

# Amnesty International

## Facts and figures | *Egypt: Roadmap to repression*

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On 23 January 2014, Amnesty International will launch a 50-page briefing entitled *Egypt: Roadmap to repression: No end in sight for human rights violations* (Index: MDE 12/005/2014).

### About the report

- The new briefing focuses on human rights violations in Egypt since the ousting of President Mohamed Morsi on 3 July 2013.
- The Egyptian authorities are using all branches of the state to trample on human rights and quash dissent, armed with repressive legislation and aided by unaccountable security forces, as well as a judicial system that punishes government critics while allowing human rights violators to walk free.
- No where has this been more evident than when security forces used excessive force to disperse pro-Morsi sit-ins at Rabaa al-Adawiya and al-Nahda squares on 14 August 2013 in Cairo, killing hundreds of protesters. To date, the Prosecution has failed to indict **a single public official or member of the security forces** for the crackdown, while continuing to order the **detention of thousands** of Mohamed Morsi's supporters accused of protesting violently and belonging to a "banned group engaged in terrorist activities".
- Unless the authorities change course and comply with commitments to respect human rights and the rule of law, the future of Egypt looks bleak and the hopes of the "25 January Revolution" have little chance of becoming a reality.

### Chapter 1: Freedoms of assembly and expression

- **Thousands of Morsi supporters** have been rounded-up by the security forces and face accusations of a string of identical offences, such as belonging to a banned terrorist group or protesting violently, without regard for their individual criminal responsibility.
- In many cases, the authorities have detained Mohamed Morsi's supporters without their basic due process rights such as access to lawyers, families and the means to challenge the lawfulness of their detention.
- Amnesty International is concerned that among the thousands arrested are men, women and children who were merely exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly by protesting in support of ousted president Mohamed Morsi.
- Security forces have also cracked-down on protests in university campuses, using excessive and lethal force to disperse protests, including at al-Azhar University. At least **five al-Azhar University students** have been killed in clashes with the security forces, and over **200 arrested**.
- The security forces have also been quick to enforce a repressive new assembly law signed by President Mansour on 24 November 2013. The law gives the Interior Ministry wide powers to re-route or cancel planned protests, and under the legislation protest-organizers must also submit their plans in advance to the ministry. To enforce the law, the security forces have repeatedly dispersed peaceful protests, and arrested so-called "secular" or "revolutionary" activists for participating in unauthorized protests. Courts have also jailed activists for breaching the law.
- Journalists and other media workers are also under threat. On the night Morsi was ousted, security forces raided the offices of **several television stations** and briefly arrested their staff,

including Al Jazeera Mubasher Misr. In the months that followed, security forces also arrested other journalists and media workers, including staff working for Al Jazeera English and Arabic. Military courts have tried **two journalists**, apparently for reporting on the Sinai Peninsula.

## Chapter 2: Freedom of association

- The authorities have maintained long-standing restrictions on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and are considering new legislation that would tighten their powers over civil society.
- On 25 December 2013, the authorities stated that they had designated the Muslim Brotherhood itself as a “terrorist” organization, following a deadly bombing attack in Mansoura for which armed group Ansar Bait al-Maqdis later took responsibility. Amnesty International fears that the authorities’ decision is politically motivated, and will sanction a further clampdown on the Muslim Brotherhood. The authorities have failed to present any evidence linking the movement to any of the terrorist attacks that have taken place since 3 July 2013.
- The authorities have extended their crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood to the movement’s charities and affiliated NGOs, ordering the Central Bank of Egypt to freeze the bank accounts of over **1,000 charities**.
- The crackdown on critical voices has also extended to human rights organizations. In December 2013, security forces raided the office of the Egyptian Centre for Social and Economic Rights, and arrested and beat a number of staff and volunteers. It was the latest in a series of raids on civil society groups that began during the 2011 uprising and peaked in December 2011 when security forces and public prosecutors stormed the offices of several Egyptian and international NGOs and sentenced them to between one and five years in prison.

## Chapter 3: Policing and impunity

- Egyptian security forces have routinely used excessive and unnecessary lethal force to disperse demonstrations, a practice that has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of protesters and bystanders, as well as in some cases journalists and other media workers.
- Since 30 June 2013, **an estimated 1,400 people** have died in protests or other political violence, including in incidents where the security forces used excessive lethal force to disperse demonstrations, as well as clashes between Mohamed Morsi’s supporters and opponents.
- According to official statistics, at **least 95 security personnel** have also died in violent attacks since Morsi’s ousting.
- Some **200 Christian properties** were attacked and **43 churches** were seriously damaged across the country in sectarian attacks after 14 August 2013. At **least four people** were killed that day. The security forces failed to intervene to protect Coptic Christians.
- Investigations into the violence by the Prosecution have focused on alleged abuses by Mohamed Morsi’s supporters, to the exclusion of human rights violations by the security forces.
- Investigations have failed to indict **a single member** of the security forces for using excessive force against protesters since 30 June 2013. **Just four members** of the security forces are facing trial, all for an incident in which 37 detainees died during their transfer to prison.
- Impunity has also continued for human rights violations committed in the “25 January Revolution” and under successive governments. Courts have **acquitted dozens of security forces** following botched investigations by the Prosecution which were not independent or impartial and which failed to consider key evidence.

- In December 2013, President Adly Mansour appointed a fact-finding committee to investigate abuses after 30 June 2013. However, the committee's mandate is too vague and excludes the establishment of individual criminal responsibility. The committee is also likely to lack powers of subpoena, search and seizure to force interior ministry officials and security forces to co-operate with it.
- The authorities have not published the full findings of any of the findings of inquiries they have ordered into human rights violations, including fact-finding committees examining abuses during the "25 January Revolution" and the uprising and military rule.
- The international community has failed to react coherently to the situation in Egypt. Many states have individually condemned the violence and bloodshed, but such condemnations have rung hollow. States have brought little collective pressure to bear on Egypt in forums such as the United Nations Human Rights Council.
- States have also acted too late to suspend transfers of weapons and equipment to Egypt used by the security forces to commit human rights violations at Rabaa al-Adawiya and other protests, despite weeks of warnings and a well-established pattern of abuse.
- Some states, including the US, seem to be preparing to resume transfers of weapons and equipment that could be used by the security forces to commit human rights violations.

## Chapter 4: Selective justice

- Amnesty International is concerned at a pattern of selective justice in Egypt, evident in the choices of cases picked by the Prosecution to investigate, prosecute and refer to trial. While the Public Prosecution has detained thousands of Mohamed Morsi's supporters on charges of protesting violently and belonging to a banned group, it has failed to hold security forces responsible for human rights violations.
- Investigations into political violence have also focused on Mohamed Morsi's opponents, to the exclusion of their opponents, despite the fact that both sides have committed abuses.
- Instead of ensuring accountability, the authorities are widening the crackdown onto government critics associated with the "25 January Revolution", including youth-movement leaders, political activists, bloggers and human rights activists.

## Recommendations

- The authorities should stop using the "three arms of repression" to quash dissent. To put Egypt back on course for rule of law and human rights, the authorities should repeal or amend repressive laws; reform the security forces and ensure the independence of the judiciary.
- The authorities must order and ensure thorough, independent and impartial investigations into human rights violations.
- Political leaders should condemn human rights abuses by their supporters and call on them to end violent attacks against supporters of the other side.
- States should suspend all transfers to Egypt of weapons, munitions and related equipment used for serious violations of human rights, including tear gas and riot control projectiles and launchers; small arms, including shotguns, and light weapons and related ammunition; as well as armoured vehicles and military helicopters, and to maintain the suspension until adequate safeguards are put in place by the Egyptian authorities to prevent further serious violations of international human rights law by security forces in policing protests.