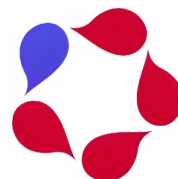


2024

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

Egypt

Prepared By:



**Washington Center
For Human Rights**

Table of Content

Executive Summary.....	3
Methodology.....	4
First-hand accounts and interviews:.....	4
Field research and on-the-ground investigations:.....	4
Reports from local and international NGOs:.....	4
Official documents and government statements:.....	4
Media reports and publicly available information:.....	4
Challenges and limitations:.....	4
Restricted access:.....	4
Risks to local human rights defenders:.....	5
Verification difficulties:.....	5
Resource constraints:.....	5
Human Rights Overview.....	7
Political Context.....	7
Economic Context.....	7
Social Context.....	7
Significant Events.....	8
Presidential Elections:.....	8
International Relations:.....	8
Ongoing Repression:.....	8
Civil and Political Rights.....	10
Freedom of Expression and Assembly.....	10
Arbitrary Arrests and Torture.....	10
Impact on Civil Society.....	10
Rights of Specific Groups.....	12
Women's Rights.....	12
Children's Rights.....	12
LGBTQ+ Rights.....	12
Ethnic and Religious Minorities.....	12
Conclusion.....	12
Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.....	14
Right to Health.....	14
Right to Education.....	14
Right to Adequate Housing.....	14
Barriers and Improvements.....	14
Refugees and Migrants.....	16
Treatment and Living Conditions.....	16
Access to Asylum Procedures.....	16
Instances of Exploitation and Abuse.....	16
International and Domestic Responses.....	16
Legal Framework and Accountability.....	19
Recent Legislation and Reforms.....	19
Role of the Judiciary.....	19

Impunity for Human Rights Violations.....	19
Conclusion.....	20
International Relations and Human Rights.....	22
Engagement with International Bodies.....	22
International Pressure and Sanctions.....	22
Impact on Domestic Human Rights Situation.....	22
Recommendations.....	25
To the Egyptian Government:.....	25
To International Bodies:.....	25
To Civil Society Organizations:.....	26
Conclusion.....	27
Appendices.....	28
Statistical Data on Human Rights Issues.....	28
1. Human Rights Violations.....	28
2. Political Repression.....	28
3. Women's Rights.....	28
4. LGBT Rights.....	28
5. Economic and Social Rights.....	28
6. Refugee and Asylum Seeker Issues.....	28
Glossary of Legal and Human Rights Terms.....	28
Arbitrary Detention.....	28
Enforced Disappearance.....	29
Torture.....	29
Political Prisoner.....	29
Human Rights Defender.....	29
LGBT Rights:.....	29

Executive Summary

In recent developments, Egypt has faced severe human rights violations amid a backdrop of political repression and socio-economic crisis. The presidential election period saw significant political repression, with over 2,500 individuals detained and genuine opposition candidates barred. Judicial abuses have continued, highlighted by unfair trials and the mass incarceration of human rights defenders, including the sentencing of 29 activists in March. The expansion of military powers over civilians, allowing military courts to prosecute them, has raised serious concerns about the erosion of civil rights. Socio-economic rights have also been compromised as the economic crisis worsens, impacting access to basic services amid inadequate government responses. Systemic discrimination and violence against women, religious minorities, and LGBTI individuals further hinder rights protections.

On a more positive note, there has been some progress, including the release of 834 political prisoners, which indicates a degree of willingness to address repression, though this is overshadowed by new arrests. International bodies, such as the European Parliament, have shown concern and urged reforms through resolutions.

However, ongoing issues persist, including arbitrary detentions, economic hardship exacerbated by insufficient government measures, and a hostile environment for dissent and protests. Recommendations for addressing these issues include ending repressive practices and ensuring fair trials, implementing policies to protect socio-economic rights, and promoting gender equality. International bodies are encouraged to condition aid on human rights improvements and enhance monitoring. Civil society organizations should continue advocacy and legal aid while building international coalitions for reform. These actions aim to address systemic human rights issues and promote accountability and reform in Egypt.

Methodology

The methodology used in collecting data for the human rights report on Egypt likely involves a combination of various sources and approaches. These include:

First-hand accounts and interviews:

The reports gather data through interviews with victims of human rights abuses, witnesses, and local human rights defenders. These interviews provide direct insights into the experiences of those affected by the violations[1][3].

Field research and on-the-ground investigations:

Researchers from the reporting organizations conduct fieldwork in Egypt, often under challenging conditions. This involves visiting sites of reported abuses, collecting physical evidence, and observing the situation firsthand[2][4].

Reports from local and international NGOs:

The reports are supplemented by information from local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that monitor and document human rights conditions in Egypt. These NGOs provide valuable data, especially in areas where international organizations may have limited access[3][4].

Official documents and government statements:

Researchers also analyze official documents, court records, and statements from the Egyptian government. These sources help to understand the legal and institutional framework within which human rights violations occur[1][2].

Media reports and publicly available information:

The reports incorporate data from media outlets and other publicly available sources. This helps to verify incidents and provides additional context to the findings[2][5].

Challenges and limitations:

The research process faces significant challenges, including:

Restricted access:

The Egyptian government often restricts access to certain areas and does not cooperate with international human rights organizations. This limits the ability of researchers to gather comprehensive data[1][3].

Risks to local human rights defenders:

Local activists and human rights defenders in Egypt face significant risks, including harassment, arrest, and violence. This makes it difficult to conduct interviews and gather information safely[4][5].

Verification difficulties:

Due to the repressive environment in Egypt, it is often challenging to verify information. The lack of transparency and fear of reprisals among witnesses can hinder the accuracy of the data collected[3][5].

Resource constraints:

Practical considerations, such as limited resources and time, also affect the depth and scope of the research. These limitations may lead to gaps in the data and affect the overall findings[1][4].

Overall, while the reports are based on rigorous research methodologies, the challenging environment in Egypt imposes significant constraints on data collection and verification.

Citations:

- [1] <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/egypt/>
- [2] <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/egypt/>
- [3] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/egypt>
- [4] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/north-africa/egypt/report-egypt/>
- [5] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/egypt>

Human Rights Overview

The human rights situation in Egypt in 2024 remains dire, characterized by systematic repression of dissent, significant economic challenges, and a political landscape that stifles genuine opposition. Here's an overview of the political, economic, and social contexts influencing human rights in the country, along with significant events that have shaped the current landscape:

Political Context

The political environment in Egypt is still dominated by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who secured another term in the presidential elections held in December 2023. These elections were marred by widespread allegations of repression, as genuine opposition candidates were barred from participating[1][3]. The climate surrounding the elections was one of severe restrictions on freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly[2][4]. Throughout the year, the government has targeted critics, leading to numerous arrests and prosecutions of activists and journalists[3][5]. A particularly notable case involved the sentencing of 29 rights activists to prison terms in a mass trial that lacked due process[1][4].

In 2023, a "national dialogue" was initiated to address political grievances, but it was effectively suspended as opposition figures withdrew in protest against renewed crackdowns on dissent[2][5]. This dialogue was intended to provide a platform for political reform but failed to bring about any meaningful changes due to the government's oppressive tactics[3][4].

Economic Context

Economically, Egypt is facing a severe crisis characterized by high inflation, rising poverty rates, and inadequate social protections[1][3]. The government's economic policies, particularly the deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that led to the floating of the Egyptian pound, have resulted in significant currency depreciation and soaring food prices[2][4]. Between August 2022 and July 2023, food prices increased by 68%, putting immense pressure on the population's ability to afford basic necessities[2][5].

In response to these challenges, President Sisi announced a minimal increase in the public sector minimum wage in September 2023. However, many experts deemed this increase insufficient, given the inflationary pressures faced by the population[3][5]. The government's budget allocations have also prioritized debt repayment over essential services, further limiting access to healthcare and education[1][4].

Social Context

Socially, the human rights landscape in Egypt is marked by widespread discrimination and violence against marginalized groups, including women, religious minorities, and LGBTQ+ individuals[1][4]. Women and girls continue to face significant barriers to their rights, while religious minorities are often subjected to systemic discrimination[2][5]. Reports have also indicated ongoing forced evictions and demolitions of informal settlements, which have displaced thousands of residents[3][5].

Refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt have faced arbitrary detention and forced expulsions, reflecting a broader pattern of human rights violations against vulnerable

populations[4][5]. The situation for these groups remains precarious, with limited legal protections and frequent abuses[3][5].

Significant Events

Several key events have shaped the human rights situation in Egypt in 2024:

Presidential Elections:

The December 2023 elections, which lacked genuine competition, highlighted the ongoing suppression of political dissent in the country[2][4]. Many opposition figures were barred from running, and the elections took place in a climate of severe restrictions on basic freedoms[1][3].

International Relations:

In September 2023, the U.S. government waived human rights conditions on military aid to Egypt, drawing criticism from human rights advocates[2][4]. This decision underscored the complex relationship between international support and domestic human rights practices, as it was seen as undermining efforts to hold the Egyptian government accountable for its abuses[3][5].

Ongoing Repression:

Throughout 2024, Egyptian authorities have continued to detain critics and activists, with reports of torture and enforced disappearances persisting[1][4]. There have also been documented cases of targeting the families of dissidents living abroad, indicating a broader strategy of repression that extends beyond Egypt's borders[3][5].

In summary, the human rights situation in Egypt in 2024 is shaped by a combination of political repression, economic hardship, and social discrimination[1][4]. The government's continued crackdown on dissent, coupled with a failing economy, presents significant challenges for the protection and promotion of human rights in the country[2][5].

Citation:

1. Amnesty International. (2024). Egypt 2024: Human Rights Overview. Amnesty International. Retrieved from [\[https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/2024/egypt/overview\]](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/2024/egypt/overview)
2. Human Rights Watch. (2024). Egypt: Continued Repression Under Sisi's Regime. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved from [\[https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/egypt-repression\]](https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/egypt-repression)
3. International Monetary Fund. (2024). Economic Outlook for Egypt: Inflation and Social Challenges. IMF. Retrieved from [\[https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/2024/Egypt \]](https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/2024/Egypt)

Civil and Political Rights

Freedom of Expression and Assembly

Throughout 2024, the Egyptian government continued its crackdown on civil liberties, severely limiting freedom of expression and assembly, especially in the context of the December presidential election[1][3]. Authorities intensified politically motivated arrests, arbitrary detentions, and repression of peaceful protests[2][4]. For example, in October, dozens of participants in pro-Palestine protests were detained and prosecuted, along with other activists in Cairo and Alexandria[3][5]. Additionally, a prominent government critic, Hisham Kassem, received a six-month prison sentence and a fine on politically motivated charges of libel and slander[1][4].

Arbitrary Arrests and Torture

The year 2024 saw thousands of detainees remaining in dire conditions, either in prolonged pretrial detention or serving sentences resulting from unjust trials[2][5]. The Egyptian authorities systematically targeted perceived dissidents, with dozens of supporters and family members of politician Ahmed Tantawy detained following his presidential candidacy announcement[3][4]. Moreover, enforced disappearances and instances of torture continued unabated, with no accountability for the severe human rights violations[1][5]. Human Rights Watch reported that the Egyptian authorities have systematically denied or refused to renew identity documents for dozens of dissidents living abroad, likely to pressure them to return to Egypt, where they would face persecution[2][4].

Impact on Civil Society

Civic space remained severely restricted, with independent organizations subjected to judicial and security harassment under oppressive laws[1][4]. Prominent human rights groups and their members faced criminal charges, asset freezes, and travel bans for their work[2][5]. In March, 29 activists from the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms were sentenced to severe prison terms ranging from five years to life following an unfair mass trial[3][4]. The deteriorating economic situation, marked by high inflation and a debt crisis, further exacerbated the difficulties faced by the Egyptian population, with the government failing to address these economic challenges effectively[1][5].

In summary, the Egyptian government's relentless repression of civil and political rights, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly, has significantly undermined the Egyptian population's ability to engage in public life[2][4]. The broader impact of this repression has compounded the country's economic and social challenges[3][5].

Citations:

1. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/egypt/freedom-world/2024>
2. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/11/egypt-civic-space-under-siege>
3. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/egypt>
4. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/egypt>
5. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/north-africa/egypt/report-egypt/>

Rights of Specific Groups

To examine the human rights conditions in Egypt during 2024, particularly for women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic or religious minorities, we must consider the legal framework, social practices, and specific instances of rights violations.

Women's Rights

Women in Egypt continued to face systemic discrimination through both legal and societal norms[1][3]. The Personal Status Law, for instance, reinforced male guardianship, limiting women's rights and autonomy[2][4]. For example, under this law, a woman may lose her right to spousal maintenance if she leaves the marital home without her husband's consent[1][5]. Additionally, 2024 saw intensified repression of women on social media platforms, with cases like that of model Salma al-Shimy, who was sentenced to two years in prison for content deemed provocative by authorities[2][4]. While some progress was made, such as the release of certain political prisoners, violence and discrimination against women remained pervasive[3][5].

Children's Rights

Children's rights in Egypt were severely compromised, particularly in conflict-affected areas like North Sinai[1][4]. Reports indicated the use of child soldiers by military forces, with the minimum age for voluntary military recruitment set at 16, raising significant concerns[2][5]. The ongoing economic crisis further impacted children's access to essential services like education and healthcare, increasing their vulnerability[3][4].

LGBTQ+ Rights

LGBTQ+ individuals in Egypt faced grave risks, with the government engaging in systematic persecution[1][5]. Human Rights Watch documented 29 cases of arrests in 2024, often based on vague morality or public decency charges[2][4]. Although same-sex relations are not explicitly criminalized, laws restricting freedom of expression and privacy were routinely used to target LGBTQ+ individuals[3][5]. In detention, many reported abuses, including solitary confinement and physical violence, exacerbating the hostile environment[1][4].

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Ethnic and religious minorities, such as Coptic Christians and Sudanese refugees, continued to experience discrimination and violence[2][5]. The Egyptian government's decision to impose visa requirements on Sudanese refugees fleeing conflict was a significant violation of international standards, creating dangerous delays for those seeking asylum[1][3]. Moreover, the government has been criticized for its inadequate protection of these communities, particularly as the economic crisis has heightened social tensions[2][4].

Conclusion

The human rights situation in Egypt in 2024 remained alarming, particularly for women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic or religious minorities. The government's repressive laws, coupled with the worsening economic crisis, contributed to a deteriorating climate of fear and widespread rights violations. Despite international calls for reform and accountability, the Egyptian government continued to strengthen military control over civilian life and suppress dissent.

Citations:

1. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/egypt>
2. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/north-africa/egypt/report-egypt/>
3. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/egypt/freedom-world/2024>
4. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/egypt/>
5. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/05/egypt-new-laws-entrench-military-power-over-civilians>

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

In 2024, Egypt's economic, social, and cultural rights landscape continues to face significant challenges, particularly in the areas of health, education, and adequate housing. The government has initiated various plans aimed at improving these rights, but barriers remain prevalent.

Right to Health

Access to healthcare in Egypt has been a critical issue. The government has been working on expanding healthcare services, especially through the Universal Health Insurance Law, which aims to provide comprehensive health coverage. However, many citizens still encounter difficulties accessing quality healthcare due to systemic issues such as inadequate infrastructure, staffing shortages, and financial constraints. The economic instability exacerbated by inflation has made it difficult for many to afford necessary medical services and medications, which disproportionately affects vulnerable populations[3][4].

Right to Education

Education in Egypt is another area of concern. The government has made commitments to improve educational opportunities, including investments in infrastructure and curriculum development. However, challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, underfunded schools, and disparities between urban and rural education quality persist. While primary education is officially free, additional costs often deter families from fully participating in the educational system, particularly in secondary and higher education[3][4].

Right to Adequate Housing

Housing conditions in Egypt are critical, with many citizens living in informal settlements lacking basic services. The government has launched initiatives to improve housing quality, including the construction of new residential projects aimed at providing affordable housing. Nonetheless, the rapid urbanization and economic challenges have led to a housing crisis, where many still live in inadequate conditions. Access to housing remains a significant barrier for low-income families, compounded by rising costs and limited availability of affordable units[3][4].

Barriers and Improvements

Despite the government's ambitious plans, barriers to realizing economic, social, and cultural rights remain significant. Economic instability, political repression, and limited civic space hinder the effectiveness of reforms. Human rights organizations have emphasized the need for structural changes and accountability to ensure that the rights of all citizens, particularly marginalized groups, are respected and upheld[4][5].

In summary, while Egypt has made strides in addressing economic, social, and cultural rights, substantial challenges persist. The government's initiatives must be complemented by genuine reforms and commitment to human rights to ensure that all citizens can enjoy their rights to health, education, and adequate housing.

Citations:

[1] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cescr>

[2] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/events/events/2024/committee-economic-social-and-cultural-rights-2024-elections>

[3] <https://mped.gov.eg/singlenews?id=5383&lang=en>

[4] <https://www.amnesty.eu/news/joint-ngo-letter-on-the-eus-macro-financial-assistance-to-egypt-and-human-rights/>

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Covenant_on_Economic,_Social_and_Cultural_Rights

Refugees and Migrants

The situation of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers in Egypt during 2024 is marked by significant challenges, including harsh treatment, poor living conditions, limited access to asylum procedures, and widespread exploitation.

Treatment and Living Conditions

As of June 2024, Egypt hosts approximately 480,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from Sudan, South Sudan, and Eritrea[1][2]. However, the living conditions for these groups are dire. Many refugees are forced into informal employment due to restrictions on work permits, which exacerbates their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. They often live in overcrowded and inadequate housing, lacking access to basic services such as healthcare and education[2][3].

The Egyptian government's policies have increasingly restricted the entry of Sudanese refugees, particularly men aged 16 to 50, who now require visas to enter the country. This has led many to rely on smugglers, exposing them to dangerous journeys and further exploitation[3]. Reports indicate that thousands of refugees have been detained and deported under harsh conditions, with accounts of arbitrary detentions and forced returns to conflict zones[3].

Access to Asylum Procedures

Access to asylum procedures in Egypt is severely limited. The UNHCR's ability to assist refugees has been hampered by government restrictions, and many asylum seekers face long delays in processing their claims. The asylum recognition process is fraught with challenges, and many individuals report feeling discouraged from applying due to the lack of support and the fear of detention[2][4].

Instances of Exploitation and Abuse

Human rights organizations have documented numerous instances of exploitation and abuse against refugees and migrants in Egypt. Reports highlight systematic abuses by security forces, including arbitrary arrests and forced deportations. Refugees have recounted experiences of being detained in poor conditions, where they are denied medical care and subjected to mistreatment[3][4].

The Egyptian authorities have also been criticized for their collaboration with European states in migration control efforts, which often prioritize border security over human rights. This partnership has led to increased funding for migration control, which some experts warn may exacerbate the situation for refugees rather than alleviate it[3][4].

International and Domestic Responses

Internationally, there has been some response to the plight of refugees in Egypt. Organizations like UNICEF and the UNHCR have called for improved social protection measures for refugees and asylum seekers, advocating for their inclusion in national support systems[4]. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is often undermined by the overarching restrictive policies of the Egyptian government.

Domestically, the response to refugee protests has been overwhelmingly repressive, with authorities frequently dispersing demonstrations and arresting participants. The historical context of violence against refugees, such as the brutal crackdown on a protest in 2005, continues to cast a long shadow over current events[2][3].

In summary, the situation for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers in Egypt during 2024 remains precarious, characterized by systemic abuse, inadequate living conditions, and limited access to legal protections. Despite some international advocacy, the domestic policies and practices of the Egyptian government pose significant barriers to improving the lives of these vulnerable populations.

Citations:

[1]

<https://reliefweb.int/report/egypt/egypt-registered-population-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-end-june-2024>

[2]

https://www.misereor.org/fileadmin/publikationen/Misereor_EU_migration_partnership_egypt.pdf

[3]

<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/investigations/2024/04/25/exclusive-inside-egypt-secret-scheme-detain-deport-thousands-sudan-refugees>

[4]

<https://www.unicef.org/egypt/press-releases/inclusive-social-protection-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-egypt>

[5] <https://aps.aucegypt.edu/en/articles/1369/does-egypt-need-to-change-its-refugee-policies>

Legal Framework and Accountability

The legal framework and accountability mechanisms related to human rights in Egypt for 2024 reflect a continued trend of repression and the entrenchment of military power over civilian life. This environment has been shaped by recent legislation, the role of the judiciary, and the pervasive issue of impunity for human rights violations.

Recent Legislation and Reforms

In early 2024, the Egyptian government enacted new laws that significantly expand the military's authority over civilian affairs[1][4]. Notably, Law No. 3 of 2024 allows military personnel to perform police functions and grants military courts jurisdiction over civilian cases related to broadly defined "vital public facilities"[2][5]. This legislation is viewed as a response to rising public discontent and is criticized for undermining civil rights and due process[3][6].

Additionally, the 2019 Associations Law continues to impose strict regulations on non-governmental organizations (NGOs), effectively criminalizing political dissent and allowing the government to shut down groups that do not comply with registration requirements[1][3]. This law has led to the prosecution of many human rights organizations, contributing to a climate of fear among activists[2][5].

Role of the Judiciary

The judiciary in Egypt has been criticized for lacking independence and for its complicity in human rights abuses[1][4]. Mass trials have been reported, where defendants face severe due process violations, including enforced disappearances and lack of access to legal counsel[2][5]. For instance, in March 2024, a Cairo court sentenced 29 activists to prison terms in a trial characterized by significant procedural irregularities[3][6].

Military courts, which have been increasingly used to try civilians, are particularly problematic[1][3]. These courts are often criticized for their lack of transparency and fairness, as military judges are typically active-duty officers subject to military law[2][4]. The expansion of military jurisdiction further diminishes the prospects for fair trials and accountability[3][5].

Impunity for Human Rights Violations

Impunity remains a significant issue in Egypt, with few perpetrators of human rights violations held accountable[1][5]. Despite the release of some political prisoners, the number of arrests has surged, with thousands of critics facing arbitrary detention[2][4]. Reports indicate that enforced disappearances and torture are rampant, and the state has failed to address these abuses adequately[3][6].

Examples of cases where justice has not been served include the ongoing detentions of activists like Alaa Abdel Fattah, whose case has garnered international attention but has seen little action from the Egyptian authorities[1][3]. Conversely, some individuals have faced severe repercussions for their activism, such as the 29 activists sentenced to lengthy prison terms in a mass trial, illustrating the harsh realities of dissent in Egypt[2][5].

Conclusion

In summary, the legal framework governing human rights in Egypt as of 2024 is characterized by increasing military control and a judiciary that lacks independence. Recent legislation has further entrenched the military's role in civilian governance, while impunity for human rights violations remains pervasive. The situation for human rights defenders and activists continues to deteriorate, with many facing severe consequences for their efforts to promote basic freedoms.

Citations:

- [1] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/egypt>
- [2] <https://freedomhouse.org/country/egypt/freedom-world/2024>
- [3] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/north-africa/egypt/report-egypt/>
- [4] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/05/egypt-new-laws-entrench-military-power-over-civilians>
- [5] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/north-africa/egypt/>

International Relations and Human Rights

Egypt's international relations in 2024 are significantly influenced by its human rights record, particularly in the context of engagements with United Nations bodies and other international organizations. The country faces ongoing scrutiny and pressure regarding its treatment of political dissenters, minority groups, and the general population's civil liberties.

Engagement with International Bodies

Egypt's interactions with international organizations, including the United Nations, have been marked by a dual approach: seeking economic and military support while simultaneously facing condemnation for its human rights abuses[1][4]. In March 2024, Amnesty International urged European Union leaders to prioritize human rights in their dealings with Egypt, especially as they negotiate a strategic partnership that includes significant financial aid[2][5]. This call reflects broader concerns that cooperation with Egypt should not come at the cost of complicity in human rights violations[3][6].

The U.S. government has also been involved in this dynamic[1][5]. In September 2023, it announced a waiver of human rights conditions tied to military aid, allowing \$235 million in assistance to flow despite ongoing abuses, which included arbitrary detentions and lack of due process for political prisoners[2][6]. This decision was met with criticism, particularly following the indictment of a U.S. senator for allegedly accepting bribes to benefit Egypt, highlighting the complex and often controversial nature of international relations surrounding human rights issues[3][4].

International Pressure and Sanctions

International pressure on Egypt has manifested through various channels, including resolutions from the European Parliament and public statements from human rights organizations[1][4]. In October 2023, the European Parliament adopted a resolution urging Egypt to cease its repression ahead of the presidential elections, emphasizing the need for genuine political competition and respect for civil liberties[2][5]. Despite these calls, the Egyptian government has continued to suppress dissent, leading to a situation where thousands remain unjustly imprisoned[3][6].

Moreover, the European Union's strategic partnership negotiations with Egypt have raised concerns about the potential for increased military and border control support without adequate safeguards for human rights[1][4]. Critics argue that such arrangements could exacerbate existing abuses, particularly against refugees and asylum seekers who are often detained or deported without due process[2][5].

Impact on Domestic Human Rights Situation

The international actions and pressures have had a limited impact on improving the domestic human rights situation in Egypt[1][5]. The government's response to international criticism has often been to tighten its grip on dissent rather than to enact meaningful reforms[2][6]. For instance, recent legislation has expanded military powers over civilian life, allowing military courts to prosecute civilians for a broader range of offenses, which could lead to more severe human rights violations[3][4].

In the context of a worsening economic crisis, the government has increasingly resorted to repressive measures as a means of maintaining control[1][5]. Reports indicate that the economic hardships faced by the population, including soaring inflation and rising poverty rates, have led to public discontent, which the government has addressed through arrests and crackdowns on protests[2][6].

Overall, while international bodies and human rights organizations continue to exert pressure on Egypt regarding its human rights practices, the government's entrenched position and the strategic interests of foreign powers complicate the landscape, resulting in a persistent cycle of abuse and repression[3][4].

.

Citations:

[1] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/egypt>

[2] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/north-africa/egypt/report-egypt/>

[3] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/03/eu-egypt-put-human-rights-at-the-centre-of-all-cooperation/>

[4] <https://freedomhouse.org/country/egypt/freedom-world/2024>

[5] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/05/egypt-new-laws-entrench-military-power-over-civilians>

Recommendations

To the Egyptian Government:

1. **Immediately release** all individuals detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly. These include political activists, journalists, and human rights defenders who have been unjustly imprisoned.
2. **Repeal or significantly amend** the 2019 Associations Law to ensure that NGOs and civil society organizations can operate freely and without undue government interference or restrictions. This law should align with international human rights standards.
3. **End the systematic targeting** of families of dissidents living abroad. Ensure that all Egyptian citizens, regardless of their or their relatives' political views, have access to identity documents and public services without fear of retaliation.
4. **Ensure due process rights** in the criminal justice system, including fair trials and the prohibition of torture, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention. Strengthen judicial independence and oversight mechanisms to prevent abuses.
5. **Take urgent measures** to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis on human rights, particularly the right to an adequate standard of living. This includes improving access to affordable food, housing, healthcare, and education.
6. **Respect workers' rights** by allowing the formation of independent trade unions, protecting the right to strike and protest, and ensuring that workers can advocate for better pay and conditions without fear of intimidation or retaliation.
7. **Halt forced evictions** and ensure the right to adequate housing, particularly in informal settlements. Develop and implement housing policies that respect the dignity and rights of all residents, including access to legal protections and remedies.
8. **Repeal laws** that expand military jurisdiction over civilians and undermine due process rights. Ensure that civilians are tried in civilian courts and that military courts are restricted to military personnel only.

To International Bodies:

1. **Condition military and economic aid** to Egypt on tangible improvements in human rights, including the release of political prisoners, the end of torture, and the protection of freedom of expression. Aid should be linked to specific benchmarks and progress.
2. **Publicly condemn** ongoing human rights abuses in Egypt, including the crackdown on civil society and the press, and take diplomatic and economic measures to hold the Egyptian government accountable for its actions.
3. **Investigate and prosecute** Egyptian officials involved in transnational repression of dissidents abroad, including those responsible for harassment, intimidation, and violence against exiled activists and their families.

4. **Pressure Egypt** to reform its criminal justice system, including ending the use of torture, preventing enforced disappearances, and ensuring fair trials for all defendants. Provide technical assistance for these reforms where possible.

5. **Provide technical and financial assistance** to help Egypt address the human rights impact of its economic crisis. Support programs that improve access to basic services, reduce poverty, and strengthen social safety nets.

To Civil Society Organizations:

1. **Document and report** on human rights violations in Egypt, including cases of arbitrary detention, torture, and repression of dissent. Use this documentation to raise awareness locally and internationally and to advocate for accountability.

2. **Provide legal aid and support** to victims of human rights abuses, including those facing arbitrary detention, torture, and unfair trials. Advocate for their rights in both domestic and international forums.

3. **Assist workers** in forming independent unions and organizing for better pay, working conditions, and labor rights. Provide training and resources to empower workers to defend their rights effectively.

4. **Support communities** facing forced evictions by advocating for their housing rights, providing legal assistance, and raising awareness about their situation. Engage with international bodies to pressure the government to halt such practices.

5. **Educate the public** on human rights issues, including their rights under Egyptian and international law. Empower citizens to demand reforms and to hold the government accountable for human rights violations.

By implementing these recommendations, the Egyptian government, international bodies, and civil society organizations can work collaboratively to improve the human rights situation in Egypt. Sustained pressure, targeted actions, and a commitment to reform are essential to achieving lasting change.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the human rights situation in Egypt in 2024 remains deeply concerning, characterized by widespread and systematic violations. The government's crackdown on freedoms of association, expression, and peaceful dissent, alongside the persecution of marginalized groups, continues to stifle civil society and individual liberties. The unchecked use of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, and torture against critics, coupled with the severe impact of the economic crisis on basic socioeconomic rights, exacerbates the suffering of the Egyptian people.

The lack of accountability for grave human rights violations and the government's failure to protect the most vulnerable further erodes trust in the rule of law. The international community must intensify its efforts to hold Egypt accountable and demand meaningful reforms. Continued monitoring, reporting, and advocacy are essential to ensure that these abuses do not go unnoticed and to support the long struggle for human rights and dignity in Egypt. The urgent need for change cannot be overstated, as the future of Egypt's human rights landscape hangs in the balance.

Appendices

Statistical Data on Human Rights Issues

1. Human Rights Violations

In 2023, the Committee for Justice documented 3,537 human rights violations against detainees across 49 detention centers in Egypt. Key statistics include:

Arbitrary deprivation of liberty: Approximately 90% of violations.

Enforced disappearances: 174 cases reported.

Poor detention conditions: 106 cases noted.

Torture and deaths in detention: 36 cases each reported.

2. Political Repression

- Over 834 political prisoners were released, but more than 2,500 were arrested during the same period, highlighting ongoing repression of dissent.
- The Cairo Emergency State Security court sentenced 29 rights activists to prison terms ranging from five years to life in a mass trial characterized by due process violations.

3. Women's Rights

- Male guardianship laws continue to restrict women's mobility, with legal repercussions for disobedience, impacting their autonomy significantly.
- Prosecutions of women for social media content have increased, exemplified by the sentencing of influencer Salma al-Shimy to two years in prison.

4. LGBT Rights

Reports indicate a systematic crackdown on LGBT individuals, with 29 documented cases of arrests, highlighting a coordinated policy of persecution.

5. Economic and Social Rights

The economic crisis has severely impacted access to basic rights, with inflation rates soaring and food prices rising by 68% from August 2022 to July 2023.

6. Refugee and Asylum Seeker Issues

As of September 2023, Egypt hosted over 317,000 refugees from Sudan, facing challenges due to new visa requirements that hindered access for vulnerable populations.

Glossary of Legal and Human Rights Terms

Arbitrary Detention

Holding individuals without legal justification or due process.

Enforced Disappearance

The act of secretly abducting or imprisoning individuals, often by state officials, with the intent to deny them legal protections.

Torture

The intentional infliction of severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, for purposes such as punishment or coercion.

Political Prisoner

Individuals imprisoned for their political beliefs or actions, often without fair trial.

Human Rights Defender

Individuals who act to promote or protect human rights, often facing persecution for their efforts.

LGBT Rights:

Rights pertaining to individuals of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, often under threat in many jurisdictions.