

# Egypt - Human Rights Scorecard <sup>1</sup>

Egypt, a country linking northeast Africa with the Middle East, has a well-documented heritage and civilization dating back thousands of years. The 30-year repressive presidency of Hosni Mubarak was overthrown following massive popular protests in early 2011, and replaced with a short-lived and tumultuous period of elective democracy for about two years. In the summer of 2013, this nascent democracy was removed by military coup, and again replaced by a military dictatorship led by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. The capital, Cairo, is home to Ottoman landmarks such as Muhammad Ali Mosque.<sup>2</sup>

**Official language:** Arabic

**Ethnic groups:** 91% ethnic Egyptians, ethnic minorities include Abazas, Turks, Greeks, and Bedouin Arab tribes.

**Government:** Unitary semi-presidential republic

- President: Abdel Fattah el-Sisi

- Prime Minister: Sherif Ismail

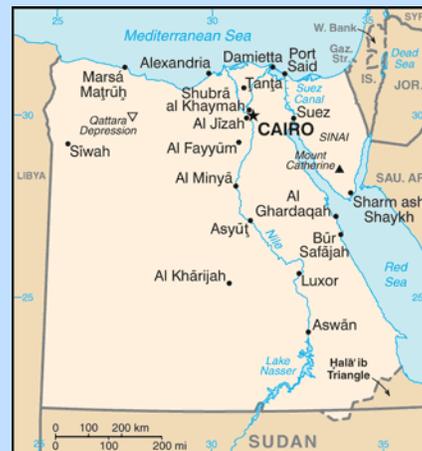
**Death penalty:** Retentionist

**Population:** 88.5 millions

**Life expectancy:** 73.7 years

**Under-5 mortality:** 24 per 1000

**Adult literacy:** 73.8 percent



## Section 1: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

### Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



**Largely disrespected**<sup>3</sup>

There have been numerous reports over several years of the government or its agents committing arbitrary or unlawful killings while dispersing demonstrators, holding persons in custody, and during military operations in the northern Sinai Peninsula. Impunity is a problem.

### Freedom from disappearance



**Largely disrespected**<sup>4</sup>

According to Amnesty International, more than 1,000 persons missing since the 2011 revolution remain unaccounted for, including dozens of new cases reported over the past year. The government has made no known effort to investigate these incidents.

### Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



**Largely disrespected**<sup>5</sup>

The constitution prohibits torture upon a person who has been detained or arrested, but there have been many reports of torture including police and prison guards throughout the year.

### Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



**Largely disrespected**<sup>6</sup>

The constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention, but reports of such practices remain high. There were numerous reports of police detaining or arresting bystanders in areas near protests, and detaining or arresting family members or friends if the wanted person wasn't home.

### Freedom from denial of fair public trial



**Partially respected**<sup>7</sup>

The constitution provides for the independence and immunity of judges. Courts generally act independently, although individual courts sometimes appear to lack impartiality and to arrive at politically motivated outcomes. The government generally respects court orders.

### Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



**Partially respected**<sup>8</sup>

The constitution provides for privacy of the home and correspondence, but there are reports of security agencies placing people such as political activists and writers under surveillance, searching them and confiscating personal property in an extrajudicial manner.

## Section 2: Respect for Civil Liberties

*Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.*

### Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)<sup>9</sup>



**Score: 51.89, Rank: 159 / 180 – Highly controlled, limited or intimidated**<sup>10</sup>

The constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, but includes a clause stating “they may be subject to limited censorship in times of war or public mobilization.” Local and international rights groups reported increases in charges under the blasphemy law targeting atheists.

### Freedom from academic censorship



**Partially respected**<sup>11</sup>

There are reports of government restrictions on academic freedom. Moreover, according to media and local rights groups, a degree of self-censorship allegedly existed when academics publicly commented on sensitive political and socioeconomic issues.

### Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



**Largely disrespected**<sup>12</sup>

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly “according to notification regulated by law.” A revised demonstrations law was adopted which does not respect international standards regarding freedom of assembly. The government vigorously enforces the law restricting demonstrations.

### Freedom of religion



**Largely disrespected**<sup>13</sup>

The constitution provides for freedom of belief, but specifies Islam as the state religion and principles of Sharia as the primary source of legislation. The government does not recognize conversion from Islam to any other religion, and has prosecuted individuals for “defaming religion”.

### Protection of refugees and stateless persons



**Largely disrespected**<sup>14</sup>

The constitution provides for the protection of political refugees, but the laws do not provide for granting asylum or refugee status, and the government has not established a comprehensive legal regime for providing protection to refugees.

### Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)<sup>15 16</sup>



**5 / 7 – Not free**<sup>17</sup>

Egypt is considered not free because of the complete marginalization of the opposition, state surveillance of communications, public exhortations to report critics of the government to the authorities, and the mass trials and unjustified imprisonment of members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

## Section 3: Respect for Political Rights

*Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc..*

### Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)<sup>18</sup>



**6 / 7 – Not free**<sup>19</sup>

Observers noted major flaws in the last elections, and the government harshly restricts dissent and assembly by activists from across the political spectrum. The media are also targeted, with authorities harassing and sometimes jailing journalists who report on political opposition of any kind.

## Section 4: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

*The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.*

### Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)<sup>20</sup>



**Score: 36%, Rank: 88 / 168 – Highly corrupt**<sup>21</sup>

The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, but the government does not consistently enforce the law, and there were allegations that members of the Mubarak and Morsi governments engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.

## Section 5: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

### Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



#### Largely disrespected<sup>22</sup>

The government exhibits an increasingly uncooperative and suspicious approach to human rights organizations. Government officials assert that they share the NGOs' goals, but are rarely cooperative. NGOs criticize government's consultations with civil society as superficial and insincere.

## Section 6: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

### Rights of women (World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index)<sup>23</sup>



#### Score: 59.9%, Rank: 136 / 145 – Very unequal rights<sup>24</sup>

Many aspects of the law discriminate against women. Women continue to face widespread societal discrimination, threats to their physical security, and workplace bias in favour of men that hinder their social and economic advancement. Moreover, spousal rape is not illegal.

### Rights of Children (KidsRights Index Overall Score)<sup>25</sup>



#### Score: 83 %, Rank: 40 / 165 – Somewhat protected (KidsRights)<sup>26</sup>

KidsRights Index gives a respectable score to Egypt but fails to take into account some important violations of children's rights, such as early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation on young girls, and child abuse. Education is compulsory, free, and universal until the ninth grade.<sup>27</sup>

### Rights of persons with disabilities



#### Partially respected<sup>28</sup>

The law provides for persons with disabilities to gain access to vocational training and employment but does not outlaw discrimination against such persons, which is widespread. Government-operated treatment centers for persons with disabilities, especially children, are of poor quality.

### Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



#### Largely disrespected<sup>29</sup>

There were no reports of violence directed toward the Jewish community, but criticism of Israel often reaches the level of blatant anti-Semitism in public discourse. State-owned and private media include anti-Semitic rhetoric, notably by academics and clerics, with cartoons demonizing Jews.

### Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



#### Largely disrespected<sup>30 31</sup>

Sexual relations between consenting adult persons of the same sex in private are not prohibited as such. However, the Law on the Combating of Prostitution, and several articles of the Penal Code, have been used to imprison gay men in recent years.

## Section 7: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

### Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



#### Partially respected<sup>32</sup>

The law provides for the right of workers to form and join independent unions, the right to strike, and collective bargaining, with significant restrictions. Important elements of the legal framework for worker rights were unclear or contradictory.

### Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



#### Largely disrespected<sup>33</sup>

The constitution states no work may be compulsorily imposed unless by virtue of a law. However, many people (including citizens) from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa have been subjected to forced labour in domestic service, construction, cleaning, begging, and other sectors.

## Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



### Largely disrespected<sup>34</sup>

The Child Law sets the minimum age for regular employment at 15 and at 13 for seasonal employment, and prohibits employment of children from any work that “puts the health, safety, or morals of the child into danger.” However, authorities do not enforce child labour laws effectively.

## Right to acceptable conditions of work



### Largely disrespected<sup>35</sup>

There is a minimum wage for public sector workers but it only applies to direct government employees, and it is lower than what most government workers already earn. There is no private sector minimum wage, and the law does not require equal pay for equal work.

## Right to employment



### 12.7% - High unemployment<sup>36</sup>

Child mortality, life expectancy, primary and secondary school enrolment, and literacy rates have improved dramatically in the past thirty years, resulting in an increase in unemployment rates.

<sup>1</sup> A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

<sup>2</sup> Commonly-known information on the country is drawn from various Internet sources, including Google country pages, and Amnesty International. For death penalty see: “Death sentences and executions in 2013.” Amnesty International. March 24, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/001/2014/en/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 Egypt.” U.S Department of State. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a “disappearance” is different than simple arbitrary detention because a “disappearance” is considered permanent.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>9</sup> The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.

<sup>10</sup> “World Press Freedom Index.” Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<http://rsf.org/index2014/en-index2014.php>.

<sup>11</sup> “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 Egypt.” U.S Department of State. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>13</sup> “Egypt.” International Religious Freedom Report for 2014. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>.

<sup>14</sup> “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 Egypt.” U.S Department of State. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.

<sup>15</sup> Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).

<sup>16</sup> Freedom House’s Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free). Accessed February 4, 2016

<https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

<sup>17</sup> “Egypt.” Freedom in the World 2015: Egypt. January 1, 2015. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/egypt>.

<sup>18</sup> See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed February 4, 2016 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

<sup>19</sup> “Egypt.” Freedom in the World 2015: Egypt. January 1, 2015. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/egypt>.

<sup>20</sup> Transparency International (TI) publishes a "Corruption Perceptions Index" annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial secrecy. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows: 80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt

<sup>21</sup> "Egypt." Corruption by Country. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016. <http://www.transparency.org/country#EGY>.

<sup>22</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 Egypt." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.

<sup>23</sup> This metric is based on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights

<sup>24</sup> "Egypt." World Economic Forum. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies/#economy=EGY>.

<sup>25</sup> This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable

<sup>26</sup> "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed February 4, 2016. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

<sup>27</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 Egypt." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>30</sup> "ILGA World Map." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016. <http://ilga.org/>. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>31</sup> ILGA, the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, was founded in 1978 on the principle of highlighting state sponsored homophobia where it exists around the world. ILGA annually publishes a map with an accompanying report on sexual and gender based harassment, which focuses on both the legal and non-legal acts of state sponsored discrimination.

<sup>32</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 Egypt." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2014. Accessed February 4, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. U.S Department of State. See also a well-done Wikipedia comparison of wage, income and work week metrics across countries at

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_minimum\\_wages\\_by\\_country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minimum_wages_by_country)

<sup>36</sup> "Global Employment Trends." International Labour Organization. January 1, 2013. Accessed February 4, 2016. [http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/WCMS\\_233936/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/WCMS_233936/lang--en/index.htm).