



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Egypt - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 30 June & Wednesday 1 July 2015

General information on the Muslim Brotherhood, Security forces, police & state authorities from 2011 to June 2015

Human Rights Watch in June 2015 states:

“...the serious abuse and deterioration of the rule of law in Egypt over the past two years has contributed to a fertile environment for violence...” (Human Rights Watch (30 June 2015) *Egypt: Top Prosecutor's Killing a New Risk for Rule of Law*).

In June 2015 *Human Rights Watch* points out that:

“Two cases that resulted in former President Mohamed Morsy and 114 others receiving death sentences on June 16, 2015, were compromised by due process violations and appear to have been politically motivated. The convictions are based almost entirely on security officials' testimony” (Human Rights Watch (16 June 2015) *Morsy Death Sentence Follows Flawed Trials*).

In June 2015 a report by the *Wilson Centre* includes commentary on the Muslim Brotherhood stating:

“...The Brotherhood's political fortunes improved in 2012 when Mohamed Morsi, a Brotherhood leader, became the country's first democratically elected president. But Morsi's tenure and the Brotherhood's newfound power were short-lived. Following massive street protests, Morsi was ousted by a military coup in July 2013, after only one year in office. Brotherhood supporters and others opposed to the coup staged massive sit-ins, which were violently dispersed by security forces. More than 800 people were killed in what Human Rights Watch described as "one of the world's largest killings of demonstrators in a single day in recent history." Over the next two years, the Brotherhood faced the greatest repression in its 87-year history. Morsi was arrested along with thousands of other Brotherhood leaders and supporters. The organization was outlawed. Its funds and properties were confiscated” (Wilson Centre (15 June 2015) *Egypt: The Founders; Egypt: The New Puritans*).

A report issued in June 2015 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of 2014 notes:

“The government maintained effective control over security forces. The Ministry of Interior's primary security forces are the Public Police and the Central Security Forces. The Public Police are responsible for law enforcement nationwide” (United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014, Egypt*, p.7).

This document also notes that:

“Impunity was a problem, particularly in cases involving alleged abuses by the Central Security Forces” (ibid, p.8).

It is also pointed out in this report that:

“The MB, the MB-affiliated Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), and its NGO remained illegal” (ibid, p.24).

MB is an acronym for Muslim Brotherhood.

In June 2015 the *Financial Times* states in an article that:

“Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood group, already reeling from a relentless security crackdown by the country’s authorities, is grappling with internal unrest as a younger generation pushes for more confrontational tactics against the state and rejects calls to adhere to non-violence from older leaders” (Financial Times (10 June 2015) *Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood youth push for confrontational tactics*).

This report also points out that:

“The Brotherhood has been targeted by the Egyptian authorities since 2013, when the military ousted Mr Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood official elected president a year before, on the back of widespread discontent against his rule. Since then thousands of members and officials have been arrested and hundreds, including Mr Morsi, have been sentenced to death in trials criticised by human rights groups as unfair, leaving the organisation in disarray” (ibid).

Freedom House point out in a report issued in February 2015 that:

“Police brutality and impunity for abuses by security forces were catalysts for the 2011 uprising, but there has been no security-sector reform in the subsequent four years” (Freedom House (16 February 2015) *Freedom in the World 2015 – Egypt*).

A report published in April 2015 by the *Carnegie Middle East Center* points out that:

“The Egyptian military has gained unprecedented power since overseeing the ouster of two Egyptian presidents, Hosni Mubarak in 2011 and Mohamed Morsi in 2013” (Carnegie Middle East Center (15 April 2015) *The Egyptian Armed Forces and the Remaking of an Economic Empire*, p.1).

In March 2015 the *European Commission* notes that:

“The security sector remained unreformed. Following the election of El-Sisi as President, the military consolidated its influence over key political decisions in Egypt” (European Commission (25 March 2015) *Implementation Of The European Neighbourhood Policy In Egypt Progress In 2014 And Recommendations For Actions Accompanying The Document Joint Communication To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions [SWD(2015) 65 final, p.7]*

A report issued in December 2014 by the *Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights* notes that:

“Abuse of power at the hands of the police manifesting itself in the unlawful use of force and firearms as well as torture or other ill-treatment did not only target perceived political dissidents, but also routinely took place in the context of regular

law enforcement operations and against suspects in common-law cases” (Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (31 December 2014) *Egypt Where Impunity Is Entrenched and Accountability Is Absent*).

A paper issued in November 2014 by the *International Federation for Human Rights* notes that:

“Since the removal of former president Mohamed Morsi in July 2013, the authorities have enacted a widespread crackdown against supporters of Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood” (International Federation for Human Rights (4 November 2014) *Egypt: Ongoing human rights violations amidst a widespread crackdown*).

A paper issued in July 2014 by the *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* includes the following comment on the Muslim Brotherhood that:

“In the wake of Egypt’s 2011 uprising, the Brotherhood faced the challenge of balancing its Islamic principles with popular demands for democracy and socioeconomic reform. The group failed to rise to the occasion and ended up failing both as “conservative democrats” and as Islamists” (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (July 2014) *The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood’s Failures*, p.3).

In March 2014 the *Carnegie Middle East Center* states that:

“A police state harsher in its repression and more hegemonic politically in comparison to the Mubarak era has been reconstituting itself under military suzerainty” (Carnegie Middle East Center (17 March 2015) *Missed Opportunity: The Politics of Police Reform in Egypt and Tunisia*, p.7).

A report issued in February 2014 by the *International Bar Association* notes that:

“Since Egypt’s 2011 revolution, the crimes committed by security forces under the watch of each successive government have remained largely unaddressed – while political opponents have been enthusiastically pursued” (International Bar Association (10 February 2014) *Separating Law and Politics: Challenges to the Independence of Judges and Prosecutors in Egypt*, p.7).

In February 2014 a document published commenting on events of 2013 by the *United States Department of State* points out that:

“The Morsy government did not maintain effective control over security forces, which observers attributed in part to long-standing animosity between the MB and the security bureaucracy. The interim government exercised a degree of greater control over the security forces, but they continued to commit human rights abuses. Notably, security forces also had significant influence within the government. The Ministry of Interior’s primary security forces are the Egyptian National Police and the Central Security Forces. The Egyptian National Police are responsible for law enforcement nationwide” (United States Department of State (27 February 2014) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, Egypt*, p.8).

This report also states:

“On December 25, the interim government declared the MB a terrorist organization, allowing the government to apply sections of the penal code related to terrorism to the MB” (ibid, p.22).

In January 2014 a paper issued by the *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade/Australia* points out that:

“Both the Egyptian National Police and the Central Security Forces (CSF) come under the aegis of the Minister of Interior. The police are responsible for law enforcement nationwide, while the CSF—a paramilitary force of some 325,000, including conscripts—are responsible for crowd control and provide security for infrastructure and key domestic and foreign officials. The police and the CSF continue to suffer from shortfalls in training and equipment. Their reputation for brutality made them a focus for popular anger in the January 2011 uprising. There is widespread distrust in the police force's ability to deal with evidence, especially in respect of politically-sensitive cases” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade/Australia (28 January 2014) *DFAT Country Report: Egypt*, 5.2).

In January 2014 *Amnesty International* states in a report that:

“Since Mohamed Morsi’s ousting, an estimated 1,400 people have died in political violence and in incidents where security forces used excessive and unnecessary force to disperse demonstrations” (Amnesty International (23 January 2014) *Egypt: Roadmap to repression - No end in sight to human rights violations*, p.27).

A report published in January 2014 by *Freedom House* reviewing events of the preceding year states:

“The authorities methodically arrested and prosecuted Muslim Brotherhood leaders, and the courts ultimately outlawed the organization” (Freedom House (23 January 2014) *Freedom in the World 2014 – Egypt*).

In January 2014 a report released by *Bertelsmann Stiftung* notes:

“After the fall of Mubarak, the major remaining cleavages include civil-military relations, secular-religious relations, labor-capital relations and gender relations. While all cleavages were intensified during the period of military governance lasting until July 2012, President Morsi successfully moderated the civil-military cleavage by compromising with regard to the military's role as manifested in the constitution, and by leaving the military's economic empire largely untouched” (Bertelsmann Stiftung (1 January 2014) *Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI) 2014 - Egypt Country Report*).

BBC News in December 2013 commenting on the Muslim Brotherhood states:

“President Mohammed Morsi, a member of the group, was ousted by the military, senior leaders and thousands of members have been detained, and its headquarters have been ransacked and burned” (BBC News (25 December 2013) *Profile: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood*).

This report also notes:

“Founded by Hassan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood - or al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun in Arabic - has influenced Islamist movements around the world with its model of political activism combined with Islamic charity work. The movement initially aimed simply to spread Islamic morals and good works, but soon became involved in politics...” (ibid).

A report issued in August 2013 by *Human Rights Watch* points out that:

“Egyptian security forces' rapid and massive use of lethal force to disperse sit-ins on August 14, 2013 led to the most serious incident of mass unlawful killings in modern Egyptian history” (Human Rights Watch (19 August 2013) *Egypt: Security Forces Used Excessive Lethal Force*).

In August 2013 reviewing events of 2012, a report published by *Freedom House* states:

“Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) won the presidency in a June 16-17 runoff election, taking 51.7 percent of the vote, and executive power was formally transferred from the military to the new civilian leadership” (Freedom House (9 August 2013) *Freedom of the Press 2013 – Egypt*).

The *United States Department of State* issued a document in April 2013 reviewing events of 2012 including noting:

“The Ministry of Interior controls the Egyptian National Police (ENP); the National Security Sector (NSS), established in March 2011 following the abolition of the SSIS, undertakes analysis and investigations; and the Central Security Forces (CSF) maintains public order” (United States Department of State (19 April 2013) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012, Egypt*, p.6)

This document also points out that:

“There were allegations that loosely organized groups of supporters of the government and the Muslim Brotherhood tortured citizens protesting against the president” (ibid, p.4).

In March 2013 the *European Commission* notes that:

“The culture of violence and torture in the police, the security sector, and in some cases the military, did not change dramatically after January 2011” (European Commission (20 March 2013) *Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Egypt: Progress in 2012 and recommendations for action*).

In January 2013 *Amnesty International* states:

“Two years have passed since the outbreak of the "25 January Revolution". The 18 days that shook Egypt and brought down a government which for decades looked invincible, claimed the lives of some 840 protestors and over 6,600 injuries. [2] An Amnesty International fact-finding team investigating human rights abuses in Egypt between 30 January and 3 March 2011 found that security forces committed grave human rights violations in their attempt to crush the uprising” (Amnesty International (24 January 2013) *Egypt: Rampant impunity: Still no justice for protestors killed in the '25 January Revolution'*).

A document issued in October 2012 by *Amnesty International* notes:

“The army repeatedly used unnecessary and excessive force, including lethal force, to disperse peaceful demonstrations and sit-ins that escalated into clashes, killing dozens of protesters, assaulting bystanders in the process, and intimidating people simply for daring to protest” (Amnesty International (2 October 2012) *Brutality unpunished and unchecked: Egypt's military kill and torture protesters with impunity*).

Amnesty International in October 2012 states:

“The police enjoy wide powers under Egyptian law and have for decades abused them. They have acted unlawfully and disregarded human rights, whether when dispersing protesters or detaining suspects, and have usually enjoyed impunity for their criminal actions” (Amnesty International (2 October 2012) *Agents of repression: Egypt's police and the case for reform*).

In October 2012 a paper produced by the *United States Institute of Peace* notes that:

“The Egyptian military establishment encompasses the army, navy, air force, and air defense forces, all of which fall under the leadership of the Ministry of Defense (MoD). [2] The 1971 constitution, which remained in effect until Mubarak's ouster, designates the president of the republic as the supreme commander of the armed forces. It describes the armed forces as belonging to the people and states that their mission is “to protect the country, its territorial integrity and security.” [3] Under the March 30, 2011, Constitutional Declaration, the SCAF was the de facto president of the country until Morsi's election in June 2012. The council consists of Egypt's most senior military leaders and was headed by Minister of Defense Mohamed Hussein Tantawi until he was retired in mid-August. The SCAF exercised substantial authority under the Constitutional Declaration annex it issued on June 17, 2012” (United States Institute of Peace (1 October 2012) *The Politics of Security Sector Reform in Egypt*).

A report published in May 2012 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of 2011 notes:

“The Ministry of Interior controls the national police, which operate in large cities and governorates; the NSS, established on March 15 after the government announced the dissolution of the State Security Investigative Services, which conducts investigations; and the Central Security Forces (CSF), which maintain public order” (United States Department of State (24 May 2012) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, Egypt*, p.6).

It is also noted in this report that:

“The freedom to form, legally register, and operate political parties improved significantly during the year. Before the revolution the law stipulated that party “principles, targets, programs, policies, or means of practicing activities” had to conform to national security and other requirements (as interpreted by the government)” (ibid, p.21).

In April 2012 a paper issued by the *International Crisis Group* notes that:

“The Muslim Brotherhood clearly presents the most serious threat to continued military control over security matters...” (International Crisis Group (24 April 2012) *Lost in Transition: The World According to Egypt's SCAF*, p.14).

In March 2012 *Freedom House* commenting on events of 2011 notes in a report that:

“...police brutality appeared to continue unabated after Mubarak's ouster” (Freedom House (22 March 2012) *Freedom in the World 2012 – Egypt*).

A report issued in February 2012 by the *International Federation for Human Rights* notes that:

“Since the 28th of January 2011 when the military went down to the streets in Egypt, military trials have been excessively used; as of August 2011, 12,000 civilians have been tried in military courts. Sentences are handed down to civilians within days, in the absence of their lawyers, and without a right to appeal. Military trials have also been used to silence opponents of the regime and human rights activists” (International Federation for Human Rights (9 February 2012) *Egypt's Revolutionary road, one year on: still awaiting respect for human rights and democratic reforms*).

A document published by *Amnesty International* in November 2011 notes:

“Arrest and detention by the armed forces began after troops were deployed in Cairo, Suez and Alexandria on 28 January (the so-called "Friday of Anger" of the "25 January Revolution"). Many of those arrested, including peaceful protesters, were subjected to arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment and tried before military courts” (Amnesty International (22 November 2011) *Broken promises: Egypt's military rulers erode human rights*).

A report released in May 2011 by the *European Commission* notes that:

“No progress was made on the independence of the judiciary, which remained subject to the Emergency law. The State Security Emergency Courts and the military courts continue to exercise jurisdiction over cases related to national security, but not limited only to these” (European Commission (25 May 2011) *Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2010 - Progress Country Report: Egypt*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Amnesty International
BBC News
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis

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