

Document #2046510

Freedom House

Freedom in the World 2021 - Egypt

NOT FREE

18

/ 100

[Political Rights](#) 6 / 40[Civil Liberties](#) 12 / 60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

21 / 100 Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)

Overview

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who first took power in a 2013 coup, has governed Egypt in an increasingly authoritarian manner. Meaningful political opposition is virtually nonexistent, as expressions of dissent can draw criminal prosecution and imprisonment. Civil liberties, including press freedom and freedom of assembly, are tightly restricted. Security forces engage in human rights abuses with impunity. Discrimination against women, LGBT+ people, and other groups remain serious problems, as does a high rate of domestic violence.

Key Developments in 2020

- Restrictive new emergency measures were justified as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In May, amendments to the Emergency Law banned all forms of public gatherings, gave police greater powers to make arrests, and expanded the jurisdiction of military courts. Authorities also used the pandemic to justify skipping renewal hearings for pretrial detention orders. A number of doctors were arrested for speaking out about a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and coronavirus tests.
- Tightly controlled parliamentary elections took place over several months in the second half of the year. The polls were marred by low turnout, claims of fraud, vote buying, severe interference by security apparatuses, and detention and intimidation of individuals who criticized the process. No credible domestic or international groups were allowed to monitor the elections, which delivered control both chambers of the parliament to the ruling regime.
- In September, small antigovernment protests erupted in a number of villages. The regime responded with harsh repression, arresting hundreds of people, including children, and killing two men. Most of those detained faced charges of protesting illegally, calling for unauthorized protests, joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, and misusing social media.
- Authorities escalated repression of perceived dissidents throughout the year, arresting and jailing scores, including several high-profile journalists, and activists with the country's remaining major human rights organizations. Egypt-based family members of dissidents abroad faced persecution, including home raids, arrest, and confiscation of passports.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections? **0 / 4**

The president is elected by popular vote for up to two terms. President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who first took power in a 2013 coup while serving as Egypt's defense minister and armed forces commander, has never been elected in a fair contest. He won elections in 2014 and 2018, the latter with 97 percent of the vote after pressuring the opposition candidates to withdraw and approving a loyal challenger, Mousa Mostafa Mousa, head of the Al-Ghad Party, who

had campaigned for Sisi before entering the race. Voting in 2018 was marred by low turnout, the use of state resources and media to support Sisi’s candidacy, voter intimidation, and vote buying. The electoral commission threatened nonvoters with fines in an attempt to increase participation.

Constitutional amendments adopted in 2019 added two years to Sisi’s current term, extending it through 2024, at which point he will be allowed to seek an additional six-year term. Beyond this, future presidents will be limited to two six-year terms.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections? 1 / 4

The 2019 amendments to the 2014 constitution reestablished the Egyptian parliament as a bicameral body in which members serve five-year terms. The upper house, the Senate, is made up of 300 seats, and has almost no significant legislative competences. Two-thirds of the Senate members are elected (of those, half through closed party lists and half through individual seats) and one-third are appointed by the president. The House of Representatives is made up of 568 members, half elected through closed party lists, and half to individual seats. The president has the right to appoint 28 additional members to the House.

The 2020 elections to both bodies of the parliament were neither free nor fair, and were marred by the widespread detention and intimidation of individuals who criticized the process, low turnout, claims of fraud, vote buying, and severe interference by security apparatuses. No credible domestic or international groups were allowed to monitor the elections.

Elections for the Senate took place in two stages in August and October. Without any competitor lists, the Unified National List, headed by the regime-allied Mostaqbal Watan (Nation’s Future) Party, won all of the 100 party-list seats, and 88 of the individual seats. Another proregime party, the Republican People’s Party, won 6 individual seats. Independents took the remaining 6 seats. In October, President Sisi appointed 100 mostly proregime members to the Senate.

Elections for the House of Representative took place in October and November. The regime-allied lists headed by Mostaqbal Watan won all 284 seats allocated for party-list seats, and the overall majority in the House was easily secured by the proregime parties and candidates. Mostaqbal Watan wound up with 315 seats, while the Republican People’s Party took 50. The Wafd Party, the Guardians of the Nation party, and the Modern Egypt Party took smaller proportions.

Egypt has not hold elections for local councils since 2008. The last elected local councils were dissolved in 2011 after the Egyptian uprising. Since then, government-appointed officials have controlled local governance.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant 1 / election management bodies? 4

In 2019, following a tightly controlled constitutional referendum, the 2014 constitution was amended to hand more power to President Sisi. The referendum was marred by reports of vote buying and other irregularities, and no organized opposition was permitted to challenge the well-resourced “yes” campaign. Nearly 89 percent of participants backed the amendments, according to official results.

While the electoral laws themselves provide some basis for credible elections, electoral authorities largely fail in practice to ensure an open and competitive campaign environment. The board of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) consists of senior judges drawn from some of Egypt’s highest courts, who serve six-year terms. The NEC’s establishing legislation phases out direct judicial supervision of elections by 2024, which critics argue will damage the integrity of elections and reduce public trust in the results.

B Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political 0 / groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these 4 competing parties or groupings?

Political parties are legally allowed to form and operate, but in practice there are no political parties that offer meaningful opposition to the incumbent leadership.

Activists, parties, and political movements that criticize the regime continued to face arrests, harsh prison terms, death sentences, extrajudicial violence, and other forms of pressure. In 2019, 15 individuals were detained in response to their peaceful political activities; the arrests, including of former parliamentarian and human rights lawyer Ziad el-Elaimy, as well as journalists and politicians Hossam Moanis and Hisham Fouad, were viewed as a signal ahead of the 2020 elections that political organizing would not be tolerated. Members of this group were reportedly subjected to torture while in detention. Thousands of dissidents, activists, and opposition figures remain in prison, where they live in squalid conditions.

Parties formed on the basis of religion are forbidden. While some Islamist parties still operate in a precarious legal position, the Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed in 2013 as a terrorist organization, and its political party was banned. Since then, authorities have systematically persecuted its members.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through 0 / elections? **4**

By extending the presidential term lengths and limits in 2019, controlling the electoral process, intimidating presidential and parliamentary candidates, and denying credible opposition parties the space to function, the regime makes it nearly impossible for the opposition to gain power through elections. Families of dissidents abroad have increasingly faced persecution by state authorities.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people’s political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political 1 / sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? **4**

Since the 2013 coup, the military has dominated the political system, with most power and patronage flowing from Sisi and his domestic allies in the armed forces and security agencies. Most of Egypt’s provincial governors are former military or police commanders. Vaguely worded 2019 constitutional amendments further strengthened the legal underpinnings of the military’s political influence, calling on it to “protect the constitution and democracy, and safeguard the basic components of the state and its civilian nature, and the people’s gains, and individual rights and freedoms.” Regional allies, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have assisted the regime through financial and other support.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other 1 / relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? **4**

The constitution and Egyptian laws grant political rights to all citizens regardless of religion, gender, race, ethnicity, or any other such distinction. However, women, Christians, Shiite Muslims, people of color, and LGBT+ people face discrimination and are denied access to a number of rights, which in turn affects their ability to participate in political life. In light of increasing control by Sisi and the military over elections and other aspects of society, these groups are generally only able to represent their interests within the narrow scope of officially sanctioned politics, and risk harsh penalties for transgressing stated and unstated red lines. The diminishing power of the legislature further undercuts avenues for meaningful representation.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) in October 2020 published a review of the cases of 13 LGBT+ individuals prosecuted between 2017 and 2020. After being detained by police officers, some were tortured, subjected to purported virginity tests or otherwise sexually assaulted, and denied medical care and access to legal counsel.

Coptic Christians, who account for some 10 percent of the population, obtained 31 seats in the House of Representatives in 2020, 28 through the party-list seats and 3 through individual seats. Thanks in large part to quotas, the number of women in the House of Representatives increased to 148 of the 596 seats, or almost 25 percent, women also make up about 13 percent of the Senate, and in December 2020, President Sisi appointed a woman as one of the deputy chief justices of the Supreme Constitutional Court. Three months earlier, Sisi approved a bill to protect the privacy of sexual assault survivors, to encourage them to report assaults and harassments. However, women generally struggle to see their interests represented in Egyptian politics.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because the regime’s tighter control over elections and the dwindling autonomy of the parliament over the past five years has reduced the ability of women and religious and other minority groups to organize independently and meaningfully advocate for their interests through the political system.

C Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies 0 / of the government? **4**

President Sisi, who was not freely elected, dominates the policymaking process. The parliament, led by security apparatuses, has neither a significant role in forming and debating laws, nor the ability to provide a meaningful check on executive power. Rather, many laws originate in the cabinet.

The 2019 constitutional amendments further consolidated Sisi’s authority, and increased the military’s already considerable independence from civilian oversight and its constitutional role in civilian governance. In addition to the language tasking the military with protecting “the constitution and democracy,” the amendments allow the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to permanently control the appointment of the defense minister, who is also the commander in chief; that power had previously been limited to the first two presidential terms after the 2014 constitution took effect.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 1 / 4

Corruption is pervasive at all levels of government. Official mechanisms for investigating and punishing corrupt activity remain weak and ineffective. The Administrative Control Authority (ACA), the body responsible for most anticorruption initiatives, is under the control of Sisi. It lacks credibility, transparency, and impartiality and is not allowed to monitor the economic activities of the military. Thus, the ACA is believed to be an instrument in the president’s hand to control the bureaucracy, to manage key patronage networks, to serve the regime’s propaganda.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 1 / 4

The Sisi administration has provided very little transparency regarding government spending and operations. Civil society groups and independent journalists have few opportunities to comment on or influence state policies, legislation, and public spending priorities. The military is notoriously opaque with respect to both its core expenditures and its extensive business interests, including in major infrastructure and land-development projects. This leads to an almost complete lack of accountability for any malpractice.

The government’s dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic was characterized by opacity, misinformation about the numbers of cases and deaths, and the further spread of misinformation by the regime-allied outlets that dominate the media sector. A number of doctors were arrested for speaking out about a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and coronavirus tests.

Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? 0 / 4

The Egyptian media sector is dominated by progovernment outlets; most critical or opposition-oriented outlets were shut down in the wake of the 2013 coup. More recently, a number of private television channels and newspapers have been launched or acquired by businesspeople and individuals tied to the military and intelligence services. Independent reporting is suppressed through restrictive laws, intimidation, and other means, but a few independent outlets still operate, including Mada Masr and al-Manassa.

Egyptian journalists risk arrest in connection with their work, and among those detained in 2020 were Nora Younis, editor of the independent news website Al-Manassa, who was arrested in June; and Lina Attalah, editor-in-chief of Mada Masr, who was arrested in May. Another prominent journalist, Mohamed Monir, died in July after contracting COVID-19 while in pretrial detention. In December 2020, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) found that Egypt was the third-worst jailer of journalists in the world, with 27 in detention.

Foreign journalists face obstruction by the state. In March, Egypt expelled *Guardian* reporter Ruth Michaelson over her critical coverage of the government’s response to COVID-19. Police raided the Cairo offices of Turkish Anadolu News Agency in January, arresting at least four people on charges of operating without a license and spreading false news. Separately, in 2019, the public prosecutor’s office established a media monitoring wing tasked with advising the media on the proper coverage of cases.

Two laws ratified in 2018 pose additional threats to press freedom. The Media Regulation Law prescribes prison sentences for journalists who “incite violence” and permits censorship without judicial approval, among other provisions. The Anti-Cyber and Information Technology Crimes Law allows authorities to block any website considered to be a threat to national security, a broad stipulation that is vulnerable to abuse. Websites of independent news and information entities are regularly blocked. According to the domestic digital rights group Masaar, 628 links and 596 websites had been blocked in Egypt as of September 2020.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 due to restrictive new legislation, a pattern of arbitrary arrests and detentions of journalists, expulsions of and travel restrictions on foreign reporters, and the widespread blocking of websites.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 1 / 4

While Article 2 of the 2014 constitution declares Islam to be the official religion, Article 64 states that “freedom of belief is absolute.” Most Egyptians are Sunni Muslims. Coptic Christians form a substantial minority, and there are smaller numbers of Shiite Muslims, non-Coptic Christian denominations, and other groups. Religious minorities and atheists have faced persecution and violence, with Copts in particular suffering numerous cases of forced displacement, physical assaults, bomb and arson attacks, and blocking of church construction in recent years. Informal reconciliation sessions following instances of sectarian conflict have denied Copts justice for acts of violence against them.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? 1 / 4

The state controls education and curriculums in public schools and to a lesser degree in some of the country’s private institutions. Faculty members and departments have some autonomy in shaping specific courses, though many scholars self-censor to avoid any punitive measures.

Under a 2014 law, university heads are appointed by presidential decree. A 2015 decree allows for the dismissal of university professors who engage in on-campus political activity, and in 2016 the government reportedly began imposing more systematic requirements for academics to obtain approval from security officials for travel abroad. A number of prominent academics are in prison, including political science professor Hazem Hosny, who has criticized Sisi and was arrested in September 2019.

Since 2013, university students have faced reprisals for political activism that include arrests, disciplinary sanctions such as expulsion, military trials, and extrajudicial killings. In December 2020, prosecutors in Egypt said that charges would not be filed against five state security officers thought to be responsible for the 2016 torturing and killing of Giulio Regeni, an Italian Cambridge University graduate student who had been researching independent trade unions in Egypt.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of 1 / surveillance or retribution? 4

Increasingly since 2013, individuals expressing personal views contrary to preferred state narratives have been subject to reprisals. Arrests of activists over social media posts and other activities are common and send a clear message that voicing dissent is intolerable, which contributes to self-censorship among ordinary Egyptians. Progovernment media figures and state officials regularly call for national unity and suggest that only enemies of the state would criticize the authorities.

The security services use sophisticated surveillance equipment and techniques to monitor social media platforms and mobile phone applications. The 2018 Anti-Cyber and Information Technology Crimes Law requires telecommunications companies to store users’ data for 180 days, further enabling widespread government surveillance, and language in the law vaguely criminalizes online expression that “threatens national security.” The 2018 Media Regulation Law subjects any social media user with more than 5,000 followers to government monitoring and regulation, threatening online expression.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? 0 / 4

According to the constitution, freedom of assembly should not be restricted. However, a 2013 law, as amended in 2017, allows the Interior Ministry to ban, postpone, or relocate protests with a court’s approval. Among other restrictions, unauthorized gatherings of 10 or more people are subject to forced dispersal, protests at places of worship are prohibited, and protest organizers must inform police of their plans at least three days in advance. Thousands of people have been arrested under the 2013 law, and some jailed protesters have received death sentences. The severity of the crackdown on assembly rights has made protests extremely rare.

However, in September 2020, scattered demonstrations erupted over several days in a number of villages. The protests came in response to the government’s decision to demolish unregistered houses, but people also turned out to voice other grievances and to mark the anniversary of protests the previous year. The regime responded to the 2020 demonstrations with repression, using tear gas, batons, birdshot, and even live ammunition. Two men were killed, while hundreds, including dozens of children, were detained; defendants reported being subjected to torture. Most of those detained faced charges of protesting illegally, calling for unauthorized protests, joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, and misusing social media.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human 0 / rights- and governance-related work? 4

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have faced mass closures as well as harassment in the form of office raids, arrests of members, lengthy legal cases, and restrictions on travel in recent years. A restrictive 2019 law provides for large fines against NGOs deemed to threaten national security, public morals, and public order; essentially stipulates that NGOs are limited to development work; and imposes onerous reporting requirements and intrusive monitoring systems. NGOs in violation of the rules may be shuttered for one year.

In 2020, authorities escalated repression of human rights advocates. In August, Bahey el-Din Hassan, a prominent human rights defender and cofounder of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), was sentenced in absentia to 15 years in prison over critical tweets he had published. (Hassan left Egypt in 2014, and lives in exile.) In February, Patrick George Zaki, a researcher with the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), was detained and reportedly tortured. In November, security forces arrested three other EIPR staff members, including Executive Director Gasser Abdel-Razek, after EIPR met with 13 ambassadors and other diplomats to discuss human rights in Egypt. Abdel Razek and the two others were released in December after international pressure, but Zaki remained in prison at the end of the year.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 1 / 4

The government only recognizes unions affiliated with the state-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation. While Article 15 of the constitution provides for the right to organize peaceful strikes, they are not tolerated in practice, and the law on protests prohibits gatherings that impede labor and production. Striking workers are regularly arrested and prosecuted, particularly since a spate of labor protests in 2016; workers at military-owned businesses are subject to trials by military courts.

A new law enacted in August 2019 eased many of the restrictions imposed by a 2017 law on trade unions, which had effectively compelled them to join the state-controlled federation and imposed controls on their structures, by-laws, and elections. Among other changes, the new law lowered the threshold for union formation from 150 to 50 workers, and imposed fines rather than prison terms for violations. It remained unclear whether the legislation would lead to actual improvements in the recognition, registration, and operational autonomy of independent unions.

F Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary? 1 / 4

The executive branch exerts influence over the courts, which typically protect the interests of the government, military, and security apparatus and have often disregarded due process and other basic safeguards in cases against the government’s political opponents or where there is perceived dissent. The 2019 constitutional amendments further strengthened the president’s supervisory powers over the judiciary and undermined its independence. The changes allow the president to appoint the heads of judicial bodies and authorities, choosing from among several candidates nominated by their governing councils. The president will also serve as the veto-wielding head of the Supreme Council for Judicial Bodies and Authorities, which controls appointments and disciplinary matters for the judiciary. The chief justice of the Supreme Constitutional Court will be chosen by the president from among its most senior members.

Many detained government critics and opposition figures have been prosecuted in the Emergency State Security Courts created when President Sisi declared a state of emergency in 2017; the state of emergency has been repeatedly renewed and remained in effect at the end of 2020. Decisions in these courts are subject to executive-branch approval, as the president can suspend any of their rulings and order retrials.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 0 / 4

Although the constitution limited military trials of civilians to crimes directly involving the military, its personnel, or its property, a 2014 presidential decree placed all “public and vital facilities” under military jurisdiction, resulting in the referral of thousands of civilian defendants to military courts. That expansion of jurisdiction was effectively incorporated into the constitution in 2019.

Restrictive new emergency measures enacted in 2020 were justified as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In May, President Sisi approved and signed into law amendments to Emergency Law no. 162 of 1958 that banned all forms of public gatherings and demonstrations, and gave police greater powers to make arrests. It further expanded the jurisdiction of the military judicial system over civilians by giving the president the power to authorize the military to investigate and prosecute crimes that violate the Emergency Law. Authorities also used the COVID-19 pandemic to justify skipping renewal hearings for pretrial detention orders.

Sisi continues to rule in a style that entrenches military privilege and shields the armed forces from legal accountability for their actions. Charges brought in military courts are often vague or fabricated, defendants are denied due process, and basic evidentiary standards are routinely disregarded. The Emergency State Security Courts also disregard due process protections, including the right to appeal convictions.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 due to the enactment of amendments to emergency and antiterrorism laws that expanded the power of the military justice system to prosecute civilians and increased the risk of arbitrary punishment for individuals and organizations.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies? 0 / 4

Police brutality and impunity for abuses by security forces were catalysts for the 2011 uprising against President Hosni Mubarak, but no reforms have since been enacted and security forces continue to wield illegitimate force with impunity. Antiterrorism laws provide a vague definition of terrorism and grant law enforcement personnel sweeping powers and immunity in enforcement.

Reports of torture, alleged extrajudicial killings, and forced disappearances continued through 2020. Prison conditions are very poor, and prisons were grossly unequipped to prevent the spread of COVID-19 or to treat it. Inmates are subject to physical abuse, overcrowding, a lack of sanitation, and denial of medical care. Use of the death penalty has increased dramatically since Sisi took power, despite serious concerns about due process violations and politicized prosecutions. In 2020, there was a steady rise in the number of death sentences issued and in the number of people sentenced to death. In October alone, according to the EIPR, 53 people were executed.

Conflict continues between security forces and adherents of the Islamic State (IS) militant group based in the North Sinai region. Both terrorist attacks and military operations have resulted in civilian casualties.

F4 0-4 pts**Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population? 1 / 4**

Women enjoy legal equality on many issues, and their court testimony is equal to that of men except in cases involving personal status matters such as divorce, which are more influenced by religious law. In practice, women face extensive discrimination in employment, among other disadvantages. Other segments of the population that are subject to various forms of harassment and discrimination include religious minorities, people of color from southern Egypt, migrants and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa, people with disabilities, and LGBT+ people.

While same-sex sexual conduct is not explicitly banned, people suspected of such activity can be charged with prostitution or “debauchery.” The police have carried out dozens of such arrests in recent years.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights**G1 0-4 pts****Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, 1 / 4 employment, or education?**

The constitution guarantees freedom of movement, but internal travel and access are restricted tightly in North Sinai and to a lesser extent in other governorates along Egypt’s borders. Sinai residents are subject to curfews, checkpoints, and other obstacles to travel.

Individuals seeking to change their place of employment or education can encounter bureaucratic barriers and scrutiny from security officials. In addition, a growing list of rights activists, journalists, political party members, bloggers, and academics have been subjected to arbitrary bans on international travel in recent years. A number of foreign researchers or activists have been expelled or denied entry to the country.

G2 0-4 pts**Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without 2 / 4 undue interference from state or nonstate actors?**

While a 2017 investment law was designed to encourage private investment in underdeveloped areas, bureaucratic barriers and related corruption remain serious problems, and the outsized role of military-affiliated companies has sidelined private businesses and hindered economic development. Property rights in Sinai and other border areas are affected by the activities of security forces.

Women are at a legal disadvantage in property and inheritance matters, typically receiving half the inheritance due to a man. Societal biases also discourage women’s ownership of land.

G3 0-4 pts**Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, 2 / 4 protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?**

Domestic violence, sexual harassment, and female genital mutilation (FGM) are still among the most acute problems in Egyptian society. The country has adopted laws to combat these practices in recent years, and FGM is reportedly becoming less common over time. However, the effectiveness of such laws is hindered by societal resistance, poor enforcement, abuses by the police themselves, and lack of adequate protection for witnesses, all of which deter victims from contacting authorities. Spousal rape is not a crime.

Personal status rules based on religious affiliation put women at a disadvantage in marriage, divorce, and custody matters. Muslim women cannot marry non-Muslim men, for example, and the Coptic Church rarely permits divorce.

G4 0-4 pts**Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation? 1 / 4**

Egyptian women and children, migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, and Syrian refugees are vulnerable to forced labor and sex trafficking in Egypt. The Egyptian authorities routinely punish individuals for offenses that stemmed directly from their circumstances as trafficking victims. Military conscripts are exploited as cheap labor to work on military- or state-affiliated development projects.

eci.net summary:

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