



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Egypt – July to December 2022

01 January 2023

04 July 2022

Ten people sentenced to death and several hundred given prison terms

According to media reports, on 28.06.22, a Cairo court sentenced ten people to death and at least 156 others to prison terms ranging from ten to 25 years in a mass trial. The charges included engaging in terrorist activities, killing members of the police force, damaging and destroying infrastructure in connection with the Helwan Brigades, which the authorities classify as a terrorist organisation. According to the Egyptian judiciary, the group is linked to a series of attacks on security forces between August 2013 and February 2015.

08 August 2022

Christian family injured in knife attack

According to the sources of Christian organisations, a Christian family was injured by a knife attack in a district of Giza on 28.07.22; father and son were treated in hospital. The attacker, who is known to be an Islamist, was overpowered by neighbours and handed over to the local security authorities. According to Christian media reports, attacks against members of the Coptic community have increased in recent months; in April 2022 for example, a Coptic priest was fatally wounded with a knife in the port city of Alexandria. His attacker was sentenced to death in May 2022 (cf. BN of 23.05.22).

29 August 2022

Prison protest after the death of two inmates

According to a local human rights organisation, dozens of inmates protested after the death of two prisoners in the maximum security prison of Gamasa. Unconfirmed reports say that the security forces used violence against the inmates, killing ten of them and transferring another 20 to another prison. According to the human rights organisation, one of the two inmates who died had been tortured by the security forces. The Ministry of Interior denied the allegations. According to human rights organisations, inhumane treatment and torture in police custody and prisons is widespread in Egypt, but investigations and prosecution of the perpetrators are rare.

12 September 2022

Prosecutors question four female journalists over articles on corruption

In connection with an article about corruption investigations in the Future of the Nation party published on 31.08.22 on the independent news portal Mada Masr, four female journalists from Mada Masr were questioned for several hours by the public prosecutor's office in Cairo and subsequently released on bail on 07.09.22. The journalists are accused of spreading false news, abusing social media and insulting members of parliament. The

Future of the Nation party, the strongest force in parliament and allegedly close to President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, denied the information presented in the article and accused the news portal of dubious and unprofessional practices that could destabilise the country's security.

All attempts obtain a licence for the news portal, which has been blocked since 2017, after the new media law was implemented in 2018 have failed. In November 2019, Mada Masr's office had been raided by security authorities and four media workers were briefly detained.

Sinai: Videos on social media show extra-legal killings by paramilitary tribal groups

Videos from July and August 2022 posted on social media allegedly show members of the Sinai Tribes Union arresting and subsequently killing several suspected Islamists, including an underage boy. The authorities did not comment on the videos published. The Sinai Tribes Union, which is an association of various tribal organisations from the Sinai Peninsula, provides military support to the Egyptian security forces in their fight against Islamist groups in the Sinai Peninsula.

19 September 2022

Prisoners pardoned; journalist released after two years of pre-trial detention

According to media reports, on 15.09.22, the authorities announced the release of 46 detainees from pre-trial detention in a presidential pardon. Among them is the human rights lawyer Haitham Mohamadein, who was imprisoned in May 2019 for spreading false news and membership of an illegal organisation. In the past months, the authorities had already released numerous detainees following pardons (cf. BN of 25.04.22, 02.05.22 and 30.05.22).

Al-Jazeera journalist Ahmed al-Najdi, who has been in prison since August 2020, was also released from pre-trial detention. Three of his colleagues who had been arrested between June 2019 and August 2021 for spreading false news and membership of an illegal organisation remain in pre-trial detention.

Human rights organisations estimate the number of political prisoners held in Egyptian prisons at around 60,000.

31 October 2022

Political prisoner pardoned

According to information in the media, on 24.10.22 the authorities announced the release from prison of former parliamentarian and human rights lawyer Zyad El-Alaimy under a presidential pardon. The co-founder of the Social Democratic Party in Egypt was arrested together with seven other individuals in 2019, shortly after they had met with a number of opposition MPs and members of political parties with the aim of establishing a coalition to contest the parliamentary elections in 2020. El-Alaimy was subsequently convicted of charges including the dissemination of fake news which posed a threat to national security. The authorities have released numerous individuals from prison under pardons in recent months (cf. BN of 25.04.22, 02.05.22, 30.05.22 and 19.09.22); human rights organisations estimate the number of political prisoners in Egyptian prisons at around 60,000.

07 November 2022

More than 118 people arrested for calling for protest actions

According to information from NGOs, the authorities have arrested more than 118 throughout the country since 25.10.22 for calling for protest actions in connection with the World Climate Summit which is to take place in Sharm el-Sheikh from 06.11. to 18.11.22. The detained individuals have been accused of belonging to a terrorist organisation, spreading fake news and misusing social networks. There are calls in the social media for actions to be held in protest at the rising cost of living on 11.11.22.

15 November 2022

Father of exiled anti-government blogger arrested

It has been reported in the media that the authorities arrested the father of Abdullah El-Sharif, a prominent antigovernment blogger who is currently living abroad, on 06./07.11.22. The father had shared a video critical of

president Al-Sisi on social media. Two of El-Sharif's brothers were arrested back in March 2020. The blogger had released a video at this time showing violations committed by the military on the Sinai Peninsular. Human rights organisations report that relatives of government critics living abroad are regularly subject to harassment by the Egyptian authorities, sometimes culminating in arrests.

19 December 2022

21 journalists in prison

A report by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) finds Egypt to be one of the most repressive countries towards media representatives. According to the report, as per 01.12.22 21 journalists were in prison in Egypt (2021: 25) and CPJ notes that a small number of these have been held for more than nine years. In the course of 2022 the authorities released journalists from prison in isolated instances (cf. BN of 02.05.22 and 19.09.22) while on the other taking numerous media representatives into custody (cf. BN of 02.05.22, 12.09.22 and 07.11.22).

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