



Thank you, Mr. President,

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies draws the Council's attention to the dangerous developments which threaten independent civil society in Egypt.

The proliferation of draft associations laws presented by various state entities in the last five months appears aimed not at creating a law to uphold the right to freedom of association, but at confusing local stakeholders and the international community. Each draft – including the bill submitted by the Egyptian presidency to the parliament two days ago – has contained variations of essentially the same violations, revealing the underlying viewpoint of the authorities that civil society organizations are an enemy to be subdued rather than a partner in the effort to build democratic governance and improve the situation of rights in Egypt.

The process of drafting this law has blatantly disregarded the concerns of Egyptian civil society, as expressed again in [a statement by 40 Egyptian NGOs](#) yesterday, and the advice of many international experts, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights, three UN Special Rapporteurs and experts from the European Union.

These bills would prohibit informal associations, effectively rendering public campaigns and many of the civic groups formed around the revolution illegal. Other problems include severe restrictions on organizations' joint work; excessive oversight powers given to the authorities, including through a partisan oversight body likely to represent the security apparatus; potential for arbitrary closure; strict controls on foreign associations; constraints on funding; the creation of prescribed federations of associations; a failure to ensure a registration process through notification rather than prior authorization; and excessive requirements for establishing organizations.

The Cairo Institute stresses that removing one or a few of these clauses will not suffice. Legal restrictions in even one of the areas mentioned will allow the authorities to severely constrict the work of Egyptian civil society. This Council should urge Egypt to adopt a new approach and draft a law that fully complies with international standards.

Thank you, Mr. President.