In its abovementioned Follow-up letter from May 2025, the UN CAT expresses concern “about the broad powers granted to the security forces to detain suspects indefinitely with barely any judicial oversight” (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, pp. 1-2). HRW explains that the current Criminal Procedure Code enables “prosecutors and judges to keep people in pretrial detention for months or years without proper court hearings or evidence of wrongdoing” (HRW, 20 December 2024). Several human rights groups reported according to the USDOS that authorities ignored court orders or added charges against detainees to prolong their pretrial detention beyond the legal limit (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c). Furthermore, the SSSP and Egyptian courts are also reported to “routinely circumvent existing pretrial detention statutes by ‘recycling’<sup>27</sup> detainees into new cases, in which they face the same or similar charges, immediately after they had been ordered released or had reached the two-year maximum legal duration for pretrial custody”. CIHRS et al. note in that regard that the time spent by detainees in “pretrial custody in the previous case is disregarded or not counted towards their release”, while the prosecution fails to impartially investigate accusations and evidence and relies only on security investigations (CIHRS et al., 26 August 2024). As mentioned above, detention orders for thousands of detainees are reportedly regularly renewed by prosecutors and judges of the SSSP, without allowing detainees to challenge their legality (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025; see also USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c). CIHRS and other authors note in August 2024 that the maximum pretrial detention period of two years currently defined by law is often completely disregarded and defendants may be held in custody for more than four years without any legal basis (CIHRS et al., 26 August 2024).

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<sup>27</sup> A practice also called “rotation” (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 5; USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c).



Sources further report a “systematic overuse of prolonged pretrial detention in politically sensitive cases” according to the UN CAT (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, p. 2), including as “a punitive measure against dissenters, human rights defenders, and journalists” (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 5), opposition members and activists (Freedom House, 2025, section F2). CIHRS et al. elaborate that “in all cases against political opponents over the past ten years, the Public Prosecution has automatically approved and renewed pretrial detention, prolonging it past its two-year legal limit”, while their cases are reportedly “subjected to pro forma examinations lasting mere minutes” (CIHRS et al., 26 August 2024). Prolonged pretrial detention was for example reported in the cases of Marwa Arafa (over 5 years) and Ibrahim Metwally (seven years) (CIHRS et al., 26 August 2024). Political dissidents Mohammed Adel, Mohammed al-Qassas, Hoda Abdel Moneim, and Alaa Abd El-Fattah are reportedly “several of many”, which “have been recycled or tried in new cases while being held in custody for other cases, to ensure their continued confinement” (CIHRS et al., 26 August 2024; see also Freedom House, 2025, section F2). The USDOS notes that “[l]arge backlogs in the criminal courts contributed to protracted periods of pretrial detention” (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c).

Regarding pretrial detention in the draft Criminal Procedure Code discussed further above, CIHRS et al. note that the “proposed amendment would reduce the maximum duration of pretrial detention from six months to four for misdemeanors, from 18 to 12 months for felonies, and from 24 to 18 months for crimes carrying a sentence of life imprisonment or death” (CIHRS et al., 26 August 2024). However, according to HRW, the draft continues to enable prosecutors “to keep people in pretrial detention for months without judicial review, and does not address the phenomenon of ‘recycling’ through which prosecutors repeatedly charge detainees in new cases with identical charges in order to keep them detained” (HRW, 20 December 2024).

### *Confessions obtained under torture*

According to the 2024 USDOS report, the “law banned torture to induce a confession from a detained or arrested suspect” (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a; see also EFHR, July 2024, p. 2). However, CIHRS et al. report allegations of forced confessions (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 3) and of confessions obtained through torture being used as evidence against defendants in court (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, pp. 8, 15). In an article from August 2025, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, a media company founded in London in 2014, states that short-time enforced disappearances are used by Egyptian security forces, among others, to extract confessions through torture without any oversight (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, 28 August 2025).

Please see [section 3.5.2](#) for further information regarding the use of torture and inhuman, cruel or degrading treatment in arrest procedures and detention and [section 3.5.3](#) regarding detention conditions.

### *Death sentences and mass trials*

A total of 105 crimes in Egypt are punishable by death under national legislation, including the Penal Code no. 58 of 1937 (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 2; CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025,

p. 14). Regarding death penalty verdicts, the UN CAT, in its May 2025 follow-up letter, states to have taken note of the information provided by the government that

“[...] an inclusive process has been initiated to review the crimes for which the death penalty may be imposed, with the aim of potentially amending legislation to restrict the use of the death penalty to certain crimes. It also notes the information that the death penalty may be imposed only for the most serious crimes, such as those threatening State security in wartime, terrorism, and premeditated murder under aggravated circumstances, and that its application is consistent with the State party’s international obligations. Moreover, it notes the information that courts apply the law most favorable to the accused and have the authority to commute the death penalty to life or rigorous imprisonment if warranted by the circumstances, and that the Court of Cassation reviews both the merits and procedural aspects of all death sentences and may overturn them even without an appeal from the convicted person.” (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, pp. 2-3)

However, the Committee also expresses concern about reports that the government had not taken “any substantive steps to amend its domestic law”, particularly the Penal Code, the Counter-Terrorism Act No. 94 of 2015, the Drugs Control Act No. 82 of 1960, as well as “other relevant laws that may entail the imposition of the death penalty, to ensure that the death penalty is never mandatory and to restrict the crimes for which the death penalty may be imposed to the most serious crimes, understood to be crimes involving intentional killing” (UN CAT, 16 May 2025, p. 3).

In its April 2025 human rights report, Amnesty International notes that in 2024, death sentences, including for crimes which did not include “intentional killing”, such as drug trafficking or rape, were imposed by criminal courts, including courts handling terrorism-related cases (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). According to Freedom House, the death penalty has been increasingly imposed since President Al-Sisi’s coming to power in 2014, including on protesters (Freedom House, 2025, sections E1, F3). With reference to data provided by EIPR, Freedom House explains that 448 of 4,202 death sentences handed out over a decade were implemented, including cases involving “trials largely reliant on torture-tainted ‘confessions’” (Freedom House, 2025, section F3). The abovementioned June 2025 joint report by CIHRS and other authors notes that “confessions obtained under torture or coercion are routinely used as evidence in capital cases”, while “drug-related offenses have led to death sentences, despite not meeting international thresholds” (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 15). SHR states that “[p]olitical death sentences in Egypt have become a tool used by the ruling regime for revenge rather than to uphold the rule of law,” including the issuance of death sentences in mass trials lacking fair trials standards (SHR, 2025, p. 5). According to CIHRS et al. in June 2025, the “death penalty disproportionately affects marginalized individuals who lack legal resources”, while procedural safeguards in death sentence cases are described as “largely symbolic” (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 15; see also SHR, 2025, p. 16).

According to SHR, 1,613 final death sentences were issued by the Egyptian judiciary against political opponents in the period between 2013 and October 2025, while 105 death sentences against political opponents were carried out between 2015 and 2024 (SHR, 2025, p. 10) and 113 final and enforceable death sentences through October 2025 (SHR, 2025, pp. 15, 16). In 2024, around 400 persons reportedly received a death sentence (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 15; Freedom House, 2025, section F3) in 255 cases, of which 31 were political cases (CIHRS

et al., 26 June 2025, p. 15), such as the case of Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohamed Badie and seven other senior leaders of the group (Freedom House, 2025, section F3). Of the overall sentences, 35 were upheld and 13 were implemented (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 15).

TIMEP et al. note in their January 2025 report that the “practice of mass trials persists” in Egypt (TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 2). HRW reports in September 2025 that authorities have carried out “an abusive campaign of mass arrests and prosecutions targeting online creators” (HRW, 10 September 2025). Sources reported mass detention renewal sessions in 2024 (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 5; USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 2c), including remote sessions (Freedom House, 2025, section F2).

### 3.6.2 Corruption

For information on Corruption as of July 2024, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

Egypt's score on the 2024 global Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)<sup>28</sup> of Transparency International (TI), an international NGO working to fight corruption – where 100 is free of corruption and 0 is highly corrupt – was 30 (TI, May 2025, p. 5), indicating a decline of 5 points from 2023 (TI, January 2024, pp. 2-3). It ranked 130<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries, falling significantly from 108<sup>th</sup> in 2023, and returning to its 2022 position, according to Zawia3 (Zawia3, 5 April 2025). In the 2025 Rule of Law Index by the international civil society organization World Justice Project (WJP), Egypt globally ranked 106 out of 142 for the “absence of corruption” factor<sup>29</sup>, with 1 indicating high absence of corruption and 142 indicating low absence of corruption (WJP, September 2025, p. 39). Partners for Transparency, an Egyptian NGO founded in 2014, which describes itself as independent and neutral, reported 84 corruption incidents for August 2025, predominantly in the supply sector, followed by finance and banking, local government and administration, education and health. Cairo governorate remained the most affected area for the eighth consecutive month. Together with Giza and Sohag, it accounted for over 50 per cent of the total corruption incidents in August 2025 (Partners for Transparency, 18 September 2025).

Sources report that corruption is widespread in Egypt’s government (Freedom House, 2025, section C2; Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 9 September 2024), even at the highest levels (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 9 September 2024), with ineffective and weak official mechanisms to control and punish it (Freedom House, 2025, section C2). The Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, a foundation

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<sup>28</sup> The CPI derived from reports by institutions like the World Bank and World Economic Forum assessing corruption risks across countries. It specifically monitors issues such as bribery, public fund diversion, public office abuse without accountability, bureaucratic excess, nepotism in public sector appointments, lack of laws requiring officials to disclose assets and conflicts of interest, weak whistleblower protections, state capture by narrow interest groups, and lack of public information access. However, it does not address citizens’ personal experiences with corruption, tax evasion, money laundering, illicit financial flows, private sector corruption, or informal markets (Zawia3, 5 April 2025).

<sup>29</sup> The factor considers whether government officials in the executive, judicial and legislative branches, as well as the police and military “do not use public office for private gain” (WJP, October 2025, pp. 14-15).

established in 1997 and closely affiliated with the German Green Party, notes that the Egyptian military controls large parts of the Egyptian economy, preventing a fair competition, while enabling Al-Sisi to secure its loyalty (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 9 September 2024). According to the 2024 Freedom House report, The Administrative Control Authority (ACA), overseeing the majority of anticorruption efforts, is controlled by President Al-Sisi. Freedom House reports that the ACA “lacks credibility, transparency, and impartiality, and cannot monitor the military’s substantial economic activities” (Freedom House, 2025, section C2). In an April 2025 article, Zawia3 cites Akram Ismail, member of the Central Committee of the under-formation Bread and Freedom Party (Hisb Al-Aysh wa-l-Hurriya), stating that the country’s core issue lies in its systemic structure, which promotes corruption. He reportedly points to excessive state interference “in nearly every sector”, unchecked governmental powers, and inefficiencies within the administration that exacerbate corruption. Ismail also notes the military’s increasing economic involvement and investment, creating a powerful entity with significant influence and financial reserves. He further indicates that oversight agencies have become less effective, typically responding only to targeted corruption issues rather than operating independently (Zawia3, 5 April 2025). Freedom House further notes that the country’s prison system is “rife with extortion, bribery, and corruption” (Freedom House, 2025, section F3).

The government has reportedly reinstated a national strategy to fight corruption (Zawia3, 5 April 2025; Government of Egypt, 5 December 2024, p. 31). The Egyptian news website Egypt Today, which is reportedly owned by a firm in the hands of the Egyptian General Intelligence (GI) (MOM, 2018), reports in August 2024 that the Egyptian government has submitted a draft law to the parliament, establishing a “committee tasked with promoting integrity, transparency, and excellence within companies” supposed to strengthen the country’s anti-corruption framework (Egypt Today, 26 August 2024). In a February 2025 article on the TI findings for 2024, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed with reference to parliamentarians and anti-corruption experts highlights the decline in anti-corruption efforts in Egypt, attributed to a lack of witness and whistleblower protection laws, the suspension of national anti-corruption committees by the Cabinet, and the exclusion of civil society and public oversight from local anti-corruption committees (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, 11 February 2025).

### *3.6.3 Use of military courts*

For information on the use of military courts as of July 2024, please refer to the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).

Freedom House’s 2024 report notes that Egypt’s constitution limits military trials for civilians. However, a 2014 presidential decree allowed military jurisdiction over “public and vital facilities”, leading to thousands of civilians being tried in military courts, a change solidified in 2021 (Freedom House, 2025, section F2; see also CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 15). Additionally, Law no. 3 of 2024 on Securing and Protecting the State’s Public and Vital Facilities, enacted in January 2024 (CIHRS, 2 February 2024; HRW, 5 March 2024), broadened military authority over civilians by allowing offenses related to public facilities to be tried before military courts (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 9; TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 1), a step, which according to TIMEP et al. indefinitely extended the military’s judicial powers over civilians (TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(a), p. 1). CIHRS et al. highlight concerns regarding vague legal terms and extensive powers given to the armed forces, which threaten civilian oversight and fair trial rights, potentially enhancing military influence over the justice system (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 9). Freedom

House adds that military court charges are frequently vague or fabricated, with defendants often denied due process and basic evidentiary standards ignored (Freedom House, 2025, section F2; see also CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 15). According to the aforementioned November 2024 report summarising stakeholders' submissions on Egypt to the HRC, individuals tried in military courts do not receive the same safeguards as those in ordinary courts. The report further mentions that two stakeholders observed the use of military trials for civilians during the reporting period (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 5). CIHRS et al., in June 2025, also report cases of children being tried before military courts (CIHRS et al., 26 June 2025, p. 15). Workers at businesses owned by the military are subject to military court trials (Freedom House, 2025, section E3).

In December 2024, 62 civilians from North Sinai were tried by military courts for protesting their displacement from their lands forced by authorities. They were reportedly convicted on charges related to damaging military property and using force against officials (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025), receiving sentences of three to ten years (CIHRS et al., 23 December 2024; Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). Amnesty International reported that 54 of the convicted were granted a presidential pardon the same month (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025).

### 3.7 Situation of women and girls

#### 3.7.1 *Discrimination against women and girls*

Article 9 of Egypt's 2014 Constitution stipulates that the "state ensures equal opportunity for all citizens without discrimination" (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 18 January 2014, with amendments up to 23 April 2019, Article 9) and Article 11 stipulates that the "state commits to achieving equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights" (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 18 January 2014, with amendments up to 23 April 2019, Article 11). However, according to a report published in September 2025 by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), Article 2 of the Constitution, which defines Islam as the state religion and the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (Sharia) as the primary source of legislation, limits the scope of legislation to implement these rights. The same applies to Articles 2 and 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which refer to the Convention's implementation and to marriage and family life respectively. Egypt has ratified the Convention but maintains reservations regarding some of its provisions, according to the BAMF report. The report further notes that women continue to be subjected to legal discrimination, particularly in civil status law, especially in divorce and inheritance law (BAMF, 29 September 2025, p. 2; see also HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 2).

Egypt has launched the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women (2016-2030) (World Bank Group, 12 March 2025; Government of Egypt, 5 December 2024, p. 8). According to the National Council on Human Rights (NCHR) cited by the HRC in November 2024, "women have attained an unprecedented level of rights in the public domain, with all public sectors now accessible to women without discrimination" (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 2). However, a July 2024 report by the Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA) and other authors notes that "Egypt has faced a deepening crisis in women's and girls' rights" since 2020 (CEWLA et al., July 2024, p. 5; see also EIPR, 18 June 2025). This crisis has been

exacerbated by the ongoing economic crisis than began in 2020, and the government's socio-economic policies that have reduced spending on public services and subsidies for the "poorest and most marginalised" individuals (CEWLA et al., July 2024, p. 5). Freedom House notes that discrimination against women "remains a serious problem" (Freedom House, 2025, Overview) and interests of women, in practice, are "not prioritized in Egyptian politics" (Freedom House, 2025, section B4). Sources note that women in Egypt encounter discrimination in several areas (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025; Freedom House, 2025, section F4; ECWR, 19 February 2025, p. 2), in particular, in employment and the justice system (Freedom House, 2025, section F4), including matters of divorce, child custody (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 7) and marriage, as well as political office (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025) and legal matters related to property and inheritance (Freedom House, 2025, section G2). In a February 2025 report, the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) highlights a controversial decision by the Egyptian Fencing Federation to exclude ten female players from international competitions, indicating discrimination and a lack of transparency (ECWR, 19 February 2025, p. 2).

In the Women Peace and Security Index 2025/26,<sup>30</sup> published by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS), an academic institute at Georgetown University, which explores the roles and experiences of women in global peace and security, Egypt ranked 125 out of 181 countries worldwide (GIWPS, October 2025, p. 2). In the World Economic Forum Gender Gap report of 2025, Egypt ranked 145 out of 148 countries in the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 22), 111 out of 148 in the Educational Attainment subindex (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 23) and 78 out of 148 in the Health and Survival subindex (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 24). Regarding parity, Egypt ranks 139 and reaches a 62.5 per cent parity (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 38) compared to a global average of 68.8 per cent (EIPR, 18 June 2025).

According to EIPR, this places Egypt "among the ten worst countries globally in terms of gender parity" and reflects a "continued decrease in the gender gap closure rate—that is, the efforts and actions taken by the state to reduce gender disparities". EIPR notes that, while the government repeatedly claims its "commitment to women's empowerment" and celebrates "so-called 'achievements,'" all indicators instead point to a "worsening crisis year after year", as do reports by Egypt's international partner institutions and the lived reality of women (EIPR, 18 June 2025). Microjustice, a Dutch foundation focussing on issues such as legal empowerment and inclusion for marginalized communities, presents the findings of a study<sup>31</sup> on women living in rural areas in Egypt in a December 2024 report. The findings reveal that rural women face significant challenges, particularly with regard to legal awareness, access to justice, and the impact of social factors on their livelihoods. The report further notes:

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<sup>30</sup> Based on 13 indicators across the three dimensions inclusion, justice, and security, including education, employment, parliamentary representation, intimate partner violence, community safety, access to justice, and others (GIWPS, October 2025, p. 70).

<sup>31</sup> Based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, including surveys with 101 project beneficiaries and stakeholders in the five governorates Qalyubia, Sharqia, Beheira, Dakahlia and Kafr El-Sheikh, around ten focus group discussions and two key expert interviews (Microjustice, December 2024, pp. 5-6).



“The findings point to a lack of legal knowledge, limited access to affordable legal services, and inadequate understanding of existing rights and resources. These challenges create substantial barriers for rural women in asserting their rights and accessing basic services.” (Microjustice, December 2024, p. 29)

The February 2025 ECWR report notes “the persistence of social discrimination against women in several aspects” with reference to findings of a survey conducted by the Information & Decision Support Center (ECWR, 19 February 2025, p. 5) affiliated with the Egyptian Cabinet (Esri, undated).

In April 2025, Amnesty International reported that the General Authority for Passports, Immigration and Nationality introduced discriminatory directives mandating women from “lower classes” to obtain travel permission to Saudi Arabia. With reference to EIPR, the report notes that the Ministry of the Interior classified “lower classes” as housewives and women, who are unemployed or in low-skilled jobs (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025; see also ECWR, 19 February 2025, p. 2).

### *Education*

According to GIWPS’s Women Peace and Security Index 2025/26, the average number of education years attained by women aged 25 and older fell from 9.8 in 2023 to 7.9 in 2025 (GIWPS, undated). Regarding pre-university education of all stages, including pre-primary but excluding Al-Azhar education<sup>32</sup>, the total number of students (25,657,948) in the school year 2023/2024, according to The Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), included 12,493,460 female students or 48,7 per cent and 13,164,488 male students or 51,3 per cent (CAPMAS, December 2024, p. 16). The World Economic Forum reports that Egypt ranked 111 on the Educational Attainment subindex 2025, falling one place compared to 2024 (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 173), with the gender gap in education reportedly at 97.3 per cent closed (EIPR, 18 June 2025). The report notes that literacy parity on the index improved due to a disproportional decrease in literacy rates for men (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 38). In an undated article on its website, the UNFPA in Egypt notes that enrolment rates have increased at all levels of education for both boys and girls aged 10 to 24 “in the last decade”, although “slightly fewer girls” attended school at every level (UNFPA, undated (a)). UNFPA further notes that girls in urban areas had higher school enrolment rates than those in rural areas, and that the same was true for girls in Lower Egypt

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<sup>32</sup> “The general education system in Egypt consists of primary (six years), preparatory (three years), and secondary (three years) levels. Alongside this general education provided by the Ministry of Education, there is another provided by institutes managed by Al-Azhar University, that is, Al-Azhar system. Al-Azhar schools / institutes consist of six years of primary stage, a three-year preparatory stage and finally three years of secondary stage. In this system [...] there are separate schools for girls and boys. Al-Azhar Supreme Council which is nominally independent from the Ministry of Education but is ultimately under supervision of the Egyptian Prime Minister is responsible for supervising this chain of schools and institutions within Egypt. These schools at all stages teach religious and non-religious subjects. Al-Azhar schools are all over the country, especially in rural areas.” (Abdel Fattah, December 2019, p. 151)



compared to those in Upper Egypt (UNFPA, undated (a)). In an August 2024 article on its website, the Borgen Project, an NGO fighting poverty, notes that educational attainment involved challenges for children in Upper Egypt, and that school access was difficult for children, in particular for girls. Families in Upper Egypt “often reside in small, rural hamlets, which are frequently located far from central village primary schools”, the source notes, adding that “[p]revailing social influences and the lack of transport facilities has hindered children, especially young girls, from reaching these public schools” (The Borgen Project, 1 August 2024). In its September 2025 report on child labour in Egypt, the US Department of Labor notes that “girls face additional barriers to education, including harassment on the way to school, as well as cultural constraints” (USDOL, September 2025, p. 2). The February 2025 ECWR report notes with reference to CAPMAS data that 21 per cent of women compared to 11.4 per cent of men in Egypt are illiterate (ECWR, 19 February 2025, p. 2). In its October 2024 report to the UN HRC, the Egyptian government states that females accounted for 53 per cent of higher education graduates in the 2021/22 academic year, representing 61.2 per cent of diploma recipients, compared to 47 per cent of male higher education graduates, representing 38.7 per cent of diploma recipients (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 13). EIPR notes in its June 2025 article that despite the “relatively better status of women in education compared to other areas”, “a clear disconnect” remained between education and meaningful economic participation (EIPR, 18 June 2025).

#### *Access to health care*

In its 2024 Global Gender Gap report, the World Economic Forum highlights a more significant decline in healthy life expectancy for men than for women, leading to improvements in gender parity (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 38). Egypt ranks 78 out of 148 in the health sub-index, according to EIPR, which observes that although women’s life expectancy is longer (73.9 years compared to 70.8 years for men), this indicator fails to reflect the quality of overall health and access to sexual and reproductive rights and health for women (EIPR, 18 June 2025). A July 2024 report on sustainability and resilience in the Egyptian health system authored by Hesham Dinana, professor at the American University in Cairo, and colleagues highlights the vulnerabilities in health insurance coverage affecting women, especially in rural areas of Egypt (Dinana et al., July 2024, pp. 5, 27). The Egyptian government’s October 2024 report to the HRC outlines an action program to achieve 85 per cent health coverage by 2026/2027, with a projected 35 per cent increase in coverage due to the transition to universal health insurance, benefiting various vulnerable groups and expanding to five new governorates (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 13).

Dinana et al. discuss the Ministry of Social Solidarity’s (MOSS) Awareness Programme *Waai*, initiated in 2020, which targets families in UNDP’s “Takaful and Karama” social protection programme and focusses on several issues, including women’s welfare (Dinana et al., July 2024, p. 55). Additionally, the government has initiated 14 women’s health initiatives since July 2019, focusing on various aspects of women’s and maternal health (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 13)

No further information on women’s access to health care during the period covered by this report could be found within the time constraints of the research.

## *Access to employment*

According to GIWPS's Women Peace and Security Index 2025/26, the percentage of women of the ages 25 to 64 employed in the formal or informal sector in 2025 was 20.1 compared to 17.7 in 2023 (GIWPS, undated). The CAPMAS reports in April 2025 that 16.5 per cent of women compared to 83.5 per cent of men in Egypt were employed in 2024. The unemployment rate was 6.6 per cent overall, with 17.1 per cent of unemployed women in 2024 compared to 4.2 per cent of men (CAPMAS, April 2025, p. 20). This was compared to an unemployment rate of 16.4 and 3.6 per cent, respectively, in the first quarter of 2025 (CAPMAS, June 2025(b), p. 24). In 2024, the youth unemployment rate was 37.1 per cent for Egyptian women aged 15 to 29 and 9.8 per cent for Egyptian men in the same age group, compared to 40.3 per cent and 10.7 per cent respectively in 2023 (CAPMAS, April 2025, p. 35). In March 2025, the World Bank Group reports that the current female labour force participation stood at 18 per cent, compared to 73 per cent for men. The report attributes this to a number of structural, legal and perceptual barriers, including high rates of opposition to childcare services outside the family and 24 per cent of men being unsupportive of female workforce participation. However, the report also highlights various efforts and initiatives aimed at addressing this issue (World Bank Group, 12 March 2025). According to the Gender Gap report, the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex showed no score changes since the 2024 edition of the report (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 38), ranking 145 out of 148 (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 173), and only closing 40 per cent of the gap in this area, compared to a 61 per cent global average (EIPR, 18 June 2025). This was due to a decrease by 1.4 points since 2024 in the share of female senior officers and of 2.5 points in income parity and increases by 3.3 points in female workforce participation rates as well as of 5 points in the share of women in technical positions (World Economic Forum, June 2025, p. 38).

In the summary of stakeholders' submissions on Egypt to HRC, published on 6 November 2024, one stakeholder expressed concern about women's right to work, particularly for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds who struggle to access higher-qualification private sector jobs. Three other stakeholders noted a persistent gender pay gap and a low female participation in certain fields (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 9). In a second January 2025 report, TIMEP et al. highlight that women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds encounter significant barriers to accessing employment in the private sector, leading them to the informal sector. This transition exposes them to greater pay disparity and a lack of social protection, thereby increasing their vulnerability to unemployment, poverty, and exploitation (TIMEP et al., 6 January 2025(b), pp. 1-2). The World Bank Group highlights that women's employment opportunities have significantly declined due to the reduction of agricultural and public sector jobs, particularly in male-dominated fields. Additionally, it points out that inadequate legal protections, unsafe transportation, and prevailing socio-cultural norms hinder women's workforce participation (World Bank Group, 12 March 2025).

According to the government's report to the HRC, a national plan to promote employment equality was launched in 2022 with the aim of reducing the women's unemployment rate by 2 per cent annually (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 12). The report also mentions the Tahweesha digital savings and loan programme, which aims to provide 3,000 job opportunities for 1.2 million women across 20 governorates between 2024 and 2026 (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 15).

EIPR highlights that draft Labor Law No. 14 of 2025, set to replace Labor Law No. 12 of 2003 in September 2025 (Eldib & Co., 27 April 2025; Andersen, 12 May 2025), introduces amendments benefiting working women, particularly regarding maternity leave (EIPR, April 2025, pp. 20-21; see also ECWR, 26 August 2025). It also revises Article 90 of the previous law, which restricted women from certain jobs for moral or health reasons. However, EIPR argues that the law does not sufficiently tackle the private sector's discrimination against women compared to the civil service, nor does it directly address issues related to recruitment discrimination or the gender wage gap in Egypt (EIPR, April 2025, pp. 20-21).

### *3.7.2 Gender-based violence (GBV)*

Freedom House notes in its 2025 report that domestic violence and sexual harassment are still among the most pressing problems in Egyptian society (Freedom House, 2025, section G3; see also ECWR, 19 February 2025, p. 6; Ahram Online, 18 December 2024), with high rates of gender-based violence in the country (Freedom House, 2025, Overview). According to GIWPS's Women Peace and Security Index 2025/26, the percentage of women in Egypt who have experienced physical or sexual violence committed by an intimate partner as of 2025 was 15.1 compared to 15 in 2023 (GIWPS, undated). A report published in February 2025 by the Edraak Foundation for Development and Equality, an Egyptian non-profit organisation focussing on women's rights, reveals that 1,195 incidents of violence against girls and women were documented in Egypt in 2024, including 363 homicides and 540 incidents of domestic violence perpetrated by family members (Edraak, February 2025, p. 9). In its February 2025 report, ECWR highlights that in Egypt, violence against women results from discriminatory attitudes and a lack of effective victim protection, exacerbated by women's reluctance to report such violence. ECWR also highlights the emergence of new forms of violence against women in Egypt, particularly noting murders of young women who reject marriage proposals. These crimes are reported to increasingly take place in public spaces, such as universities and workplaces, indicating a growing severity of violence and a deeper crisis related to social justice and gender equality (ECWR, 19 February 2025, p. 6). The UN Human Rights Committee reportedly expressed concern that increased sentences for sexual harassment have not led to a decrease in its occurrence (HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 9).

According to Lamia Lotfi, co-founder of the Rural Women's Initiative, rural areas experience higher rates of violence against women compared to urban areas. She states that while psychological and emotional violence is more common in urban settings, physical violence prevails in rural regions due to patriarchal traditions supporting masculine authority and family structures, such as living in extended households. Additionally, economic dependence in rural communities normalizes violence, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups like women and children. Divorce rates are higher in cities, while rural women often remain in abusive marriages due to societal pressures against divorce. The article highlights that "legal loopholes and weak social protection network [...] leave many Egyptian women vulnerable to abuse and harassment, both from the community and within the family" (Zawia3, 19 August 2024).

Sources reported online gender-based violence in Egypt during the reporting period (Freedom House, 16 October 2024, section C7; Raseef22, 4 October 2024; Ahmed, 26 July 2024). Freedom House describes it as a "common" phenomenon, noting that women routinely faced online harassment and hate speech (Freedom House, 16 October 2024, section C7). In an October 2024 article, Raseef22, an independent Arabic media platform, describes several cases

of women who were subjected to online violence, including blackmailing, stalking and threats of defamation by ex-partners or male friends (Raseef22, 4 October 2024). According to an Al Manassa article authored by journalist Ayar Abdel-Karim Ahmed published in English in July 2024 by Worldcrunch, a Paris-based, independent digital media platform, studies show that around 90 per cent of Egyptian blackmail victims are women, only 10 per cent of which report these incidents “for fear of social stigma or what they call ‘scandals’ for their families”. The source also notes that there are no official statistics on the occurrence of online blackmailing (Ahmed, 26 July 2024).

In their submissions for the November 2024 report of the HRC, several stakeholders highlighted that Egypt lacks comprehensive legislation addressing violence against women, specifically pointing out that marital rape is not criminalized due to an inadequate legal definition of rape (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 9). According to the December 2024 report by CIHRS and other authors, the “Penal Code’s article 60 serves to vindicate domestic and family violence while Article 17 continues to exonerate (or reduce sentencing of) men who rape, assault, or commit so-called ‘honor’ crimes against women” (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 15). According to an Al Manassa article authored by journalist Hanan Al-Gohry and published in English in December 2024 by Worldcrunch, it is not uncommon in Egypt for sentences in family violence cases to be reduced. The source continues to describe the case of a woman pleading to the judge to spare her son after he has killed his sister, noting:

“The court in the Faiyum province, southwest of Cairo, sentenced the man in July to hard labor and life in prison in July. However, an appeals court two months later lowered the sentence to 15 years.

This case is not an exception. Reducing sentences in family violence cases isn’t uncommon in Egypt. Such cases usually involve women victims, who are subjected to a father’s anger, a husband’s slander, a brother’s violence that too often leads to death.” (Al-Gohry, 21 December 2024)

The BAMF notes in its September 2025 report that several new provisions criminalizing various forms of gender-based violence against women have been added to the Penal Code since Al-Sisi became president in 2014, and existing laws have been expanded and tightened. However, in cases of domestic violence in particular, the law gives judges a lot of discretion resulting in a negative impact on women in legal practice (BAMF, 29 September 2025, p. 4). In a November 2024 article, Zawia3 notes that so-called honour killings saw an increase in Egypt in recent years, particularly in rural areas and Upper Egypt (Zawia3, 13 November 2024). Zawia3 notes that court rulings in such cases often lead to reduced punishments based on the perpetrator's psychological state, along with family circumstances and age. According to Mustafa el-Saadawy, a criminal law professor at Minya University cited by Zawia3, Egyptian law favours men in honour-related issues, allowing them to attempt to prove their wives' infidelity to mitigate or eliminate prison sentences (Zawia3, 13 November 2024, see also BAMF, 29 September 2025, p. 4). More recent laws against “cybercrime” with vague provisions, some of which are applied in a gender-discriminatory manner against women, also concern violations of “public morality” or “family values”, according to the BAMF report (BAMF, 29 September 2025, p. 4). Freedom House also reports that in 2024, authorities targeted content creators on social media, particularly women on platforms like TikTok, accusing them of crimes such as “inciting

debauchery" (Freedom House, 2025, section D4). According to a July 2025 EuroMed Rights report, women's rights defenders frequently face prosecution for revealing instances of gender-based violence (EuroMed Rights, July 2025, p. 7).

### *3.7.3 Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)*

Freedom House notes in its 2025 report that Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is still among the most pressing problems in Egyptian society (Freedom House, 2025, section G3). Other sources report that FGM/C is still widespread (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a; UNFPA, undated (b)) and "deeply entrenched" in Egypt (Friedrich Naumann Foundation For Freedom, 8 July 2025). Regarding statistics related to FGM/C, the USDOS notes in its 2025 report:

"Incidents of FGM/C were not always reported, and authorities enforced the law inconsistently. According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the most recent data showed a drop in the rate of FGM/C among girls and young women ages 0-19 from 21 percent to 14 percent between 2014 and 2021. The overall rate for women of all ages dropped from 92 percent to 86 percent." (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a)

According to a July 2025 report of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation For Freedom, "rural areas and communities experiencing poverty and limited education remain disproportionately affected" by FGM/C (Friedrich Naumann Foundation For Freedom, 8 July 2025). In an undated entry on its website, UNFPA notes that, according to the 2021 Egyptian Family Health Survey (EFHS), 74 per cent of Egyptian married women aged 15 to 49 who have undergone FGM/C (overall 86 per cent) did so at the hands of doctors (UNFPA, undated (b)). The Friedrich Naumann Foundation For Freedom describes a "troubling [...] trend toward medicalization", adding, with reference to UNICEF, that 72 per cent of FGM procedures in the country are carried out by professionals in the medical field. The source describes this as a "disturbing development that may falsely legitimize the practice and lull families into a false sense of safety" (Friedrich Naumann Foundation For Freedom, 8 July 2025). In a February 2025 report, Equality Now, an NGO focussing on the protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls, and other authors note that medicalized FGM/C is "seen as a legitimate alternative" in Egypt (Equality Now et al., February 2025, p. 47).

The September 2025 BAMF report highlights legal sanctions against FGM/C, including a minimum five-year prison sentence for its performance and increased penalties for medical professionals involved. Individuals who accompany girls to the procedure face up to three years in prison. Additionally, convicted medical professionals risk having their licenses revoked for up to five years. There is no legal provision for victim compensation (BAMF, 29 September 2025, pp. 4-5; see also UNFPA, undated (b); Friedrich Naumann Foundation For Freedom, 8 July 2025). Freedom House notes that while "the penalties for FGM were increased in 2021, the law's implementation is hindered by societal resistance, poor enforcement, police abuses, and the lack of adequate protection for witnesses, all of which deter victims from contacting authorities" (Freedom House, 2025, section G3). UNFPA notes that "FGM is part of the social fabric of the Egyptian community and is in some cases upheld by beliefs associated with religion" (UNFPA, undated (b)). Regarding steps taken by the government in fighting FGM/C, the USDOS notes:

“According to international and local observers, the government took steps to enforce the FGM/C law, including maintaining hotlines to inform authorities of doctors who performed the operations. The National Committee for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation and other government bodies conducted awareness raising campaigns targeting villages and rural areas. These efforts reached millions of citizens, according to a statement by the head of the National Council for Women in February.” (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3a)

According to an April 2025 HRC report, a national plan for the period 2022-2026 launched by the National Committee for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation aims at the integration of awareness campaigns and the enforcement of stricter penalties on medical professionals and others involved in FGM/C (HRC, 1 April 2025, p. 6). The Egyptian government notes that 72 FGM/C cases were investigated during the period from January 2020 to August 2022 by the Public Prosecutor and there were 18 convictions, with some cases still pending. (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 16). In the abovementioned July 2024 report, Dinana et al. discuss the MOSS’s Awareness Programme *Waa*i, initiated in 2020, which targets families in UNDP’s “Takaful and Karama” social protection programme and focusses on several issues, including FGM (Dinana et al., July 2024, p. 55).

### 3.7.4 Early/forced marriage

Despite marriage becoming legal at the age of 18 (Law No.12 of 1996 Promulgating the Child Law, with amendments up to 2008, Annex, p. 52; USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3b; Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 17; Zawia3, 27 August 2024), early/forced marriage below that age is reportedly practiced in Egypt (Egypt Today, 15 August 2025; Masrawy, 15 June 2025; HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 6; Zawia3, 27 August 2024), with sources describing the practice as “widespread” (Zawia3, 27 August 2024; BAMF, 29 September 2025, p. 12) and “persistent” (Coptic Solidarity, 29 January 2025, p. 8).

In an undated entry on its website, Girls not Brides, an international network of over 1,400 civil society organisations from more than 100 countries committed to ending child marriage, reports, with reference to the aforementioned 2021 EFHS survey published by CAPMAS in October 2023, that 2 per cent of girls were married by the age of 15 while 16 per cent were married by the age of 18 (Girls not Brides, undated). Furthermore, the USDOS, referencing CAPMAS data published in 2023, reports that the marriage rate for girls aged 15 to 17 decreased to 2.1 per cent in 2021 (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3b). In August 2025, Egypt Today reports that the NCCM documented 252 cases of early or child marriages from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. NCCM's director, Sabri Othman, states that 196 of these cases were prevented, and the rest were revealed only after they “had already been conducted” (Egypt Today, 15 August 2025; see also USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3b). According to him, Sohag governorate had the highest number of cases (47), followed by Dakahlia (33) and Assiut (26), and early marriage was most prevalent in Upper Egypt governorates, followed by Lower Egypt (Egypt Today, 15 August 2025). Sources report that the practice is especially widespread in rural and lower-income regions of the country (Zawia3, 27 August 2024; BAMF, 29 September 2025, p. 12). The USDOS report explains that an NGO report submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child attributed the decline in early marriage rates to government reforms, awareness campaigns, and collaboration with religious institutions. However, according to the



NGO report, limited enforcement mechanisms and families circumventing laws through informal marriages hindered progress (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3b). Sabri Othman emphasizes in August 2025 that early and child marriages continue to be a significant issue in Egypt, despite efforts to promote awareness and enforce relevant laws (Egypt Today, 15 August 2025), and notes that informal early marriages are influenced by customs, traditions, and economic pressures on families (Masrawy, 15 June 2025).

According to Article 31-bis, which was added to Civil Status Law No. 143 of 1994 by Law No. 126 of 2008, documenting a marriage contract is prohibited for both genders if the individuals concerned are below the age of 18. Any individual, who sets up a marriage contract between people who are younger, shall be punished according to that law (Law No.12 of 1996 Promulgating the Child Law, with amendments up to 2008, Annex, p. 52; Zawia3, 27 August 2024). The HRC also notes in its October 2024 report that the “Criminal Code provides for imprisonment or a fine for anyone who provides false information or fraudulent documents for the purpose of legitimizing the marriage of a child under the legal age” (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 17; see also Zawia3, 27 August 2024). Zawia3 notes that the “penalties apply to the responsible guardian, the officiating official, and the witnesses” (Zawia3, 27 August 2024). Sources highlight that underage marriage can occur in Egypt due to legal loopholes, allowing the groom to pledge to provide the required legal documents for marriage registration when the bride reaches the age of eighteen (Coptic Solidarity, 29 January 2025, p. 19; Zawia3, 27 August 2024). Thus, they allow for marriages to take place unofficially in the form of “(urfi) marriages witnessed by two people and officiated by a religious official who takes a written pledge from the husband” to later formalize the marriage (Zawia3, 27 August 2024). In a TV interview with Egyptian media organisation Sada Al-Balad summarised in an article by the news portal Masrawy, Sabri Othman, director of the Child Helpline at the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) highlights that written pledges documenting marriages often get lost, resulting in girls losing their rights (Masrawy, 15 June 2025). Unregistered marriages may result in contested paternity and deny women and girls access to alimony and benefits available to those with registered marriages, according to the USDOS report (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3b; see also Masrawy, 15 June 2025). Hayam El-Ganaini, head of the Legal Support Unit at the Feminist Initiative Moaneth Salem cited by Zawia3, notes that girls suffer significant consequences during disputes due to ambiguous legal statuses and evidence manipulation regarding marriages. This issue is exacerbated in cases involving children, which necessitate separate lawsuits for marriage verification and parentage establishment. El-Ganaini points out that lenient fines encourage legal circumvention by families, alongside inadequate oversight of marriage contract registrations, facilitating the manipulation of underage marriage records (Zawia3, 27 August 2024). Sabri Othman highlights that less than 50 per cent of early marriages are documented after the legal age of the couple is reached (Masrawy, 15 June 2025).

The HRC notes that as of November 2024 the draft law to prohibit child marriage and enforce Act No. 126 of 2008 on the minimum marriage age was still pending (HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 9). Hani Helal, a child rights expert cited by Zawia3, emphasizes the urgency of finalizing amendments to the personal status law that criminalize child marriage as sexual exploitation, proposing increased penalties for all involved in facilitating early marriages, including officiants and administrative staff (Zawia3, 27 August 2024). For further information on the draft law, please refer to chapter 3.7.4 of the [July 2024 ACCORD COI Compilation on Egypt](#).



One form of customary marriage, in which adolescent girls are temporarily married off to wealthy foreign men, is the so-called „Misyar marriage“ (BAMF, 29 September 2025, p. 12), also referred to as „tourism“, „summer“ (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3b), „temporary“ or „transactional“ marriage (USDOS, 29 September 2025; HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 6) for the purpose of sexual exploitation, prostitution, or forced labour (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3b; USDOS, 29 September 2025; BAMF, 29 September 2025, p. 12; see also USDOL, September 2025, p. 2; HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 6). The USDOS reports that such marriages are criminalized by law, requiring foreign men who want to marry an Egyptian woman over 25 years younger to pay her EGP 50,000 (USD 1,000), and notes that women's rights organizations contend that this regulation represents trafficking and promotes child or forced marriages (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3b). Zawia3 notes that Law No. 64 of 2010 [on Combatting Human Trafficking] also considers early marriage to be a form of human trafficking, punishable by life imprisonment and a fine of 100,000 Egyptian pounds (USD 2,083) for the responsible guardian (Zawia3, 27 August 2024). Sources reported a trafficking trend of Coptic women and girls, who are abducted, forcibly converted (Coptic Solidarity, 29 January 2025, pp. 8-9) and subsequently forcibly married (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 9; Coptic Solidarity, 29 January 2025, pp. 8-9), with the most common form of marriage in such cases being Urfi<sup>33</sup> (or customary) marriage (Coptic Solidarity, 29 January 2025, p. 19). For further information on tourism marriages, please refer to [section 3.9](#), which deals with human trafficking. For further information on abduction and forced conversion of Coptic women and girls, please refer to [section 3.4.4.3](#).

### 3.7.5 State protection

In its October 2024 report to the HRC, the government of Egypt states that it was “studying a draft domestic violence act to confront this phenomenon in its various dimensions prior to submitting it to parliament” (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 16), further elaborating:

“The draft would increase penalties for and protection against assault within the family. It would increase penalties in family violence cases related and introduce other punishable crimes. It also covers alternative penalties for some crimes; rehabilitation for offenders and victims; family, psychological, social and health counselling; and the need to raise public awareness of the dangers of family violence, including through training and academic programmes in schools.” (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 16)

The April 2025 report of the HRC working group on the UPR on Egypt notes in that regard:

“A comprehensive legislative package had been enacted to protect women from physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence. Reforms envisaged harsher penalties for harassment and female genital mutilation, criminalized bullying and prohibited the unauthorized publication of victims’ data, in order to encourage reporting. A one-stop shop for women’s protection had been established, providing legal, psychological and social

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<sup>33</sup> Urfi or Orfi marriages are informal, not registered marriages (BAMF, 29 September 2025, p. 12, Footnote 93) before two witnesses but without a religious official (Coptic Solidarity, 29 January 2025, p. 19).

services. The Women's Complaints Office, of the National Council for Women, had received 207,000 complaints, and had achieved a resolution rate of 80 per cent through legal and social interventions" (HRC, 1 April 2025, p. 6)

According to the government of Egypt report to the HRC, as of October 2024, over 42 anti-harassment and violence units are available at universities. The source further states that there are medical response units and ten "safe women" units at university hospitals, three forensic medicine clinics for women victims of violence, and nine shelters for victims of violence and human trafficking (Government of Egypt, 30 October 2024, p. 16). In a December 2024 article, Ahram Online states that the government and civil society organizations have made progress in addressing the issue of violence against women. However, the source notes that "significant challenges still persist, and more efforts are required" (Ahram Online, 18 December 2024).

In a master's thesis authored by Nada Saad El-Din Shehata, submitted to the Department of Law at the American University in Cairo, Shehata discusses problems that victims of sexual violence face when reporting incidents to the police. Having collected data "through ongoing discourse and analyses of texts, focus groups, and qualitative interviews", most of which were conducted in March 2022, Saad El-Din Shehata identifies "the prospects of subjection to sexual harassment by police personnel", including female police officers, "or forensic authority doctors, fear of judgment and, fear of legal and physical retaliation" as potential issues (Saad El-Din Shehata, February 2025, pp. 14-15). As for problems faced by victims after referral of their cases to trial, Saad El-Din Shehata notes that they "might encounter gender bias by presiding judges", elaborating that as per her "research, gender bias of the judiciary takes place in two ways, first, in the judges' actions while they consider cases of sexual assault, and second, in the verdicts they deliver" (Saad El-Din Shehata, February 2025, p. 27).

Regarding the issue of early marriage, the abovementioned August 2024 Zawia3 article notes that the Egyptian government has paid attention to it, for example through an awareness campaign organized by the NCW, "including the ongoing 'Knocking on Doors' initiative, through which council representatives work to raise awareness among mothers about the dangers of child marriage and its health, psychological, and physical harms, as well as its impact on future generations". The source notes that the phenomenon of child marriage continues despite the state's efforts (Zawia3, 27 August 2024). In its April 2025 report, the HRC states that the Egyptian government has passed an act on social assistance, which among others strengthens measures combatting early marriage and FGM/C (HRC, 1 April 2025, p. 5). In the abovementioned June 2025 interview with TV channel Sada Al-Balad, Sabri Othman, director of the NCCM's Child Helpline explains that the NCCM deals with reports of child marriage based on Article 96 of the Child Law. However, he notes that there is no explicit legislation criminalizing child marriage, which limits the effectiveness of the accountability mechanism. Othman describes the case of a 15-year-old girl, whose customary marriage to a 25-year-old man was stopped by the NCCM after they received reports about it. He states that the case was referred to the Public Prosecution Office, which is investigating charges against the parents and groom (Masrawy, 15 June 2025). The USDOS reports that in 2024, the government often enforced the law regarding child marriage and the NCCM and "governorate child protection units identified attempted child marriages" (USDOS, 12 August 2025, section 3b). According to Othman, 196 cases of 252 early or child marriage cases documented by the NCCM between

1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025 were prevented, including two cases involving 16-year-old girls in Beheira and Assiut governorates, respectively (Egypt Today, 15 August 2025).

### 3.8 Situation of persons of diverse SOGIESC

Several sources point to LGBTI persons facing discrimination and harassment (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025; Freedom House, 2025, sections B4, F4; EuroMed Rights, July 2025, p. 5), as well as prosecution for exercising their human rights, or for their “actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity” (Amnesty International, 29 April 2025). Prosecution was based on “vague ‘morality’ charges”, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW) (HRW, 31 January 2025), while EuroMed Rights mentions the arbitrary detention of LGBTI persons on “vague” charges of “debauchery” (EuroMed Rights, July 2025, p. 33).

HRC states that homosexuality, same-sex intercourse and transgender identities were reportedly prosecuted under Law No. 10 of 1961 on Combating Prostitution (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 10). According to a joint statement by International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), the Middle East Democracy Center and the Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute, an Egyptian NGO, LGBTI persons were among those “disproportionately” targeted by so-called vice laws, including Law No. 10 of 1961, the Penal Code, and Cybercrime Law 175 of 2018 (ISHR et al., 3 July 2025). MRG explains that

“Egyptian law does not expressly criminalize queer sexual intercourse or transgender identification. However, various vaguely worded legal provisions including law 10/1961 and article 25 law of Cyber-crime law 175/2018 are used in practice to criminalize queer relationships and queer and gender-non-conforming expression. Investigation methods used by law enforcement routinely violate human rights. This includes law enforcement entrapping queer individuals through same sex dating sites.” (MRG, 20 January 2025)

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) lists the main charges brought against LGBTI persons under Law No. 10 of 1961 on Combating Prostitution, including “habitual practice of debauchery” (Article 9c), “publicising an invitation to induce debauchery” (Article 14), and “incitement to debauchery” (Article 1) (ILGA, undated; see also Law No. 10 of 1961 on Combating Prostitution), with penalties up to three years of imprisonment (ILGA, undated; CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 12). Moreover, several provisions in the country’s Penal Code can be used against LGBTI persons, such as Article 178 (production and dissemination of information “against public morals”), Article 278 (on commission of a “scandalous act against shame”) and Article 269 bis (“inciting the passers-by with signals or words to commit indecency”) (ILGA, undated; see also Penal Code Law No. 58 of 1937, 21 July 1937, with amendments up to 15 August 2021, Articles 178, 269 bis, 278; HuMENA, undated).

Several stakeholders quoted by the HRC mention that LGBTI persons and other minorities were “disproportionally affected” by enforced disappearances by state authorities, including the arrest, detention, or abduction of individuals without informing about their whereabouts (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 4). CIHRS and co-authors note in their December 2024 report that the number of arrests and prosecutions has risen over the previous five years (CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 12). EuroMed Rights states that repression against actual or perceived LGBTI persons has increased since 2013. LGBTI persons are reportedly submitted to torture and ill-treatment, sexual violence and invasive anal examinations (EuroMed Rights, July 2025, p. 33)

for those suspected of homosexuality (MRG, 20 January 2025; Cairo 52 et al., 5 August 2024, p. 9) or “habitual debauchery”, as well as “virginity tests” (HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 10).

One source reportedly pointed to LGBTI persons frequently facing “verbal abuse and ridicule” from health professionals when coming to state hospitals for HIV treatment (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 10).

Several sources mention the targeting of LGBTI persons online (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 10), including through online dating platforms (Mdawkhy, 28 January 2025; MRG, 20 January 2025; CIHRS et al., 17 December 2024, p. 12). One source reportedly observed an increase in hate speech against LGBTI persons on social media, and, in the framework of a joint submission, described “media practices that promote hate speech and incite violence” against LGBTI persons (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 10).

In July 2024, authorities reportedly arrested a “gender nonconforming person” accused of disseminating “indecent content”, promoting LGBTI issues on social media and “inciting immoral behaviour” (BAMF, 31 December 2024; see also Al Bawaba, 4 July 2024). In August 2025, an 18-year old person known on TikTok as “Yasmeen” was arrested for publishing allegedly “indecent” videos, with authorities saying that “Yasmeen” was “a man misrepresenting as a woman”, according to HRW (HRW, 10 September 2025; see also Gulf News, 16 August 2025; Youm7, 13 August 2025). In October 2025, the Egyptian daily online newspaper ElDostor reported that he was sentenced to five years in prison on charges of “inciting immorality” and “impersonating a woman” (ElDostor, 18 October 2025).

Cairo 52 points to the lack of social acceptance of transgender persons (Cairo 52, August 2025, p. 19; Cairo 52, 12 December 2024). MRG states that the health system “pathologizes trans identities” (MRG, 20 January 2025). Cairo 52 and TIMEP explain:

“Transgender individuals, whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned to them at birth, are referred to as individuals diagnosed with gender identity disorder (GID) within the Egyptian medical-policy discourse.” (Cairo 52 & TIMEP, 6 January 2025, p. 3)

The source further elaborates that existing policy differentiates between “sex change” and “sex correction”. In this context, “sex change” refers to gender-affirming treatment for transgender persons and is banned as it is considered a “mental illness” issue. On the other hand, “sex correction” refers to sex reassignment surgery for intersex persons, which is considered a “biological” issue (Cairo 52 & TIMEP, 6 January 2025, p. 4). Sex correction surgery is allowed under certain conditions:

“Sex correction is only permissible after receiving approval from the review committee in the Syndicate. Surgeries will only be conducted after at least two years of psychiatric evaluation and hormonal treatment and after conducting a complete examination of hormones and the chromosomal map of the applicant.” (Cairo 52 & TIMEP, 6 January 2025, pp. 3-4).

The review committee or “Sex Correction Committee” was set up by the Ministry of Health’s Resolution 238 and is composed of several medical representatives and a religious representative from Al-Azhar who temporarily left the committee over disagreements with the medical members (Cairo 52 & TIMEP, 6 January 2025, pp. 3-4). As of 2025, the committee has reportedly been “dysfunctional” (MRG, 20 January 2025) and has stopped issuing any permits

(Parlmany, 27 August 2025). Two sources quote the former Grand Mufti of Egypt, Shawky Allam, saying that transition from one gender to another was permissible only within a medical framework and if there was a medical reason (El Watan News, 4 January 2025; Youm7, 4 January 2025).

Moreover, Cairo 52 notes that a new directive (Directive 25/2024) issued by the Ministry of Interior in 2024 closed a legal “loophole” used by transgender persons to obtain legal gender recognition. While previously, legal recognition could be obtained at civil registries by applying for correction of one’s civil records, the new directive requires all applicants to undergo “comprehensive forensic examinations”, “including DNA tests to ascertain whether they are transgender or intersex”. If nationwide implemented, legal gender recognition “will become exclusively a judicial matter”, according to Cairo 52 (Cairo 52, 12 December 2024).

### 3.9 Trafficking in persons

According to Freedom House, women, children and migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia as well as Syrian refugees are the most vulnerable to forced labour and sex trafficking in Egypt (Freedom House, 2025, section G4). Several UN committees note in a November 2024 report prepared by the OHCHR for the HRC that “various forms of trafficking remained prevalent, including the labour and sexual exploitation of women migrant workers, child trafficking, including for begging and labour exploitation, and transactional ‘temporary marriages’ of women and girls for sexual exploitation” (HRC, 7 November 2024, p. 6). A similar observation was reportedly made by Siobhán Mullally, the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, at an event organised by the Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights (ECWR) in January 2025 (ECWR, January 2025, p. 2). The US Department of Labor (USDOL) also states in its report on the Worst Forms of Child Labor covering the year 2024 that

“[s]ome Egyptian girls are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation under the pretext of temporary marriage to wealthy foreign men, mostly from Persian Gulf countries. Some girls are subjected to sex trafficking and forced to sell drugs by criminal gangs.” (USDOL, September 2025, p. 2)

The USDOS notes in its Trafficking in Persons report covering the period April 2024 to March 2025 that Egypt “does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so”. However, in 2024 the authorities investigated and prosecuted fewer trafficking crimes and identified fewer victims compared to previous years, according to the USDOS. In total, the authorities opened 76 new investigations of alleged sex and labour trafficking crimes – 31 cases of sex trafficking, 34 cases of labour trafficking and 11 unspecified trafficking cases – involving 195 suspects. The authorities also continued 44 previously initiated investigations. Moreover, the authorities launched prosecution against 119 alleged perpetrators – 44 for sex trafficking, 42 for labour trafficking and 33 for unspecified forms of trafficking. On the other hand, the USDOS points to an increase in the number of convictions, with 104 traffickers being convicted in 54 cases in 2024, all of them to prison sentences of more than one year (USDOS, 29 September 2025). According to the Egyptian Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the databases of the competent criminal chambers in the courts of appeal at national level have 903 judicial rulings registered in the field of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants as of July 2025 (MoJ, 29 July 2025).

The Refugees Platform in Egypt (RPE), an Egyptian NGO, notes in a report of June 2025 published by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) that the Law regarding Combating Human Trafficking No 64 of 2010 punishes human trafficking with imprisonment (up to life imprisonment) and heavy fines (RPE et al., June 2025, p. 8; see also Law No. 64 of 2010 on Combating Human Trafficking). The USDOS specifies that the Law on Combating Human Trafficking of 2010 punishes sex trafficking and labour trafficking with prison terms from three to 15 years and a fine between EGP 50 000 and EGP 200 000 (between USD 980 and USD 3 940) in case of an adult, and with life imprisonment and a fine from EGP 100 000 and EGP 500 000 (between USD 1 970 and USD 9 840) in case the victim is a child. “These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other grave crimes, such as rape”, according to the USDOS (USDOS, 29 September 2025). Child Trafficking is prohibited by Article 89 of the Constitution, Article 291 of the Penal Code and Articles 2, 3, 5, and 6 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking, according to the USDOL (USDOL, September 2025, p. 3).

RPE further explains that the Anti-Human Trafficking Law of 2010 aims to protect and provide support for victims and foresees the establishment of a National Coordinating Committee for Combating Human Trafficking.<sup>34</sup> However, it is reportedly criticised for a lack of effective measures to protect the rights of refugees and migrants as well as for a lack of clear mechanisms to identify victims and provide them with support (RPE et al., June 2025, p. 8). HRC’s November 2024 report summarising stakeholders’ contributions similarly includes recommendations in terms of victim protection (HRC, 6 November 2024, pp. 2, 4).

Two stakeholders pointed to “a trend of trafficking of Coptic Christian women and girls, who are subsequently forcibly married, and recommended monitoring and reporting on their abduction, forced marriage, and forced religious conversion” (HRC, 6 November 2024, p. 9). For further information, see also [section 3.4.4.3](#) above on the situation of Copts/Christians. Independent Arabia, a news site published by the Saudi Arabian Saudi Research and Media Group, reports in February 2025 on networks operating on social media who are trafficking children under the cover of offering them for “adoption” – which is prohibited by the Child Law No. 12 of 1996 (Independent Arabia, 26 February 2025; see also Law No.12 of 1996 Promulgating the Child Law, with amendments up to 2008). In November 2024, HumAngle Media reports on a Nigerian woman trafficked to Egypt and subjected to forced labour as a domestic worker (HumAngle Media, 26 November 2024). In a December 2024 letter to the Egyptian authorities, seven UN Special Procedures mandate holders pointed to the potential impact of some provisions of a new Asylum Law on the human rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, such as longer waiting times on their application for asylum seekers who entered the country illegally (UN Special Procedures mandate holders, 17 December 2024, p. 2), noting that “victims of trafficking are often in irregular situations and without documentation” (UN Special Procedures mandate holders, 17 December 2024, p. 4; see also EIPR, 26 December 2024).

In an April 2025 report, the HRC points to the country’s efforts in combating trafficking in persons:

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<sup>34</sup> The National Coordinating Committee for Combatting and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM&TIP) was established by Cabinet Resolution No. 192 of 2017 (RPE et al., June 2025, p. 11).

“The national referral mechanism provided hotlines, translation services, healthcare, psychological support and shelter. Legislation on combating trafficking in persons and irregular migration ensured the prosecution of traffickers while protecting victims. Between 2019 and 2024, Egypt had launched 20 awareness campaigns and conducted 75 training sessions for border control officers. A cooperation agreement with Italy had led to the establishment of an African training centre on prevention of irregular migration.” (HRC, 1 April 2025, p. 6)

In its report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), Egypt notes that there is a total of nine women’s shelters available for victims of violence and human trafficking (CESCR, 5 December 2024, p. 34).



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