

A Report Submitted to the Human Rights Committee regarding Egypt

Egypt ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on January 14, 1982, pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 536 of 1981, to be among the first countries in Africa, the Middle East, and the North Africa region to accede to the treaty. Article 151 of the Constitution gives international treaties the force of domestic laws after ratification, which gives the right to those who are harmed by its non-implementation to resort to the judiciary. Article 93 also grants special status to international human rights conventions that are ratified and given the force of law, thus conferring on the texts of those conventions the protection prescribed for the constitutional rule.

Since the ratification of the Covenant, Egypt has submitted five periodic reports to the Human Rights Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee), the latest of which was on November 12, 2019. Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights submits this report after reviewing the 5th periodic report submitted by Egypt to the Committee, in addition to the list of issues submitted by the Committee also in June 2022. After reviewing the recent developments that Egypt has taken in the course of addressing its human rights situation, Maat also noted some of the challenges that Egypt still faces in implementing the principles and provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which will be included in the report.

Article 2: Non-discrimination

Article 53 of the Egyptian Constitution guarantees equality and non-discrimination among all citizens, and the article states that “citizens are equal before the law, without discrimination between them for any considerations such as religion, creed, gender, origin, race, color, social level, or political or geographical affiliation or for any other reason.” The same article also considers discrimination and incitement to hatred crimes punishable by law. The article also mentioned the establishment of an independent

commission for the elimination of discrimination to confront these practices, whenever occur.”¹ Maat also reviewed the positive measures that Egypt listed in its periodic report to the Committee to prevent discrimination.

Nevertheless, Maat noted that there are some discriminatory practices still practiced against specific groups in Egyptian society, whether in law or in practice. In January 3, 2021, the Supreme Constitutional Court in Egypt acknowledged that the Penal Code unconstitutionally discriminates against women by stipulating longer prison terms as punishment against women in certain cases, following the appeal of a woman sentenced to two years in prison for adultery², the Penal Code also does not consider marital rape as a crime that requires a penalty for the husband if committed³.

In the context of preventing discrimination against some vulnerable groups within the state’s jurisdiction, Maat noted some positive steps in favor of integrating refugees and asylum seekers into Egyptian society. A decision of the Ministry of Education indicated that government education should be made available to refugees and asylum seekers from Sudan and South Sudan, along with children from Yemen and Syria, on an equal footing with Egyptians, and allowed children whose documents had expired to enroll in the public education system. The ministry also noted that steps to integrate other refugee nationalities, especially from African, are underway⁴.

In another context, Maat has noticed discriminatory measures that veiled women are subjected to when entering some restaurants in Egypt under the pretext of the internal policies of these restaurants, which are often found in high-end neighborhoods in the Egyptian capital, Cairo. Although the constitutional text guarantees non-discrimination among all citizens in Egypt, it is not compatible with Article 2 of the Covenant, where the term citizens refers to individuals who possess Egyptian nationality, while the article provides for ensuring non-discrimination among all within the geographical scope of the state, including refugees and asylum seekers. The delay in establishing an independent anti-discrimination commission, in accordance with Article 53 of the constitution, still

¹ الدستور المصري المعدل لعام 2019، منشورات قانونية، المادة 53، على الرابط التالي: <https://manshurat.org/node/14675>

² EGYPT 2021 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, U.S. Embassy in Egypt, <https://eg.usembassy.gov/egypt-2021-human-rights-report/>

³ الاغتصاب الزوجي: جدل متجدد في مصر بين دعوات تجريمه و"حكم الشرع" في امتناع الزوجة، بي بي سي عربية،

<https://www.bbc.com/arabic/trending-57558476>

⁴ انظر مفوضية اللاجئين على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3BofQNP>

requires clarification from the Egyptian delegation during the dialogue with the commission during the review session.

Article Three: Gender Equality

Article 3 guarantees equality between men and women in the enjoyment of all civil and political rights. In the context of working to activate and implement this article, Maat noted a set of positive steps and measures that the Egyptian government has embarked on, especially at the level of ensuring equality in political rights or with regard to assuming leadership positions. Egypt witnessed a remarkable increase in the percentage of women's participation in political positions compared to previous years, especially in the parliamentary elections. The representation of women in the recent parliamentary elections of 2020 increased to 163 female representatives between election and appointment, compared to 90 female representatives in the 2015 elections. The representation of women in the judiciary also increased, reaching 3115 female judges in 2022 compared to 2130 female judges in 2014. Women in the Senate increased to 13.7% with 41 seats in 2022, compared to 5.7% with 12 seats in 2012, in addition to the increase in the number of women judges in the courts to reach 66 judges in 2022, compared to 41 judges in 2014, and 36 women counselors were appointed. In addition, 36 female advisors have been appointed as vice presidents of the State Litigation Authority, in addition to the number of female members of the authority reaching 769 until 2022⁵.

The recent period also witnessed a violation of a custom that was in force in the Council of State, which is one of the judicial bodies that constitute the judicial authority in Egypt. Since its inception, the Council of State refused to appoint women to the council in accordance with prevailing customs in the council, although the Judicial Authority Law does not prohibit women from being appointed to the council. However, a directive from the President of the Republic to the Minister of Justice canceled this custom, so that 98 cases were appointed in the Council of State through delegation from the State Cases Authority and the Administrative Prosecution.

However, Maat points out that Egypt still lags behind in international indicators that measure the gender gap. In 2021, Egypt ranked 129th out of 156 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index. Egypt also ranked 146th out of 156 countries in terms of women's

⁵ انظر الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3hdCqS3>

economic participation and equal opportunity. The indicators also showed that only 20% of women of working age in Egypt participate in the economic process, compared to 75% of men⁶.

This is due to a number of reasons, the most important of which is restricting women to stereotypes and specific roles, such as working at home and working in specific jobs, despite ministerial decisions that tried to reduce this gap, as the Minister of Manpower adopted Resolution No. 44 of 2021 that regulates the rules for working at night for women⁷. In a related context, Maat reviewed the concluding observations submitted by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women regarding the combined report of the 8th to 10th periodic reports of Egypt, which confirmed that Egypt's reservations to Articles 2 and 16 of the Convention are reservations that contradict the goal and purpose of the Convention, and undermine the implementation of the fundamental principle of achieving formal equality between women and men in all aspects of public and private life⁸. Maat confirms that the persistence of these reservations may be seen as a defect in achieving gender equality and the optimal implementation of this article.

Article 4: Exceptional Emergency

In its periodic report submitted to the committee, the Egyptian government justified imposing the state of emergency on the circumstances and challenges represented in the terrorist operations that sought to undermine stability in Egypt, especially after the spread of terrorism after the Muslim Brotherhood left power. Maat welcomed the decision taken by the President of the Republic on October 25, 2021, to cancel the Emergency Law No. 162 of 1958⁹ and the amendments introduced beginning in 2017, and it is assumed that after the cancellation of the Emergency Law, the review of the Emergency Supreme State Security Courts will come into effect, in cases referred to in accordance with Article 19 of the Emergency Law¹⁰.

Judgments issued in emergency cases that were not ratified by the military governor will still be considered before the Emergency Supreme State Security Courts. However, at the same time, the President of the Republic retains all the powers vested under the aforementioned law with regard to judgments that have been passed by the State Security

⁶ PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, USAID, <https://bit.ly/3uBfhfs>

⁷ قرار رقم 44 لسنة 2021، الجريدة الرسمية، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3VJ7JTG>

⁸ Concluding observations on the combined eighth to tenth periodic reports of Egypt, <https://bit.ly/3FatdlC>

⁹ متاح على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3ChPACW>

¹⁰ قانون حالة الطوارئ رقم 162 لسنة 1958، منشورات قانونية، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3vJiJV8>

Courts, prior to the cancellation of the state of emergency and have not been ratified. This means that the cases referred to the Emergency Supreme State Security Courts under the law will still require the approval of the President of the Republic. In turn, the President has the right to refuse to ratify them and to decide on a retrial¹¹.

As for the crimes for which the accused have not been brought to the courts, they will be referred to the competent ordinary courts, and the rules of the Code of Criminal Procedure will be followed. This means that the cases that are still in the investigation phase, and the Public Prosecution Office has not issued a decision to refer them to court, will be tried before the normal courts and not the Emergency Supreme State Security Courts. The abolition of emergency will also end the referral of the accused before any exceptional court, whose rulings are not subject to appeal.

The abolition of emergency, which was imposed on April 9, 2017, after the bombing of a number of churches in Alexandria and Tanta¹², is consistent with a wide range of results and goals targeted by the National Human Rights Strategy, especially in the first axis related to civil and political rights, and specifically the third sub-item on the right to litigation. strengthening fair trial guarantees as the strategy aimed at, among a range of other outcomes; Limiting the crimes that fall within the jurisdiction of the Emergency Courts, in addition to setting up a mechanism for notifying those concerned with the result of examining the reasoned grievances issued in the Emergency Supreme State Security Court rulings. After canceling the extension of the emergency, the crimes under investigation, and for which the defendants were not referred to the Emergency Supreme State Security Courts, will be heard before ordinary courts and a normal judge. If verdicts are issued in these crimes, the defendants will have the right to appeal these verdicts, unlike the inadmissibility of appeal against verdicts issued by the Emergency Supreme State Security Court under Article 10 of Emergency Law No. 162 of 1958 and its amendments, which were revoked once the extension of the emergency was cancelled¹³.

Article 6: The right to life

In its periodic report, Egypt considered that the right to life is the highest human right and should not be infringed upon, and Maat has noticed diminishing opportunities for impunity with regard to the violation of this right, as Maat reviewed on June 9, 2022, a ruling issued by the Cairo Criminal Court ruling the imprisonment of an officer named "H.A", who was the chief of investigations of the Helwan Police Department, and a police

¹¹ نفس المرجع السابق

¹² إعلان حالة الطوارئ في مصر عقب تفجير كنيسة في طنطا والإسكندرية، بي بي سي عربية، 9 أبريل 2017، على الرابط التالي:

<https://bbc.in/3IYwFk5>

¹³ الاستراتيجية الوطنية لحقوق الإنسان، المحور الخاص بالحقوق المدنية والسياسية، على الرابط التالي:

<https://sschr.gov.eg/media/xaonutei/arabic-strategy-final.pdf>

secretary called "H.A" was imprisoned for seven years on charges of killing a citizen. They were acquitted of charges of using force against him, but reports considered that these sentences were mitigated compared to the crime that occurred and caused the death of a citizen¹⁴.

Maat has noted that the national strategy for human rights launched by the President of the Republic on September 11, 2021 aimed, in the first axis of political and civil rights, to benefit from the framework for reviewing the most serious crimes for which the death penalty is imposed, taking into account societal conditions and specialized studies in accordance with international and regional conventions that Egypt ratified, and the strategy also aimed to create a legislative amendment that allows those who are financially unable to appeal death sentences before the Court of Cassation, with the obligation to assign a lawyer for those sentenced to death.

It is a step that is supposed to address the legislative loophole that existed before, represented in the fact that the Law of Cases and Procedures for Appeals before the Court of Cassation No. 57 of 1959 does not require the assignment of a lawyer for those sentenced to death, and also the failure to enable those who are financially unable to appeal before the Court of Cassation. However, despite more than a year passed since the launch of the strategy, the efforts exerted to achieve this result are still very slow and limited, and exceed only some demands from civil society organizations that this result should be activated in the strategy.

Despite previous positive steps taken by the Egyptian government, the death penalty is still applied. Egypt applied the penalty based on the second paragraph of Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It states that “in countries that have not abolished the death penalty, this penalty may only be imposed for the most serious crimes under the legislation in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not in violation.” This penalty may not be applied except under a final judgment issued by a competent court. In this context, Maat did not notice the application of any death sentences except based on judicial rulings. In its comment on the death penalty case, Egypt justified the application of the penalty that it shares the United Nations’ same vision in Resolution 37/175 of 2018. It considers that the death penalty is a judicial and legislative issue; it is a part of the sovereignty of states in determining the existing

¹⁴ السجن 7 سنوات لضابط وأمين شرطة بتهمة قتل مواطن في حلوان، الشروق، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3FyDWYh>

criminal justice system. There are many local discussions at the national level needed to abolish the penalty to study the impact of abolishing punishment or stopping its application for a specific period. These studies will discuss the rights of victims, the effective remedy for these victims and their families, the effects of the spread of horrific crimes, and the safety and security of society. Maat noted that in some cases there were non-governmental demands for the implementation of the death penalty, especially in the case of the murder of the girl Naira Ashraf, who was killed by a colleague on June 20, 2022, in Dakahlia Governorate.

The President of the Republic may also issue a decision to pardon or commute the sentence. On August 4, 2021, the President of the Republic issued Resolution No. 323 of 2021, commuting the death sentence to life imprisonment, which was imposed on an Indian citizen, Amalna Baju Ayana, in Case No. 951 of 2016, the felonies of the Marsa Alam department, under No. 26 of 2017 in the entire Red Sea, lead. The review of crimes for which the death penalty is imposed requires the revision of national laws; it was reported that 78 legislative texts in 5 basic laws allow the death penalty as a penalty for about 104 crimes, of which 35 are stipulated in the Penal Code.

Article 7: Anti-Torture

Maat reviewed Egypt's positive steps to prevent torture and included these practices in its periodic report submitted to the committee.

Article 52 of the Constitution prohibits all forms of torture and stipulates that all forms of it are crimes imprescriptible. The law criminalizes torture and inhuman and degrading treatment, whether it extracts confessions or information, to punish any act, a form of discrimination against some citizens, or even under the pretext of intimidation or physical assaults. This prohibition is consistent with Paragraph 13 of General Comment No. 20 of the Committee against Torture. Article 40 of the Egyptian Penal Code includes a general rule that a person is an accomplice to the crime of torture when he is keen on it, agrees with others to commit it, or helps the perpetrator to prepare for, facilitate, or complement it. Article 41 of the same law punishes the accomplice in the crime with the same penalty imposed on the original perpetrator. All of the above is inseparable from the rulings issued by the Court of Cassation that the orders of superiors cannot be a pretext for the practice of torture. The court also ignores any confession resulting from torture, penalties can only be applied based on judicial rulings, and a person may only be tried for crimes stipulated by law.

The national strategy for human rights, within the framework of the first item on the right to life and physical integrity, also aimed at continuing to combat torture in all its forms, investigating all relevant allegations, and protecting the rights of victims under the constitution and human rights obligations ratified by Egypt. The strategy also aimed

the same clause to reduce all forms of individual practices which considered violations of the sanctity of the body, whether in executive institutions or public and private places.

However, the law still has legislative gaps with the criminalization and definition of torture in international standards. Especially Articles 126 and 129 of the Egyptian Penal Code, its provisions do not include a definition of the crime of torture consistent with the definition of torture in Article 1 of the Convention against Torture, which Egypt ratified. Egypt has not yet signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

However, the Egyptian government acknowledges that individual practices happened, it is not a prohibition of this crime, but it does not an approach of the police forces. These practices are followed by investigations and criminal trials of police personnel, in addition to disciplinary convictions such as transfer to a lower level or non-promotion. Among the evidence are the criminal trials for some police personnel during the last two years. On August 19, 2021, the Public Prosecution Office, the authority authorized to initiate criminal cases in torture accused of by public officials, issued a statement. It imprisoned a police officer working in the First Al-Montazah Department in Alexandria Governorate for fifteen days as a precautionary measure pending the case after he physically assaulted a lawyer claiming (E) E.L.) While performing his work inside the department office, the latter sustained brain, and head injuries. The First Al-Montazah Misdemeanor Court renewed the officer's detention twice¹⁵.

In September 2020, the Public Prosecution decided to imprison four police secretaries for 15 days and to release a police officer on bail of 500 pounds in custody for interrogation. They were arrested on charges of involvement in the torture and killing of the young man, "E. A"; in the Al-Munib district of Giza two days after his arrest¹⁶. Surveillance cameras, according to the investigations of the Public Prosecution, indicated that the victim entered the police station alive, and the cameras also recorded the police secretaries assaulting the victim while arrested¹⁷. On December 3, 2019, the Al-Waili Criminal Court issued a ruling in Case No. 4126 of 2016, penalizing an officer and eight police secretaries to 3 years in prison because they were accused of intentionally beating the victim, H.F.H. until he died. Among the accusations against the officer are the cruelty against the victim, his wife, and his son, and abuse of his office¹⁸.

The Right to Liberty and Security of the Person

¹⁵ إخلاء سبيل الضابط المتهم بالتعدي على محامي بقسم المنتزة بكفالة 5 آلاف جنيه، المصري اليوم، على الرابط التالي:

<https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2446992>

¹⁶ قضية قتل اسلام الأسترالي.. الحلم بوطن بلا تعذيب، السفير العربي، 17 سبتمبر 2020. <https://bit.ly/3hevqjm>

¹⁷ وسط حراسة مشددة.. تجديد حبس أمناء الشرطة المتهمين بقتل «إسلام الأسترالي»، المصري اليوم، 13 سبتمبر 2019، للمزيد على الرابط التالي:

<https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2035180>

¹⁸ السجن 3 سنوات لضابط و8 أمناء شرطة لضربهم مواطن حتى الموت، أخبار اليوم، 3 ديسمبر 2019، للمزيد على الرابط التالي:

<https://bit.ly/2WE1cwC>

Article 9 stipulates that everyone has the right to liberty and security of his person. It also stipulates that every person deprived of his liberty through arrest or detention has the right to refer to a court, which may decide without delay on the legality of his detention and order his release if the detention is illegal. The judicial authorities authorized to issue detention orders have expanded the renewal of pretrial detention orders since 2015. Maat noted that since the reactivation of the Presidential Pardon Committee in April 2022, the total number of those released within the framework of the Presidential Pardon Committee is about 1,200 people until November 2022. It expects to release other batches after sorting the applications submitted to the committee, which were about 4,237 applications by October 2022. Among those released are those held in pretrial detention and convicted of publishing or violating the procedures of the Protest Law¹⁹. The civil movement, the opposition entity in Egypt at present, confirmed that it does not have any prisoners of conscience in correction and rehabilitation centers in Egypt²⁰. The President of the Republic also pardoned some activists against whom court rulings were issued, the latest of which was the activist Ziyad Al-Alimi; he was released on October 24, 2022, under Resolution No. 510 of 2022²¹.

Article 18: Freedom of religion and belief

The constitution stipulates that “freedom of belief is absolute” and that “the freedom to practice religious rites and establish places of worship for followers of monotheistic religions is a right regulated by law, and the government recognizes the three religions of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Maat has noted the measures taken by the government to guarantee this right. For example, the number of churches approved by the Council of Ministers to legalize them until November 14, 2022, reached about 2,526 churches and their service buildings. Since the establishment of the Church Legalization Committee headed by the Prime Minister, successive decisions to legalize churches. In the weekly cabinet meeting on November 14, 2022, the council agreed to legalize the conditions of 125 churches and their buildings. On April 27, 2022, in its governmental meeting, the Council of Ministers agreed to regularize the conditions of 239 churches and their buildings. On January 4, 2022, the committee agreed to regularize the conditions of 141 churches and their service buildings. Legalization is consistent with what was stated in the eighth target in the eighth item on freedom of religion and belief in the first axis on civil and political rights, which included “the continuation of the committee concerned with legalizing the conditions of churches, its work in order to legalize the conditions of the rest of the churches and their service buildings that have not yet been subject to regulation.

¹⁹ عضو «العفو الرئاسي» يكشف إجمالي عدد المفرج عنهم منذ إعادة تفعيل اللجنة، المصري اليوم، على الرابط التالي:

<https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2743273>

²⁰ خالد داوود: أحزاب الحركة المدنية ليس لديها أي سجين رأي حاليًا، على الرابط التالي:

<https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2732816>

²¹ الرئيس السيسي يصدر قرارا بالعفو عن زياد العليمي، الشروق، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3FfPdeV>

Article 21: Peaceful Assembly

During the recent period, Maat noticed the government's measures to implement this article and the guarantees stipulated in the constitution to allow this right. From November 12 to 18, 2022, Egypt hosted the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. During this period, Egypt allocated space for demonstrations, including for Egyptian citizens. The police also allowed trade unions to organize gatherings to protest some Egyptian Ministry of Finance policies. In December 2022, the Egyptian Bar Association organized a peaceful gathering to reject the decision of the Ministry of Finance to apply the electronic bill to the free professions. On December 8, 2022, the Ministry of Finance take a decision to postpone registration in this system until April 30, 2023, in response to the Bar Association gathering²².

Maat noted that the Egyptian police were not subjected to these stops and that there is a commitment to the law of demonstrations practiced by all parties. On December 3, 2022, the opposition parties of the Civil Democratic Movement in Egypt held a public conference in Cairo Governorate to present their political and economic program. Some attendees included criticism of the current Egyptian government, and this conference did not face any obstacles. On November 12, 2022, the Egyptian government allowed representatives of 12 human rights organizations, Egyptian, regional and international, to meet in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, at a round table hosted by a non-governmental organization to discuss opportunities for the promotion and protection of human rights in Egypt in recent years. Although these organizations criticized the human rights situation, they considered allowing them to organize this meeting as a positive development.

Article 22: Formation of associations

The constitution allows for the right to form associations. In February 2019, the Constitutional Court issued a ruling that administrative decisions may not dissolve civil associations. Law No. 149 of 2019 on the practice of civil work came as a lifeline for civil society in Egypt, and it is an alternative to Law 70 of 2017 on civil work practice. Most civil society organizations rejected that, which prompted the President of the Republic to demand that it be reconsidered and put forward for a societal dialogue, which resulted in the abolition of the law and the issuance of Law No. 149 of 2019 and its complementary executive regulations. The new law abolished any freedom-depriving penalties as prolonged or preventive detention stipulated in Law No. 70 of 2017 and only imposed fines for violating the provisions of the law.

On April 11, 2022, Law No. 23 of 2022 was issued; it amends some Civil Work Practice Law provisions. Article 2 of the law extends the period for reconciling the status of civil society organizations to six months from the date the law came into effect; it allows the

²² بيان عاجل من نقيب المحامين بشأن قرار وزير المالية بتأجيل التسجيل في الفاتورة الإلكترونية، على الرابط التالي، على الرابط التالي:
[/https://egypls.com/218724-2](https://egypls.com/218724-2)

duration of this period only once by a decision of the Minister of social solidarity. This amendment came in line with the many demands of civil society organizations, such as Maat, to provide an opportunity to reconcile the conditions of institutions and civil associations, which were unable to reconcile their conditions due to the limited knowledge of these organizations in dealing with the electronic registration system.

On October 12, 2022, the Minister of Social Solidarity, after the Council of Ministers' approval, issued a decision extending the regularization period of the status of associations, civil institutions, and regional and foreign non-governmental organizations for six months, ending in April 2023. It is the second time extending this period; it was scheduled for January 2022. Until October 2022, 32 thousand NGOs and NGOs have completed procedures to regularize their statuses. Despite these positive developments, there are obstacles facing NGOs carrying out their activities, including the cumbersome procedures for obtaining funds from donors, which may prevent the sustainability of the work of these organizations. Among the criticisms against the executive, regulations are its obligation for the association to return the money to the donor within five days if the administrative body refuses the organization to obtain the grant. Reports considered that this procedure would waste the organization's opportunity to challenge the administrative body's decision and obtain the grant if a judgment was issued in favor of the organization.

Maat recommends the following:

- Consider establishing an independent anti-discrimination commission under Article 53 of the Egyptian constitution.
- Consider eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and vulnerable groups in Egypt, including refugees and asylum seekers.
- Cancellation of the reservations expressed by Egypt to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in a way that contributes to achieving de facto equality between the sexes.
- Consider harmonizing the definition of torture in Egyptian law with the definition contained in Article 1, which Egypt has ratified.
- Consider the rest of the requests submitted to the Presidential Pardon Committee and the release of other batches of remand detainees.