

# The State of the World's Human Rights; Egypt 2025

Authorities referred thousands of people to trial on terrorism-related offences, many of whom were targeted solely for the peaceful exercise of their human rights. NGOs faced undue restrictions on access to funding, undermining their operations. Security forces detained dozens of social media influencers over vague morality charges. People died in custody following reports of torture or medical negligence. Police arrested workers demanding the enforcement of the minimum wage. Death sentences were imposed, including for crimes other than intentional killing, following grossly unfair trials. Executions were carried out. Impunity prevailed for grave human rights violations committed in 2025 and previous years. Women and girls, religious minorities and LGBTI individuals faced discrimination and prosecution for exercising their human rights. Amid the ongoing economic crisis, authorities failed to protect economic and social rights or to adequately adjust social security measures. The government introduced new legislation that risked jeopardizing the right to adequate housing for millions. Unlawful deportations of refugees from Sudan and elsewhere continued.

## Background

Voter turnout in the Senate and House of Representatives elections was 17% and 32.4% respectively. Pro-government parties and candidates won a majority in the parliamentary elections, amid reports of vote-buying, ballot tampering, procedural flaws, and multiple run-offs following cancellations of results by officials.

Egypt's human rights record was reviewed under the UPR process in January. Egypt accepted a small number of meaningful recommendations but merely noted many others, including those concerning the excessive use of pretrial detention, undue restrictions on civil society and discrimination against religious minorities. In September, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi ordered, for the first time, the development of a national human rights strategy.

In June the European Council and European Parliament approved the remaining EUR 4 billion of the EUR 5 billion macro financial assistance that the EU pledged to Egypt in 2024.

The economy continued to face significant challenges. Domestic and external debt accounted for nearly two-thirds of total planned expenditure in the 2025-2026 state budget. In December, Egypt's annual inflation rate dropped to 10.3%, down from 23.4% a year earlier, while food and beverages prices rose by about 0.9%. For the fifth consecutive year, the government did not publish poverty figures.

The Rafah Crossing between Gaza and Egypt remained mostly closed.

## Freedom of association

The government failed to uphold independent civil society organizations' right to freedom of association. Authorities imposed an unlawful authorization system for associations to register; forced the dismissal of staff and board members of associations without legal basis; and subjected associations to intrusive and excessively burdensome reporting requirements, effectively placing them under constant surveillance. National Security Agency (NSA) agents intimidated staff and board members, fostering a climate of fear and repression.<sup>1</sup> Associations continued to face severe restrictions on accessing funding or using financial services.

In May, the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression, a human rights group, was granted access to banking services after an 11-month process. However, in November, authorities refused two of its project grants without explanation.

On 30 November, the Centre of Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance, an independent women's rights group, stated that authorities had refused three of its project grants without explanation and had failed to respond to a fourth grant request.

## Freedom of expression and assembly

Authorities continued to criminalize dissenting forms of expression and peaceful assembly, targeting journalists, protesters, opposition politicians and others who criticized the government's human rights record or called for political change.

On 2 January, political opponent Hisham Kassem learned through news websites that he had a hearing scheduled for 9 February in a new criminal case on charges of "defamation" and "intentional disturbance" of a former minister. The charges related to the same social media post for which he was unjustly convicted, sentenced, and imprisoned in 2024. In May a court sentenced him in his absence to six months' imprisonment and a fine, with the option of bail to suspend the sentence pending appeal.

On 15 January the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) summoned Hossam Bahgat, executive director of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), for questioning. Prosecutors opened an investigation into him on charges of terrorism and spreading false news in connection with an EIPR statement about deteriorating conditions of detention at the 10th of Ramadan prison. He was released on bail.

Also on 15 January, security forces arrested journalist Ahmed Serag. SSSP prosecutors accused him of terrorism-related offences and ordered his detention. On 5 June he was released pending investigations.

On 16 January, plain-clothes police officers arrested journalist Nada Mogheeth. SSSP prosecutors investigated her on terrorism-related charges in relation to a December 2024 interview about her detained husband, journalist Ashraf Omar. She was later released on bail.

Between 10 and 12 June, security forces arrested two men and one woman in their homes in Cairo and al-Sharkia governorates for supporting the Gaza March, a global peaceful initiative to break the blockade on Gaza. The SSSP opened investigations against them for terrorism-related offences and ordered their pretrial detention. They remained arbitrarily detained at the end of the year. Authorities also arbitrarily arrested scores of foreign nationals who came to participate in the march before deporting them (see below).

Authorities launched a crackdown against social media content creators. In August and September, security forces arrested dozens of social media influencers for their TikTok content, using charges of “indecentcy” and “violating family principles and values”. Courts sentenced at least one man and two women to prison terms ranging between one and three years, in addition to fines.

On 17 September, police arrested journalist and researcher Ismail al-Iskandrani at a checkpoint in Marsa Matruh governorate. Later that day the SSSP accused him of terrorism-related offences in connection to Facebook posts and ordered his detention. He remained in pretrial detention at the end of the year.

## **Arbitrary detention and unfair trials**

Between September 2024 and May 2025, authorities referred around 6,000 people – including journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders – to trials before special terrorism circuits of criminal courts in connection with terrorism-related charges, many of which were solely based on the exercise of human rights. Such courts routinely failed to uphold fair trial guarantees or order investigations into detainees’ claims of abuse.

On 19 February a military court sentenced five fishermen to one year in prison and a fine of EGP 50,000 (around USD 985). Military prosecutors charged them for fishing during “prohibited periods” and entering a military area without permission, in connection with fishing in a lake in North Sinai managed by a development agency operating under the Ministry of Defence.

On 22 September, authorities released Egyptian-British activist Alaa Abdel Fattah following a presidential pardon, ending six years of unjust imprisonment.

On 16 October, parliament approved amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure bill. The amendments introduced additional alternatives to pretrial detention, including curfew, electronic monitoring and house arrest. Despite minor improvements from earlier proposals, the bill remained inconsistent with international human rights law, particularly regarding the right to legal representation during questioning. In November the president ratified the bill.

## **Enforced disappearances and torture and other ill-treatment**

Security forces, including the NSA, continued to subject individuals held for political reasons to enforced disappearance or incommunicado detention. Torture and other ill-treatment remained routine in prisons, police stations and NSA-run facilities.

Between late December 2024 and February 2025, security forces arbitrarily arrested at least 55 men and four women for sharing social media content criticizing the government. SSSP prosecutors accused at least seven of the men of terrorism-related offences and ordered their pretrial detention. At least four remained in pretrial detention at the end of the year. NSA agents held five of the men in incommunicado detention for periods of between four and six weeks before bringing them before the SSSP. Two other men arrested in connection with the same case were subjected to enforced disappearance for 28 days and 41 days respectively at undisclosed NSA facilities. Four of the detained men told SSSP prosecutors that NSA agents subjected them to verbal insults and beatings, while two others described being subjected to electric shocks. On 9 February, plain-clothes security officers arrested Egyptian-Libyan activist and TV anchor Nasser al-Hawari outside his family home in Alexandria. He was forcibly disappeared for 16 days before his release without charge on 26 February.

Three Egyptian supporters of the Gaza March arrested between 10 and 12 June (see above, Freedom of expression and assembly), were held by security forces in incommunicado detention at undisclosed NSA facilities for periods of between nine and 10 days before being presented to the SSSP. During questioning, one man said that NSA agents had subjected him to beatings and electric shocks on his hands and body. Another man said that NSA agents beat him and forced him to strip naked.

Between 10 and 12 June, security forces held scores of foreign national supporters of the Gaza March in incommunicado detention for more than a day before deporting them. During the deportation of Stefanie Crisostomo, a Croatian-Peruvian activist, police handcuffed her, and caused bruising to her arms. Police beat a man with batons during arrest, striking his face and neck. The man said that a police officer also attempted to put their finger into his anus during the arrest. Two Norwegian men said they were struck in the face and chest by NSA agents.

## **Death penalty**

Criminal courts, including those handling terrorism-related cases, imposed death sentences following unfair trials. Offences punishable by death included drug trafficking and rape, crimes that did not amount to “intentional killing” to which the use of the death penalty must be restricted under international law and standards. Executions were carried out.

## **Impunity**

Impunity prevailed for unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearance and other grave human rights violations committed in 2025 and in previous years, including the unlawful killings of at least 900 supporters of ousted president Mohamed Morsi on 14 August 2013.

In June, EIPR filed a complaint with the public prosecutor requesting an investigation into the deaths of seven men held at al-Omraniya Police Station in Giza governorate between March 2024 and May 2025. The prosecution dismissed the complaint without providing reasons.

In August, independent media website Mada Masr reported that three men died while in police custody in Alexandria and Qalyobiya governorates following reports of torture or denial of healthcare. In the same month, the Ministry of the Interior denied that a fourth man died in custody after being tortured at a police station in Giza. No information was made public regarding any investigations into the deaths in custody.

Prosecutors, particularly from the SSSP, dismissed or ignored most torture complaints against police officers.

On 11 January, security forces arrested Mohamed Allam at a relative's house in Giza governorate. In the weeks prior to his arrest, Mohamed Allam had posted several videos on TikTok criticizing President al-Sisi. Before presenting him to the prosecution, NSA agents forcibly disappeared him for more than one week at an NSA facility in Giza. Mohamed Allam told prosecutors that NSA agents subjected him to electric shocks and beatings and kept him blindfolded for the duration of his enforced disappearance. In January, in a rare case, an SSSP prosecutor referred Mohamed Allam for forensic examination after raising allegations of torture. By the end of the year, prosecutors had not allowed his lawyer to review the forensic report.

## **Discrimination**

### **Women and girls**

Women continued to face discrimination in law and practice, including in matters of marriage, divorce, child custody and political office. Long-promised amendments to the Personal Status Law stalled amid concerns over lack of meaningful consultation with independent women's rights groups.

At least two women and one girl were arbitrarily arrested and prosecuted on vague morality charges in relation to publishing content on TikTok.

### **LGBTI people**

The authorities continued to harass and prosecute individuals for their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

## **Economic and social rights**

Economic and social rights, including the rights to an adequate standard of living and to health, continued to be undermined including due to the ongoing economic crisis. The government failed to meet the constitutionally mandated allocation of at least 3% of GDP to health and 6% of GDP to education.

In the 2025-2026 budget, allocations for cash transfer programmes grew for people living in poverty, but remained inadequate to lift people above the poverty line, according to EIPR, or to reach all those in need. Since their launch in 2015, the Takaful and Karama cash transfer programmes had reached a total of 7.7 million beneficiaries, according to an official statement by the minister for social solidarity in July 2025. The most recent official figures, dating to 2020, placed the number of people living in poverty at around 30 million.

## **Workers' rights**

On 25 January, security forces arrested nine workers at a clothing manufacturing company over their participation in a strike demanding the enforcement of the minimum wage and other rights. Prosecutors accused them of deliberate disruption of production, incitement to strike and incitement of unrest, and ordered their pretrial detention for four days. On 30 January, a court ordered their release, after which the company dismissed them.

In September, NSA officers summoned five workers from a factory in Qena governorate following their participation in a strike demanding higher annual bonuses and other benefits. The officers instructed the workers to end the strike, promising to relay their demands to the factory directors, and the workers complied. A day after the strike ended, the factory agreed to address some of their demands.

## **Right to housing**

In August, President al-Sisi promulgated a bill repealing the 1977 and 1981 rent laws, effectively ending decades-old rental contracts, affecting around 1.6 million households. The bill set a fixed transition period of five years for commercial units and seven years for residential units, after which old rental contracts will expire, with rents rising by a set percentage. It also gave affected tenants priority access to available state-owned residential or commercial units. A decree detailing the compensation scheme lacked details on pricing, raising uncertainty about the affordability of available residential units for low-income tenants and the accessibility of the programme. The government did not conduct meaningful consultations on the proposed compensation scheme.

## **Freedom of religion and belief**

State officials continued to discriminate against Christians and deny them their right to remedy after incidents of sectarian violence, insisting on resolving cases through customary

reconciliation. This, however, regularly denied Christians compensation for material losses and sometimes even resulted in their banishment from their communities.

Between March and May, at least 15 members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light were arbitrarily detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of religion. The NSA subjected at least three of them to enforced disappearances for periods of between 29 and 34 days before bringing them before a prosecutor. NSA officers tortured two of the men by beating one with a stick and the other with a metal object, and by administering electric shocks to their genitals.<sup>2</sup>

In April, UN special procedures sent a joint allegation letter to the Egyptian government expressing concerns over discrimination against the Baha'i community, including the confiscation of Baha'i cemeteries; denial of identity documents recognizing the Baha'i faith as a religion and recognizing civil status and marriages; as well as harassment and surveillance of Baha'is.

The right to build or repair Coptic churches remained restricted under a 2016 law requiring approval from security agencies and other state bodies. In October, the government announced that 3,613 churches had been legalized out of 5,540 requests submitted since the law was enacted.

## Refugees' and migrants' rights

The authorities continued to unlawfully deport refugees from Sudan and other countries, including some registered with UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, according to independent NGOs EIPR and the Refugees Platform in Egypt.

The prime minister had yet to issue executive regulations for the asylum law, which were required to be issued within six months of the law's enactment in December 2024. Consequently, the law effectively remained unenforced, leaving the rights of refugees unregulated, particularly with respect to social and economic rights.

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1. [Egypt: "Whatever Security Says Must Be Done": Independent NGOs' Freedom of Association Restricted in Egypt, 24 November ↩](#)
  2. ["Egypt: Halt arbitrary arrest, disappearance and threatened deportation of Ahmadi minority members", 8 April ↩](#)

