

Egypt: Planned anti-terror law could intensify abuses

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The Egyptian authorities are committing systematic abuses of human rights in the name of national security -- and a planned new anti-terror law could make the situation worse, according to a report which Amnesty International (AI) published on 11 April in Cairo.

Thousands of Egyptians have been locked up, with many sentenced after grossly unfair trials in emergency and military courts. Torture and prolonged detention without trial are rife in detention centres across the country. A planned new anti-terrorism law, expected to be introduced following last month's controversial amendments to the constitution, could pave the way for further abuses.

Egypt's State Security Investigations (SSI) services enjoy huge powers under the state of emergency the government has maintained almost continuously for the past 40 years. Torture is widely used by the SSI officers, but allegations are rarely investigated.

The country has also been a key destination in the "war on terror", with many Egyptians and others suspected of terrorism transferred by the US and other governments to Egypt, where they have been detained and tortured. The fate of some, who were victims of unlawful "rendition" by the US, remains unknown.

"The Egyptian authorities must come clean and disclose the number, names, nationality and current whereabouts of all terrorism suspects extradited, subjected to 'rendition' or otherwise transferred into their custody from abroad," said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Deputy Director of AI's Middle East and North Africa Programme. "It must also lift the shroud of impunity that protects those who torture in the name of the state."

As the government prepares new anti-terrorism legislation, AI urged it to allow UN human rights experts on torture and on countering terrorism to visit the country.

Read the full report:

[Egypt – Systematic abuses in the name of security](#)