

Egypt

Report on Egypt's Response to the Observations Submitted During the Comprehensive Review in the 48th Session

Submitted to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review Working Group

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Name of the Organization Submitting the Report:

SHR El-Shehab for Human Rights is a volunteer organization that supports freedom, democracy, and the people's will. It opposes injustice, oppression, and all forms of discrimination. The organization strives for a world where people can live with dignity. It was founded in Egypt in 2006 and received approval from the British authorities as a human rights organization under number 11567508.

- Introduction

- This report responds to Egypt's reply to the observations submitted during the comprehensive review at the 48th session. A total of 137 countries issued 366 recommendations during this session. These recommendations addressed a broad range of human rights issues, including freedom of opinion and expression, conditions in detention

facilities, the fight against torture, and the abolition or restriction of the death penalty to the most serious crimes.

- The Egyptian delegation tried to promote the idea that the ruling regime was making reforms and progress in the area of rights and freedoms, but this message was met with strong skepticism from participating countries and the international community. This is confirmed by the criticism directed at Egypt for not signing international agreements related to combating torture and enforced disappearances, along with the failure to justify the inability to implement many of the recommendations made to Egypt during the 2019 review of its human rights record.

We review several instances of violations in Egypt during the months following the review of Egypt's human rights record, which took place in January 2025. The Egyptian regime continued its repressive policies across all levels, both within the legislative and executive branches. It also persisted in committing human rights violations, including widespread enforced disappearances, abuses inside prisons, and an increase in killings caused by and resulting from torture. Additionally, there were more killings due to deliberate medical negligence, along with campaigns to strip detainees of all their belongings inside prisons and prevent legally mandated visits.

In the field of legislative provisions

- On April 29, 2025, the House of Representatives finally approved the draft Criminal Procedure Code. This move marked a step backward in the effort to protect fundamental rights and freedoms. The law provides

special immunity to public employees, law enforcement officers, and prison officials, while also giving the Public Prosecution broad powers to restrict the rights of the defense and due process guarantees. It opened the door to the practice of rotation of detainees without any restrictions. It also established the use of pretrial detention as a punitive measure, expanded the powers of courts to punish their critics, legalized the conduct of trial sessions and the renewal of detention remotely, and undermined the principle of public hearings and the rules governing judgments in absentia. This clearly violates fair trial guarantees and Egypt's international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These amendments include changes that impact the defendant's right to counsel from the moment of arrest and introduce controls on home searches and wiretapping of communications.

Regarding the Formation of Pardon Committees

On April 26, 2022, a presidential decree was issued to reactivate the Presidential Pardon Committee, which was established as one of the recommendations from the 2016 National Youth Conference.

- According to Article 155 of the 2014 Constitution, "The President of the Republic, after consulting the Council of Ministers, may pardon or commute a sentence. A general pardon may only be granted by law, approved by a majority of the members of the House of Representatives."

According to the previous article, there are two types of pardons:

A general pardon: This can only be granted in the form of a law issued by the legislative authority with the approval of a majority of the members of the House of Representatives. To date, no such law has been issued.

A pardon for the remaining sentence or commutation: In this case, the recipient of the pardon is the person who has received a final judgment.

- By examining the lists of pardons issued by presidential decrees, it becomes clear that most of those pardoned are individuals in pretrial detention awaiting investigation for cases where their detention exceeded the legal limit. In such cases, a decision by the State Security Prosecution to release them would have sufficed. Among political detainees, the number of those granted pardons is very small. The National Human Rights Strategy

On September 11, 2021, Egypt launched the National Human Rights Strategy. It seems that the country's effort to create a human rights strategy lacks genuine intent by the regime to improve its human rights record. The main goal of launching this strategy was to appeal to international audiences, serving as little more than a rhetorical gesture with no real positive effect on the human rights situation. It clearly appears to be a tactic to deceive the international community and persuade donor countries that political reform is happening in Egypt. This is supported by the fact that prison conditions remain terrible. Additionally, the timing of the launch suggests an attempt by the government to improve its image before the Universal Periodic Review of Egypt's case at the United Nations, which occurred in early 2025.

Enforced Disappearances

- The number of enforced disappearances between January 2025 and June 2025 totals 770 cases, as follows:

35 cases in January

154 cases in February

125 cases in March

109 cases in April

213 cases in May

134 cases in June

- On May 9, 2025, security forces detained lawyer Seif Mamdouh Ahmed Mahmoud, 24, from his office in Cairo Governorate without a warrant from the Public Prosecution and without presenting him to any investigative authority. He forcibly disappeared. Security authorities refused to disclose his location of detention and prevented him from communicating with his family or lawyer.

- Prison Violations: The number of deaths caused by torture reached three during the first half of 2025, as follows:

- On April 8, 2025, detainee Mohamed Hassan Hilal, 32, was killed at Qasr al-Aini Hospital in Cairo after being transferred there in critical condition from Badr 3 Prison, having sustained severe injuries suspected to have resulted from severe torture.

- On April 11, 2025, Mahmoud Asaad, 26, was killed by Interior Ministry officers inside the Khalifa Police Station. He was placed in solitary confinement and denied visits. The station chief informed his mother that her son had died. When his family received his body, they found it bore disfigurement and signs of torture.

On April 9, 2025, two young men, Youssef Eid Fadl Al-Sarhani and Faraj Rabash Al-Fazari (aged 17 and 18), were killed after the Director of the National Security Office in Salloum received them for questioning regarding the Al-Najila incident, in which three police officers lost their lives. Soon after being brought in, they were targeted and killed outside the bounds of the law.

Deaths caused by deliberate medical negligence in the first half of 2025:

- On January 2, 2025, detainee Engineer Abdel Salam Mahmoud Saddouma, 50 years old, was killed inside Giza Central Prison, Kilometer 10.5. He was diagnosed with cancer in mid-2024 and had been detained since 2018. He had been recycled several times.

- On January 14, 2025, detainee Saad El-Sayed El-Sayed Madin, 57, was killed inside his cell at Borg El-Arab Prison due to deliberate medical negligence and poor detention conditions.

- On January 16, 2025, detainee Metwally Abu El-Magd Soliman Mohamed, 57, was killed in Gamasa Prison due to medical negligence. He suffered from high blood pressure, diabetes, and chronic heart attacks.

- On January 19, 2025, detainee Ahmed Gabr, 42, was killed inside Alexandria University Hospital. He was subjected to torture inside State Security and prisons, resulting in a brain tumor. He did not receive appropriate treatment.

- On February 1, 2025, detainee Hisham El-Haddad was killed inside the 10th of Ramadan Prison after experiencing deliberate medical neglect.

- On February 20, 2025, detainee Khaled Ahmed Mustafa was killed inside his cell at the 10th of Ramadan Prison, amid a lack of healthcare for detainees.

- On February 27, 2025, detainee Nabil Farfour, 65, was killed inside his cell due to medical neglect. His health declined after a stroke. After spending one day in security custody in Damanhour, his condition worsened, and he was transferred to the Oncology Institute, where he died from medical neglect.

On April 3, 2025, detainee Abdel Fattah Mohamed Abdel Maqsoud Obeido was killed in Mansoura University Hospital after his health deteriorated following his transfer from Gamasa Maximum Security Prison, where he fell into a coma due to deliberate medical neglect.

- On April 1, 2025, detainee Mohamed Abdel Razek Ghoneim was killed in his cell at Damanhour Prison due to medical neglect.

- On April 11, 2025, detainee Yasser Khashab was killed in Wadi El Natrun New Prison due to deliberate medical neglect. He needed open-heart surgery and National Security refused to transfer him to the hospital for the procedure.

- On April 20, 2025, detainee Hamdi Youssef Hashem, 62, was killed in the medical center at 10th of Ramadan Prison after suffering from illness and being subjected to deliberate medical neglect. He suffered from pulmonary fibrosis, along with high blood pressure and diabetes.

- On April 27, 2025, detainee Saad Abu Al-Enein was killed inside his cell in 10th of Ramadan Prison due to medical negligence.

- On May 5, 2025, detainee Bilal Raafat Muhammad Ali, 55, was killed inside Minya Al-Qamh Police Station after falling into a coma as a result of a brain hemorrhage while in detention.

- On May 12, 2025, detainee Ahmed Abdel-Aal Al-Gendy, 62, was killed inside Wadi El-Natrun Prison due to deliberate medical negligence and poor detention conditions.

- On June 25, 2025, detainee Abdel-Aziz Abdel-Ghani, 62, was killed after deliberately delaying his treatment. He suffered from severe health problems, despite undergoing a medical examination confirming he had an acute intestinal obstruction and an urgent need for surgery. However, security authorities delayed the necessary medical intervention, leading to the deterioration of his health and his death inside Awlad Saqr Police Station.

Medical Negligence

- During March 2025, detainees in Badr 3 Prison were subjected to tragic conditions and gross violations, including harsh detention conditions, continued medical neglect, and denial of exercise and sun exposure. The health of a large number of detainees deteriorated.
- In March 2025, detainee Gamal Ahmed Sawi Ibrahim, 70, experienced a decline in health. He has liver cirrhosis, which has caused swelling and fluid buildup in his body, due to intentional medical neglect inside Minya Prison.
- Medical negligence persists against detainee Ahmed Al-Walid Al-Sayed Al-Shal, who is sentenced to death and held at the Wadi El-Natrun Prison Medical Center, where his health condition is worsening and life-threatening. He has a cerebellar tumor that has led to a fluid-filled cyst, compressing the cerebellar cells. This has resulted in loss of balance, difficulty walking, and impaired use of his upper and lower right limbs.

Stripping

- On February 4, a distress call was received from detainees in Wadi El Natrun Prison 5:

Winter clothing and heaters were banned, and detainees were forced to live outdoors in the extreme cold. Officials refused to provide additional blankets or clothing from the prison.

- On April 24, 2025, the Burj Al Arab Prison administration assaulted four political detainees (Mansour Al Sayed, Alaa Al Wensh, Abdel Rahman Saleh, and Mohamed Al Bandari) after they protested the humiliating strip searches they were subjected to. They were taken to the disciplinary unit wearing the same clothes they had on.

- In April 2025, violations continued against detainee Sultan Omran, held at Burj Al Arab Prison. He began an open hunger strike on April 20 to protest his arbitrary transfer to the so-called "Defense Ward," which jeopardizes his life and physical safety.

During May 2025, we observed a general deterioration in health conditions and the spread of disease in Abu Zaabal prison, amid severe deficiencies in medical care.

Repeated arbitrary cell searches intended to harass detainees, during which detainees are stripped of their personal belongings and belongings are destroyed.

- * Rising number of placements in disciplinary cells.

- In May 2025, we documented serious violations at Gamasa Maximum Security Prison.

- * Continuous searches and strippings.

- * Overcrowding in disciplinary and harassing cells, housing up to 50 people in inhumane conditions.

- * Frequent power and water outages, along with poor quality and limited food supplies.

Physical and Psychological Torture

- On May 11, 2025, a complaint was filed regarding inmate Marwan Ibrahim Abdel Basset Abdel Latif, stating that he was subjected to torture and physical abuse inside the Damanhour Correctional and Rehabilitation Center (resulting in visible bruises on his body).

Ban on Visits

- Detainees in Beni Suef Central Prison have been banned from visits due to the absence of a visitation hall since April 2025. Visitation was completely halted after the prison administration used the visitation hall as a "cell" to house several prisoners transferred from Nasser Center.

Women

On February 1, 2025, Egyptian authorities detained journalist Marwa Abu Zeid, 42, an activist and human rights advocate—the wife of imprisoned journalist Abdel Rahman Dabi—at Cairo International Airport as she was preparing to travel to perform Umrah. She was subjected to enforced disappearance for two days, then appeared before the State Security Prosecution, which ordered her remand in custody in Case No. 7887 of 2024, Supreme State Security. On June 23, 2025, the Cairo Criminal Court decided to extend her detention for 45 days pending further investigation.

On June 14, the First Terrorism Circuit, led by Counselor Mohamed Saeed El-Sherbiny, sentenced Ms. Maha Salama Abdel-Wahab Ahmed to life in prison and five years of probation in Case No. 618 of 2024, Supreme State Security. She was arrested on February 2, 2024, and went missing for nine days. During her detention at a National Security facility, she was subjected to severe abuses, including beatings, torture, and continuous blinding. These abuses were used to force confessions that would later be used as evidence against her in court.

Heba Mustafa, who was arrested at her home on October 3, 2018, then forcibly disappeared for four months. She later appeared before the prosecution on charges of "joining a terrorist group" and "spreading false news." A pretrial detention order was issued against her. In January 2025, a release order was issued, but she was not released, as National Security recirculated her into a new case on the same charges.

- On May 28, 2025, the Cairo Criminal Court sentenced Ms. Dina Alaa Eid Sayed Ahmed to three years in prison, and her husband, Ahmed Naji, to five years, in Case No. 966 of 2021, Supreme State Security. She was arrested on April 26, 2021, upon her return from Turkey and

forcibly disappeared for two months. She reappeared in June before the State Security Prosecution, which ordered her detention pending trial. She was then brought to trial on charges of "joining a terrorist group" and "spreading false news."

In May, journalist and academic Dr. Rasha Qandil was investigated by the Supreme State Security Prosecution in Case No. 4196 of 2025. The prosecution confronted her with 31 complaints—almost all of them worded the same—targeting her journalistic work, including her article "Is Egypt on the Brink of an Explosion?" After eight hours of questioning, the prosecution decided to release her on a bail of 50,000 Egyptian pounds.

Recommendations

We call on and demand the Egyptian government to take the following actions:

First: Join the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, criminalize enforced disappearance in the Penal Code, and consider it a crime without a statute of limitations.

Second: Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), and amend the law to include a specific definition of torture to ensure that perpetrators cannot avoid punishment.

Third: Work to address all recommendations directed at Egypt during the comprehensive review at the forty-eighth session and implement them without delay.

Fourth: Allow the Working Group on Human Rights and Special Rapporteurs to visit Egypt to evaluate the human rights situation there.

Fifth: We urge the Egyptian government to ratify, accede to, or withdraw its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.