



CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

United Nations Human Rights Council: 26th Session
Item 3: ID with Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
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Thank you Mr. President,

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), on behalf of the Forum for independent Egyptian human rights NGOs, welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers. We join the concerns expressed in her joint urgent appeals sent to the government of Egypt.

The Egyptian justice system has demonstrated almost zero tolerance for any form of dissent, banning opposition groups including the 6th of April movement and issuing arrest warrants against journalists, political opposition and members of youth movements.

The examples below demonstrate the reluctance of the current judiciary to ensure proper accountability and due process. They also reveal the increasing use of the justice system in Egypt as a tool of political repression in an ongoing, unprecedented crackdown on all forms of dissent in the country.

A few days ago, 25 individuals were sentenced to 15 years in prison and a fine of 100,000 LE for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly. In a flagrant violation of the rights to due process and fair trial, the sentence was issued in absentia although three of the defendants and their lawyers were present and waiting for permission to enter the court room. Additionally, almost a month ago an Alexandria court confirmed a two year incarceration judgment against woman human rights defender Mahinor El Masry, and seven other activists, without due respect to their right to free and fair trial. These cases are not the only ones where victims had their rights denied in Court as a punishment for participating in public assemblies.

On 28th April 2014, the Minya Criminal court confirmed 37 death sentences and more than 492 sentences of life imprisonment after a half-an-hour session on allegations of the killing of one police officer. The UN High Commissioner has characterized these decisions as an “outrageous and shocking” breach of international law.

Arbitrary detention continues to be used against dissenters on a large scale. The security apparatus no longer relies on the infamous emergency law to justify such measures. Instead, the public prosecutor has begun issuing thousands of arrest warrants without conducting the required prior investigations.

Three years since January 2011 only three soldiers have been sentenced to between 2-3 years imprisonment for the killing of 27 protesters in October 2011, and only one policeman has been sentenced to three years imprisonment for shooting at protesters in November 2011. Other than these examples, no one has been held accountable for the thousands of deaths of protesters since the Egyptian uprising.

Advancing democracy and stability in Egypt will greatly depend on the ability of the justice system to demonstrate impartiality and independence when investigating abuses by state security agents.

Thank you Mr. President