

# Egypt 2024 Human Rights Report

## Executive Summary

Egypt's human rights situation remained concerning. The government took steps to address human rights concerns during the year, including closing investigations into rights groups in Case 173 (known as the "Foreign Funding Case"), but in most cases, authorities did not comprehensively investigate or prosecute allegations of human rights abuses, including most incidents of violence by security forces.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest and detention; instances of transnational repression against individuals in another country; serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including unjustified arrests or prosecutions of journalists and censorship; significant restrictions on workers' freedom of association; and significant presence of some of the worst forms of child labor.

The government's lack of investigations and prosecutions into allegations of human rights abuses contributed to an environment of impunity.

## Section 1. Life

### a. Extrajudicial Killings

There were numerous reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings while making arrests or holding persons in custody. Local and international rights groups reported instances of persons tortured to death in prisons and detention centers.

Despite the existence of mechanisms for investigating complaints of security force abuses, both through the Public Prosecutor's Office and the quasi-governmental National Council for Human Rights (NCHR), multiple groups reported investigations of deaths in custody often either concluded that death occurred from natural causes or did not include a forensic examination. The Public Prosecutor's Office reported charging, prosecuting, and convicting perpetrators in a number of cases, but lack of accountability remained a serious problem.

In February, the Italy-based trial of four Egyptian security officers accused of kidnapping and killing Italian doctoral student Giulio Regeni in 2016 began in absentia. The Italian prosecutor alleged the officials tortured and deliberately killed the Cambridge University student, arguing they mistakenly believed Regeni was involved in espionage, according to international media reports. The Italian Constitutional Court ruled in 2023 the trial could proceed after having previously suspended proceedings in

2021 on procedural grounds.

## **b. Coercion in Population Control**

There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

## **Section 2. Liberty**

### **a. Freedom of the Press**

The constitution provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, but the government frequently did not respect this right. Human rights defenders, journalists, activists, and others regularly faced criminal prosecution on charges that observers assessed as retaliation for criticism of the government.

The law required newspapers to print their issues at licensed printing houses registered with the Supreme Council for Media Regulation (SCMR).

According to the law, news websites had to host their servers in the country, newspapers had to submit 20 copies of each printed issue to the council, and websites and television outlets had to keep copies of all published or broadcast material online for one year and submit a copy of their published or broadcast material to the council every month. The law also prohibited any recording, filming, or interviews in public places with the intention of

broadcasting them on a media outlet without a permit issued by the council.

Citizens expressed their views on a wide range of political and social topics, but the government regularly investigated, detained, and prosecuted individuals for expressing political views or criticism, using charges such as “spreading false news,” supporting a banned group, misuse of social media, incitement of violence, insults to religion, insults to public figures and institutions such as the judiciary and the military, or “abuse of public morals.” The government used social media posts as evidence in many cases, according to multiple human rights lawyers.

The law provided a broad definition of terrorism, to include “any act harming national unity or social peace.” Human rights observers noted authorities regularly used the ambiguous definition to stifle nonviolent speech and nonviolent opposition activity through criminal investigations and prosecutions.

In May, 80 local and international human rights groups called for the release of blogger and activist Mohamed Adel following his 2023 conviction for “spreading false news” on social media. Adel undertook a hunger strike from August until October to protest authorities’ refusal to subtract from his sentence the five years he spent in pretrial detention on prior charges for the same accusation.

## **Physical Attacks, Imprisonment, and Pressure**

According to media reports and local and international human rights groups, authorities regularly harassed and intimidated human rights defenders, activists, opposition figures, and journalists during the year.

In August, 11 local and international rights groups condemned the arrests, enforced disappearances, and prosecutions of journalists solely for practicing their profession, as protected by law. The groups cited the arrest of journalist Khaled Mamdouh on charges of joining a banned group and “spreading false news,” as well as authorities’ failure to investigate his incommunicado detention despite formal complaints to the Public Prosecutor’s Office. In November, the head of the Journalists’ Syndicate, Khaled al-Balshy, called on the government to release all 23 journalists then imprisoned or detained for their reporting.

Police arrested several journalists for covering politically sensitive topics. Some of those arrested were released, while others remained in detention at year’s end. The family of photojournalist Hamdi Mokhtar, known as Hamdi al-Zaeem, requested his release in August after more than three years in pretrial detention on charges of joining a terrorist group, misusing social media, and “spreading false news.” Al-Zaeem spent nearly two years in pretrial detention on similar charges in 2016-2018. In May, the Journalists’ Syndicate also called for his release and stated al-Zaeem and thousands of others paid a heavy price due to baseless accusations.

## **Censorship by Governments, Military, Intelligence, or Police Forces, Criminal Groups, or Armed Extremist or Rebel Groups**

The constitution allowed “limited censorship in times of war or public mobilization.” Independent media expressed a variety of views but with significant restrictions, and official censorship occurred. The constitution, penal code, and media and publications law regulated media conduct. The government regulated the licensing of newspapers and controlled the printing and distribution of most newspapers, including private newspapers.

The law designated the SCMR as an independent body with members appointed by the president to regulate the media sector, also overseeing both the National Media Authority (for broadcast outlets) and the National Press Authority (for print outlets). The SCMR issued licenses for media outlets and websites, had the authority to block websites, and monitored media funding and content. More than 20 state-owned media outlets broadly supported official state policy. The National Press Authority held the power to appoint and dismiss editorial leadership of state-owned print outlets. The governmental Egyptian Radio and Television Union appointed the heads of state-owned radio and television channels. Both state-owned and private media (including television and online news sites) occasionally broadcast and published mild criticism of government policies, but dominant media narratives supported the president and his policy initiatives. The law considered websites and social media accounts with at

least 5,000 subscribers to be media outlets, required them to pay a licensing fee, and granted the SCMR broad discretion to block their content.

Media rights organizations stated the government continued to block hundreds of websites and virtual private network services, including independent news outlets *Mada Masr* since 2017 and *al-Manassa* since 2018. Rights groups and media freedom organizations condemned the blocking of additional news websites, including *Cairo 24*.

Local and international media rights organizations reported the government blocked hundreds of websites, including more than 130 news websites. The blocked sites included international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local human rights NGOs, and numerous virtual private network services. Some blockages appeared to respond to critical coverage of the government or to disrupt antigovernment political activity or demonstrations. The constitution required public parliamentary sessions, but the government did not broadcast or publish the deliberations of the House of Representatives or Senate. At year's end, the Second Circuit of the Administrative Court had not yet ruled in a 2022 lawsuit brought by a human rights lawyer challenging this practice.

## **b. Worker Rights**

### **Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining**

The constitution provided for freedom of association and the right to “peaceful” strikes. The law provided for the rights of workers to form and join independent unions and bargain collectively but imposed significant restrictions, including prior approval by a general trade union affiliated with the official Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF). The government did not effectively enforce applicable laws, including prohibitions on antiunion discrimination. Penalties for violations of the freedom of association and the right to strike were less than those under other laws involving denials of civil rights. Penalties were rarely applied against violators of freedom of association and the right to strike. The law prescribed union elections every four years and imposed a strict hierarchy for union formation consisting of a company-level trade union committee, a profession or industry-level general union, and a national-level union.

The law required centralized tripartite negotiations that included workers, represented by a union affiliated with the ETUF, business owners, and the Ministry of Labor, which oversaw and monitored negotiations and agreements. The government seldom participated in tripartite negotiations, leaving workers to negotiate directly with employers, frequently after resorting to a strike.

Independent unions faced significant and onerous obstacles in registering with the government. Previously established independent unions faced pressure to dissolve, and new unions faced impediments to completing establishment requirements. In many cases, the Ministry of Labor delayed responding to unions' applications for legal status, according to local media. In other instances, the Ministry of Labor refused to legalize proposed unions if an ETUF-affiliated counterpart existed. The slow processing of registration documents left some unions unregistered and unable to work effectively with the government, according to media reports.

Most violations of workers' rights, including delayed payment of salaries, arbitrary dismissal, suspension, and seeking criminal charges against striking workers, took place in the private sector, with the government's knowledge, according to a local labor advocacy group.

The law prohibited antiunion discrimination and provided for the reinstatement of workers fired for union activity, but the prohibition was rarely enforced.

The Ministry of Labor did not allow trade unions to adopt their own bylaws in addition to those provided in the law. Local workers' rights organizations complained this was contrary to the law, which stated unions could use the statutory bylaws as guidance to develop their own.

In June, a local labor advocacy group stated employers often violated labor

laws by blocking the formation of labor unions and impeded collective bargaining efforts.

The government occasionally arrested workers who staged strikes or criticized the government, and it rarely reversed arbitrary dismissals. Workers at the Samanoud Textile Company began a strike in August demanding implementation of the minimum wage. According to media reports, some workers faced suspensions, and eight were arrested for participating in the strike but released a few days later. Media reported the company applied for an official exemption from the minimum wage, but the request remained pending during the strike.

The law required workers to obtain permits before staging sit-ins on public or private property, and authorities could prosecute those who failed to do so. Unauthorized sit-ins nonetheless often occurred when authorities did not approve the required permits.

## **Forced or Compulsory Labor**

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

## **Acceptable Work Conditions**

### **Wage and Hour Laws**

By law the government set a monthly minimum wage for government

employees and public-sector workers, which was above the poverty line. The law also gave the National Wages Council, headed by the minister of planning and economic development, the authority to set the minimum wage for private-sector workers, which was above the poverty line.

Minimum wages for some workers increased in May, but the minimum wage increase was applied unevenly, with thousands of businesses receiving exemptions. There were numerous worker strikes over the uneven application of the minimum wage increase.

The law stipulated a maximum 48-hour workweek for the public and private sectors and provided for premium pay for overtime and work on rest days and national holidays. The law prohibited excessive compulsory overtime. The law did not ensure equal pay for equal work. Labor rights activists told local media the lack of oversight and enforcement of the regulations allowed many employers to ignore the requirements, particularly in the service and informal sectors.

The law excluded agricultural, fishery, and domestic workers from wage and hour regulations.

### **Occupational Safety and Health**

Occupational safety and health (OSH) standards were not always sufficient for the main industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, quarrying, mining, and services. The law allowed workers to remove themselves from

situations that endangered health or safety without jeopardy to employment, but authorities did not reliably enforce this right. Responsibility for identifying unsafe situations lay with occupational safety and health experts and the employer, not the worker, with varied and uneven implementation.

In June, an economic think tank called on the government to protect workers during unseasonably high summer temperatures. The group stated sectors such as agriculture, construction, and manufacturing lacked sufficient safety regulations.

### **Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement**

The National Center for Occupational Safety and Health Studies and Securing the Work Environment, chaired by the Ministry of Labor, was responsible for enforcing labor laws and standards for working conditions. The government did not effectively enforce the law. Penalties for OSH violations, which were sometimes enforced with fines and imprisonment, were commensurate with other laws, such as negligence. Labor inspectors had the authority to make unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions. The number of labor inspectors, however, was insufficient to enforce compliance.

Some private-sector employers reportedly required workers to sign undated resignation letters as a condition of employment, which the employers could

use to terminate employees at will, in contravention of the law.

In June, a leading labor organization reported workers in some private-sector industries faced unsafe working conditions, lacked employment contracts, and were required to work excessive hours. The absence of employment contracts or the use of temporary work agreements allowed the dismissal of workers without providing due compensation. Local media reported in July that workers in the delivery sector connected to mobile phone apps faced significant vulnerabilities and risk of accidents while often lacking basic protections such as insurance.

The Ministry of Labor did not enforce labor standards in the informal sector, which employed approximately 40 percent of workers. In July, a labor advocacy group, citing CAPMAS statistics, found 75 percent of individuals ages 15 to 29 worked in the informal or semiformal sectors, which lacked unemployment, health care, or retirement benefits.

### **c. Disappearance and Abduction**

International and local human rights groups reported large numbers of enforced disappearances, alleging authorities utilized this tactic to intimidate critics.

Authorities sometimes detained individuals without presenting arrest or search warrants as required by law. According to local NGOs, authorities detained many of these individuals in unspecified National Security Agency

offices and police stations, but they were not included in official police detainee registers until presented for official investigations to prosecutors or detention hearings before a court. Authorities routinely held detainees incommunicado, denied their requests to contact family members and lawyers for periods ranging from a few days to several years, and tortured them to extract confessions, according to a report by 13 rights groups prepared for the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the country scheduled for January 2025.

Local media and rights groups documented the enforced disappearances of scores of defendants. In June, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention's annual activity report expressed concern regarding authorities' consistent use of national security laws to justify enforced disappearances. A local campaign against enforced disappearance reported in September more than 4,600 cases took place since 2015, and more than 400 in the 12 months ending in August, for periods ranging from several days to over a year.

Rights groups and the Journalists' Syndicate criticized the detention in May of Asmaa Fathi Hassan and Naglaa Faith Hassan, the spouse and sister-in-law of journalist Yasser Sayed Abu al-Ela. The Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) ordered them held in pretrial detention following two weeks of enforced disappearance. Rights groups alleged the arrests were in response to the family members' public calls for information concerning the

whereabouts of Abu al-Ela, who was held incommunicado for 47 days before appearing before the SSSP in April. Both family members faced charges of joining a terrorist group and “spreading false news,” and remained in pretrial detention at year’s end.

## **Prolonged Detention without Charges**

The constitution prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention, but local and international rights groups reported widespread and frequent arbitrary arrests and detentions.

According to international and local human rights groups, authorities regularly deprived individuals of the right to challenge their detention, and when challenges occurred, courts did not issue timely judgments. The groups also reported authorities ignored court release orders or brought new or additional charges against detainees to prolong their pretrial detention beyond legal limits.

The law required that police act based on a judicial warrant except where persons were apprehended in the process of committing a crime, but there were numerous reports of arrests without a warrant.

Rights groups criticized the security services and public prosecution for regularly ignoring constitutional protections, particularly in the case of enforced disappearances. In some cases defendants faced political or legal obstacles to exercising the right to counsel and often could not secure

regular access to lawyers.

Prosecutors had the authority to order four days of preventive detention in misdemeanor and felony cases. After the four-day period, investigative judges could extend the detention for up to 45 days in 15-day increments. After the 45-day period, prosecutors could request that an appellate court extend the detention in 45-day increments.

In cases under the jurisdiction of the SSSP, prosecutors could renew preventive detention in increments of 15 days up to a total of 150 days. After the 150-day period, prosecutors could refer the case to a criminal court panel of three judges to renew the detention in increments of 45 days. Multiple reports from lawyers and rights groups stated the SSSP regularly conducted “perfunctory” detention renewal hearings for hundreds of defendants in a single court session, depriving them of access to their attorneys. In January, a rights group issued a report on pretrial detention renewals in terrorism circuit courts showing detentions were renewed in more than 99 percent of the approximately 36,000 hearings during 2023.

Authorities regularly detained defendants from the initial investigation through all stages of criminal judicial proceedings. The law limited the combined periods of prosecutor- and court-ordered detentions prior to trial to six months in cases of misdemeanors, 18 months in cases of felonies, and two years in cases involving the death penalty or life imprisonment. After pretrial detention reached its legal limit without a conviction, the law

required authorities to release the accused person immediately.

According to human rights groups, authorities sometimes added charges involving the death penalty or life imprisonment, such as “joining a banned group seeking to undermine state institutions,” to cases related to freedom of expression or other nonviolent political charges, in order to prolong their detention.

There were frequent reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions. Local activists and rights groups stated hundreds of arrests did not comply with due-process laws.

The government did not provide figures on the total number of pretrial detainees, and nongovernmental estimates of the number of pretrial and preventive detainees varied widely. Rights groups alleged authorities excessively abused pretrial detention and preventive detention against individuals accused of nonviolent crimes, especially those involving human rights advocacy or criticism of the government. The NCHR stated it coordinated efforts to receive and address complaints of pretrial detainees. Large backlogs in the criminal courts contributed to protracted periods of pretrial detention. Human rights groups criticized the practice of bringing additional or similar charges after the detention limit was reached, thereby “recycling” or “rotating” the accused person into indefinite pretrial detention.

In March, the UN special rapporteur on human rights defenders and other UN experts expressed concerns when human rights lawyer Hoda Abdel Moneim was recycled to face the same charges (joining and financing a terrorist group) as in her 2020 trial on the day of her scheduled release in October 2023, after completing a five-year sentence for membership in a terrorist organization. In April, 19 rights groups issued a statement criticizing the arbitrary detention for more than 2,000 days of Abdel Moneim. She remained in detention at year's end.

In January, local rights groups criticized the continued detention of nearly 900 individuals detained for exercising their fundamental freedoms at Badr Prison's terrorism circuit court, alleging the court's postponement of detainees' renewal hearings without providing justification or hearing defense arguments fell short of minimum fair trial guarantees.

In June, lawyers representing approximately 1,000 pretrial detainees withdrew from renewal hearings at the Third Circuit Terrorism Court located in Badr Prison, alleging the presiding judge denied their clients' due process. According to public statements by lawyers present, the group decided to withdraw after the judge denied their requests to consult with their clients due to the large number of hearings on the docket. The lawyers noted access to many detainees at Badr Prison was highly restricted and the hearings offered the only opportunity to consult with their client.

In September, 59 local and international human rights groups called for the

release of Alaa Abdel Fattah. The groups urged authorities to apply previous time served in pretrial detention to his five-year sentence for “spreading false news,” arguing he should have been released on September 29. He remained imprisoned at year’s end.

#### **d. Violations in Religious Freedom**

See the Department of State’s annual *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

#### **e. Trafficking in Persons**

See the Department of State’s annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

### **Section 3. Security of the Person**

#### **a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**

The constitution prohibited such practices against “a person whose movements were restricted or whom authorities had detained or arrested.” The law banned torture to induce a confession from a detained or arrested suspect but did not account for mental or psychological abuse against persons whom authorities had not formally accused, or for abuse occurring

for reasons other than securing a confession. While the law authorized prison officials to use force against prisoners who resisted orders, it prohibited all officials from “employing cruelty” or “causing bodily harm” under any circumstances. Nonetheless, there were numerous reports officials employed torture or cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment.

Local and international rights organizations reported abusive practices were systemic, asserting police and prison guards regularly abused detainees, including individuals younger than 18, through beatings, electric shocks, psychological abuse, and sexual assault, including as part of interrogation. A local human rights group focusing on torture and mistreatment of prisoners and detainees documented approximately 1,900 violations of prisoners’ rights, including torture and intentional medical neglect, in prisons, police stations, and detention centers through the first half of the year.

Multiple rights groups reported torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment remained pervasive. In reports to the UN’s UPR, these groups stated the lack of accountability or investigations into abuse allegations allowed perpetrators to act with near absolute impunity. The NCHR called on the government to conduct a review of legal definitions of torture and develop a comprehensive approach to addressing allegations of torture in its UPR report, in accordance with the 2002 UN Convention against Torture review recommendations.

Multiple human rights groups indicated authorities subjected prisoners accused of crimes related to political or security matters to physical and verbal abuse and prolonged or indefinite solitary confinement. In August, journalists, activists, and some politicians criticized authorities for reportedly disappearing cartoonist Ashraf Omar for two days and torturing him following his arrest in July and called for an investigation into the allegations. According to local media, authorities beat Omar and threatened him with electric shocks during his interrogation. Omar remained in pretrial detention at year's end on charges of joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, and misuse of social media.

Human rights organizations stated the Public Prosecutor's Office ordered forced anal and vaginal "exams" of detainees, primarily in "debauchery" cases against persons targeted on the basis of sexual orientation. Civil society organizations further alleged that the authority to undertake these abusive practices stemmed from internal guidelines rather than law, and that "evidence" obtained from the "exams" could only be used against detainees, never to exonerate them. Authorities regularly used the "results" of forced anal exams as evidence against defendants, despite the opinions of independent international medical experts that there was no medical or evidentiary basis for such conclusions.

According to human rights activists, security force impunity was a significant problem. The Prosecutor General's Office (for Ministry of Interior actions)

and the Military Prosecution (for military actions) were responsible for pursuing prosecutions and investigating whether security force actions were justifiable.

In some cases, reported abuse led to investigations and charges against security officials. In December, the government reported investigations into complaints of torture and use of cruelty resulted in disciplinary measures against employees of the Interior Ministry, including police officers, involved in 1,217 incidents between November 2019 and July 2024.

The law made female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) a crime, but the practice was widespread. Incidents of FGM/C were not always reported, and authorities enforced the law inconsistently. According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the most recent data showed a drop in the rate of FGM/C among girls and young women ages 0-19 from 21 percent to 14 percent between 2014 and 2021. The overall rate for women of all ages dropped from 92 percent to 86 percent. According to international and local observers, the government took steps to enforce the FGM/C law, including maintaining hotlines to inform authorities of doctors who performed the operations. The National Committee for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation and other government bodies conducted awareness raising campaigns targeting villages and rural areas. These efforts reached millions of citizens, according to a statement by the head of the National Council for Women in February.

## **b. Protection of Children**

### **Child Labor**

See the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>.

### **Child Marriage**

The legal age of marriage was 18. Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) data published in 2023 showed the rate of marriage for girls ages 15-17 dropped to 2.1 percent in 2021. A report submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in April found the government's efforts to reform legal provisions prohibiting child marriage, raise awareness, and collaborate with religious institution contributed to this reduction. According to the NGO report submitted to the UN committee, limited enforcement mechanisms and attempts by families to skirt the laws through informal marriages hampered progress, however. Informal marriages unrecognized under the law could lead to contested paternity and leave women and girls without alimony or other benefits available to women with registered marriages.

Families reportedly sometimes forced adolescent girls to marry wealthy foreign men in what were known locally as "tourism" or "summer" marriages for the purpose of sexual exploitation, prostitution, or forced

labor. Human trafficking laws criminalized such marriages. The law required a foreign man wanting to marry a citizen woman more than 25 years younger to pay the woman 50,000 Egyptian pounds (\$1,000).

Women's rights organizations argued that allowing foreign men to pay a fine to marry much younger women represented a form of trafficking and encouragement of child or forced marriage.

The government often enforced the law. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) and governorate child protection units identified attempted child marriages. In August, the NCCM announced officials stopped the planned marriage of a girl, age 15, in Kafr al-Sheikh Governorate. According to the NCCM's statements to local media, the area's child protection unit intervened to offer the family counseling and secured their commitment not to marry the child until she was of legal age.

### **c. Protection to Refugees**

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern.

The government estimated in January the country was hosting approximately 10 million "guests" from Arab and African countries due to security concerns in their home countries. UNHCR reported an increase

during the year of more than 700 percent in the number of registered Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers since April 2023. UNHCR registered more than 877,000 asylum seekers and refugees representing 59 nationalities during the year through December. Sudanese represented approximately 69 percent of the registered refugee population in the country. The government also facilitated entry into the country for foreign nationals fleeing the conflict in Gaza, including dual nationals and a limited number of Palestinians with health conditions, many of whom departed for onward locations.

### **Provision of First Asylum**

The constitution provided for the protection of “political refugees,” but the law did not provide for granting asylum or refugee status for the majority of the year. The government granted UNHCR authority to make refugee status determinations. In July, the government revised its policy permitting Syrian refugees to remain in the country on multiple-entry renewable visas, requiring them to reapply for single-entry visas each time they entered the country.

In November, parliament approved a new asylum law nationalizing refugee processing, and President Sisi signed it into law in December. Officials described the law as upholding humanitarian commitments while addressing national security priorities. Some rights groups criticized the drafting process as not sufficiently inclusive and assessed accompanying

bylaws would be critical for implementation.

UNHCR did not have access to detention centers or border areas, absent prior approval by authorities. Authorities generally released asylum seekers registered with UNHCR but frequently did not release detained migrants who could have had a basis for asylum claims, many of whom were Eritrean, Ethiopian, Somali, South Sudanese, and Sudanese. Authorities often held detained migrants as unregistered asylum seekers in police stations and sometimes sent them to regular prisons alongside convicted criminals or deported them and did not permit UNHCR access to assess protection needs.

The government did not recognize UNHCR's mandate to offer services to Palestinians outside of the fields of operations of the UN Relief and Works Agency, reportedly due to its belief that allowing UNHCR registration would entrench Palestinians' displacement and negate their right of return. UNHCR did not register or assist Libyan citizens or Palestinians in the country.

#### **d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement**

The country's Jewish community reportedly numbered as few as 10 individuals split between Cairo and Alexandria. International media reported some Jewish individuals fleeing the conflict in Yemen relocated to the country with government support. Certain media outlets published

antisemitic content from time to time, and some social media users posted content containing antisemitic tropes and conspiracy theories.

In May, a group calling itself the Vanguard of Liberation claimed responsibility for the killing of a Canadian-Israeli businessman in Alexandria. In social media posts, the group cited the conflict in Gaza as its motivation and alleged the man was a spy to justify the killing, which remained under investigation at year's end.

In December, a report from the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-SE) assessed that more than 80 percent of the country's elementary students were using revised textbooks with a curriculum focused on promoting peace and rejecting extremism. The new curriculum also included a more positive representation of Israel and stressed the value of peaceful coexistence, according to IMPACT-SE.

For further information on incidents in the country of antisemitism, whether or not those incidents were motivated by religion, and for reporting on the ability of Jews to exercise freedom of religion or belief, please see the Department of State's annual *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

## **e. Instances of Transnational Repression**

There were reports the government engaged in acts of transnational repression.

## **Threats, Harassment, Surveillance, or Coercion**

Rights groups and media reports indicated the government regularly used threats, harassment, and surveillance of individuals outside the country as well as arrests and pressure on family members to temper the activities of critics based abroad.

In February, 18 local and international rights groups issued a statement condemning a smear campaign and threats against the United Kingdom-based director of the Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, following the group's report alleging the government had constructed a fortified zone in North Sinai along the Gaza border to prepare for a potential influx of Palestinian refugees. The groups contended government and progovernment figures targeted the organization's director in media and social media statements, including reported threats of violence and forcible return to Egypt.

## **Efforts to Control Mobility**

There were reports the government denied consular services to or revoked identity documents of certain citizens abroad, jeopardizing their legal status. In September, two rights groups issued a report documenting the denial of applications for national identification cards, birth certificates, and passports for human rights defenders residing abroad.

## **Bilateral Pressure**

There were credible reports the government exerted pressure on other countries for politically motivated purposes against individuals located outside the country. The family of activist Ghada Najibe criticized Turkish security officials for arresting her in April for the second time in six months, attributing her detention for approximately 10 days to pressure from the Egyptian government. Rights groups called for Najibe's unconditional release.