



Universal Periodic Review of Egypt

Violations of Detention Conditions

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Submission by:

Egyptian Front for Human Rights¹

<https://egyptianfront.org/>



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I. Introduction

1. The report examines Egypt's violations of its negative obligation to respect the minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners as well as Egypt's failure to carry out its positive obligation to investigate, prosecute and punish acts of torture and treatment in detention places. In addition, the report demonstrates how the Egyptian authorities lack any political will to end the cycle of human rights abuses in detention places.
2. During its third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2019, Egypt accepted numerous recommendations, including improving detention conditions. Egypt also pledged to consider its ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. Egypt accepted 4 recommendations on providing detainees with medical care and family visits.²
3. Four years after Egypt's third UPR, when the Egyptian government accepted all UPR recommendations concerning the minimum standards for the Treatment of Prisoners and the practices of torture in detention places, Egyptian detainees still suffer from persistent violations including inhuman treatment, torture, solitary confinement, visits prohibition and denial of medical care.

II. Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

4. During its third cycle review, Egypt accepted implementing 16 recommendations on protecting the right to be free from torture and ill-treatment.
5. However, the definition of torture in Egyptian law³ still falls short of the definition in Article 1 of CAT. Article 126 of Egypt's Penal Code criminalizes torture. It states: "Any public official or employee who orders the torture of an accused person or does that himself in order to induce him to confess shall be punished with temporary hard labor or imprisonment from three to ten years. If the victim dies, the penalty prescribed for premeditated murder shall be imposed."

² Recommendations 31.89, 31.76, 31.11, 31.4

³ *Egypt: Penal Code*, No. 58 of 1937, August 1937, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/1937/en/119651>

6. Verbal and physical attacks and humiliation continue as a general rule for the treatment of detainees inside those detention places. These violations cannot be described as individual cases, as they are recurring in several stations, and also because the victims are exposed to considerable violations for which different institutions in the state are responsible.
7. The systematic pattern of torture appeared in how the Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecution handled the case of “Salam Police Station detainees”, In November 2021, a detainee in the First Salam Police Station recorded a video in the cell to document the physical and psychological torture (hanging from hands and beatings with sticks and preventing them from food) the detainees were subjected to there. The Guardian newspaper and a YouTuber published this video on many social media platforms after verifying it by an expert. Many newspapers published that some reference officers in the Ministry of Interior said that this video was fake. After that, the public prosecution dismissed claims made by detainees inside the Police Station and stated that the video aims to destabilize the country. The State Security Prosecution started to accuse many citizens (at least 20 defendants) under case No. 95 of 2022 with charges of joining a terrorist group, publishing false news, possessing two mobile phones in Al-Salam Police Station, and using them to film and broadcast torture incidents inside Al-Salam Police Station, and funding a terrorist group. The case includes one minor (Tamer Khaled Abdulaziz), who is 17 years old. The court ordered to include all the defendants on the terrorist list and place them under police surveillance for five years. In addition, the Court sentenced 8 defendants to life imprisonment, 13 to 15 years imprisonment and one defendant in absentia to life imprisonment. Moreover, the Court sentenced the minor “Tamer Khaled Abdulaziz” (17 years old) to five years imprisonment.⁴
8. The extrajudicial killing of economic researcher Ayman Hodhoud indicates that torture is systematic and organized and uses a parallel policy to the law in which various state agencies collude to prevent these facts from being exposed to public opinion. In February 2022, Mr. Ayman Hadhoud was forcibly disappeared. Mr. Hadhoud was held in custody before authorities transferred him to the Abbasseya Psychiatric Hospital, where the Egyptian prosecution stated that he grew ill and died. His body was stored improperly for weeks before his family was informed of his death. Without having conducted a proper investigation and despite visible signs of torture on Mr. Hadhoud’s body, the prosecution issued a statement saying that he died of a pre-existing heart condition.⁵

⁴ Joint Statement, “Retrial demanded for detainees allegedly tortured by police and sentenced by terrorism court for up to life imprisonment”, November 2022 <https://egyptianfront.org/2022/11/retrial-demanded-for-detainees-allegedly-tortured-by-police-and-sentenced-by-terrorism-court-for-up-to-life-imprisonment/>

⁵ Joint Statement, “Evidence of the abnormal death of economic researcher Ayman Hadhoud: Involvement extends to National Security, the Public Prosecution, and Abbasiya Mental Health Hospital”, April 2022 <https://egyptianfront.org/2022/04/evidence-of-the-abnormal-death-of-economic-researcher-ayman-hadhoud-involvement-extends-to-national-security-the-public-prosecution-and-abbasiya-mental-health-hospital/>

III. Conditions of Detention Places

9. EFHR team has monitored the names of at least forty-two deaths in different detention facilities between prisons, police stations and unknown places of detention, including at least three who died as a result of torture, the marks of which were later noticed by family members of the deceased. The majority of deaths, were due to gross medical negligence or because of poor conditions of detention, which led to the detainees' illness or exacerbation of diseases they were already suffering from. Among the prominent cases of deaths inside detention facilities was the case of the detainee, "Anwar Mousa al-Gazzar", a resident of North Sinai Governorate, who had been arrested as part of a campaign launched by the authorities against displaced citizens in the area. There were also repeated reports of detainees being beaten and tortured inside detention facilities, whether by the National Security Sector or by detective officers inside police stations. Also, a clear pattern appears in the deaths inside detention, whereas a large number of victims who were killed in detention were also victims of other violations, such as round-ups by the prosecution, prolonged denial of visits, enforced disappearances, and torture at the hands of the National Security Agency.⁶

10. In violation of the constitution and international law, many prisoners are prohibited from being allowed to visit. Visiting has been prohibited for many years, especially for the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood and their families. The WHRD Aisha Khairat Al-Shater is spending her imprisonment in solitary confinement and is prohibited from visiting. She was absolutely forbidden to see her children and family, in addition to her deteriorating health condition since she suffers from pernicious anaemia.⁷ Likewise, The WHRD Hoda Abdel Moneim was prevented from visiting on many occasions and necessary health care, although she suffers kidney failure and heart attacks that should have required her immediate transfer to the hospital.⁸

11. According to Egyptian law⁹, "Solitary confinement" shall not be imposed except by decision of the prison warden for a period not exceeding 15 days, and the total period of placement in solitary confinement shall not exceed 30 days. The law requires that this penalty be recorded in a special register subject to the control of the judiciary and the Public

⁶ EFHR, "A year since launching the national strategy for human rights: The status of detention conditions has not improved, nor exceeded propaganda to polish the regime", September 2022 <https://egyptianfront.org/2022/09/a-year-since-launching-the-national-strategy-for-human-rights-the-status-of-detention-conditions-has-not-improved-nor-exceeded-propaganda-to-polish-the-regime/>

⁷ Amnesty International, "Egypt: Further information: Unjustly jailed couple held incommunicado: Aisha el-Shater, Mohamed Abo Horeira", July 2023 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/7044/2023/en/>

⁸ Joint Statement, "Egypt: 2,000 days of arbitrary detention for human rights defender Hoda Abdel-Moneim", April 2024 <https://egyptianfront.org/2024/04/egypt-2000-days-of-arbitrary-detention-for-human-rights-defender-hoda-abdel-moneim/>

⁹ Joint Statement, "Alarming Death of Egyptian Economist and Researcher Following Forced Disappearance", April 2022 <https://egyptianfront.org/2022/04/alarming-death-of-egyptian-economist-and-researcher-following-forced-disappearance/>

Prosecution upon inspection of prisons. The penalty shall be lifted in accordance with Article 31 of the internal regulations of prisons before the end of his term if the doctor finds that there is harm to the prisoner's health.

12. However, solitary confinement became a systematic way of punishing political prisoners and abusing them psychologically¹⁰. the former presidential candidate and head of the "Strong Egypt" Party, Dr. Abdel Moneim Abul Fotouh had been in solitary confinement since he entered prison in 2018 till May 2023. Likewise, the Advisor on Foreign Affairs of former president Mohamed Morsi, Mr. Essam Al-Hadad has been prohibited from family visits for more than 7 years (Since October 2016). He was held under solitary confinement in Scorpion Prison for more than 4 years (from December 2013 to February 2018). Then, he was transferred to Tora Liman Prison in 2018 to be held under solitary confinement there until October 2022. He is currently held in Badr 1 Prison where he has been prevented from family/lawyer visits. He had been forced to sleep on the floor of his solitary cell, prevented from buying food from the prison canteen and prevented his family from bringing him food. Mr. Essam Al-Hadad has persistently been denied access to medical care.
13. The former speaker of the Muslim Brotherhood group, Mr. Gehad Al-Hadad has banned from visits and been held in solitary confinement since his arrest in 2013. Mr. Gehad has been subjected to ill-treatment and stripped of their personal belongings and medications on several occasions. During his detention in Scorpion Prison, Mr Gehad was held in a solitary confinement cell measuring 170 cm x 230 cm. It had a hole in the floor to be used as a toilet and the cell had one small window covered with at least four layers of bars and wires so the cell got very damp and very cold. The cell was full of insects. In addition, Mr. Gehad had been banned from the daily hour exercise, he was not allowed to leave his cell. He was being held in complete isolation from the outside world without any newspapers and books. several complaints regarding the mentioned ill-treatment and violations were sent to the Attorney General but were never investigated.¹¹
14. From 2017 to 2020, Mr. Anas Al-Beltagy¹² was held in solitary confinement in Scorpion Prison and banned from visits. In September 2022, Mr. Anas was transferred to Badr III

10 Amnesty International (AI), "Crushing Humanity: The Abuse of Solitary Confinement in Egypt's Prisons", 2018 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/8257/2018/en/>

¹¹ Joint Statement, "Egypt: Judicial authorities condemned for "recycling" political prisoners into new cases after the end of their prison term", 2024. <https://egyptianfront.org/2024/02/egypt-judicial-authorities-condemned-for-recycling-political-prisoners-into-new-cases-after-the-end-of-their-prison-term/>

¹² DAWN, "Anas El-Beltagy: 19-Year-Old Student Denied Fair Trial, Remains Unjustly Imprisoned after Four Separate Acquittals Eight Years Later", 2022 <https://dawnmena.org/anas-el-beltagy-19-year-old-student-denied-fair-trial-remains-unjustly-imprisoned-after-four-separate-acquittals-eight-years-later/>

Prison where he was held in solitary confinement, prevented from receiving visits and banned from the daily hours of exercise. In November 2022, Mr. Anas was moved to Badr I prison where the prison administration didn't allow him to receive any visits neither allowing entering food, blankets or medicines.

IV. Conditions of the new Egyptian Prisons:

15. In December 2021, the Ministry of Interior announced the opening of the Badr Rehabilitation Center as an extension of the security complex in Badr City, which was built on an area of 85 acres to include three reform and rehabilitation centers, one of which is the Badr III Prison. The government has shown the development of buildings and control systems and also indicated the rights enjoyed by inmates within it, such as the right to health care, visitation, exercise, education, etc. Nevertheless, EFHR monitored and documented many violations inside Badr III Prison which shows the continuous suffering of the detainees inside the new prisons.¹³

16. Visits prohibition: Detainees who were transferred from Tora Maximum Security (Scorpion) Prison to Badr III Prison have been banned from family/lawyer visits noting that they were subjected to the same violation in the Tora Prison for six years. Therefore, families of some detainees submitted an official complaint to the National Council for Human Rights regarding the continuous deprivation of their right to visit. It's worth noting that there is not any communication means (phone calls or letters) between those detainees and their families/lawyers. The administration of Badr III Prison continues to prevent families from bringing in clothes, textbooks, hygiene tools, or anything else that is permitted by law. Regarding the food, the guards sometimes allow a specific quantity of food and other times, they don't allow food to detainees during the visit.

17. Inhuman treatment: Prisoners detained inside Badr III Prison are subjected to insults by prison officials, which prompted one of the detainees, a Muslim Brotherhood leader, to declare his hunger strike for more than three weeks in response to being insulted. The water is not potable, it is polluted and contains grains of sand. Despite this, the prison administration refuses to allow the families to bring water during the visit. Also, the flashlights are continuously shining inside all the cells 24/7 in addition to the presence of surveillance cameras inside the cells which violates the privacy of detainees and puts additional psychological pressure on them.

¹³ EFHR, "Detention conditions unchanged in Badr 3 Center for Rehabilitation: EFHR Demands a visit from the National Human Rights Council", October 2022. <https://egyptianfront.org/2022/10/detention-conditions-unchanged-in-badr-3-center-for-rehabilitation-efhr-demands-visit-from-the-national-human-rights-council/>

18. In March 2023, there was an increased escalation of suicide attempts inside Badr Rehabilitation Center III, ranging from hanging attempts, artery slitting and ingesting large amounts of drugs. These reports had not been corroborated due to the Egyptian authorities' lack of transparency, their refusal to visitation rights to family members and their prevention of the accused from attending the prosecution's interrogation sessions under the pretext of a technical issue that lasted for 3 weeks. After that, During a court [hearing](#) on March 13, 2023, prisoners informed the court of the torture and other violations committed against them at Badr III prison, the judge, however, denied the lawyers' request to put the prisoners' statements on a separate record and open an investigation into their complaints. EFHR was able to reach the lawyer of one of the victims (Abdul Mohsen Abdel Moneim Abdel Hamid) who attempted suicide on March 13, 2023, and the family of another victim (Hussam Ibrahim Sayed Ibrahim) who attempted suicide on February 24, 2023¹⁴.
19. Based on the EFHR documentation, there have been at least 8 deaths in custody since Badr prison was opened in mid-2022. Mohamed Abdulhamid El-Sefy, Alaa Mohamed Abdalnaby, Magdy Al-Shabrawy, Hassan Diab Hassan and Gehad Abdulghany died due to denial of medical care in addition to the death of Saeed Habshy, Sameh Mohamed Mansour and Ali Abbas Barkat in Badr I prison, again due to medical negligence.
20. In November 2022, Omar Ali, a political prisoner was sexually harassed in the presence of the detective inspector. The incident took place in Badr Prison. The police officers started searching Ali, and before he was asked to undress, three security personnel stripped him of his clothes by force while he was handcuffed, and repeatedly harassed him in the presence of a detective inspector and in a place where there are many surveillance cameras.¹⁵
21. In May 2024, the violations were escalated in Badr 1 Prison/Rehabilitation Center including power cuts and their impact on the ventilation system and detainees' health. This led the detainees to announce a protest strike at the end of May to demand improvements in these deteriorating conditions. In response, the prison administration imposed punitive

¹⁴ Joint Statement, "Rights Groups Warn of Collective Punishment at Badr Prison: International Committee of the Red Cross and Independent Rights Groups Must be Granted Access to Badr Prison Complex", March 2023 <https://egyptianfront.org/2023/03/rights-groups-warn-of-collective-punishment-at-badr-prison-international-committee-of-the-red-cross-and-independent-rights-groups-must-be-granted-access-to-badr-prison-complex/>

¹⁵ Joint Statement, "Sexual assault of detainee Omar Ali in Badr Prison denounced by human rights organizations", November 2022. <https://egyptianfront.org/2022/11/sexual-assault-of-detainee-omar-ali-in-badr-prison-denounced-by-human-rights-organizations/>

measures, including “taghrib”, transferring some detainees to other cells or other prisons such as Minya Prison.¹⁶

22. In light of these conditions, the detainees announced their demands concerning improving conditions inside the prison in a letter reviewed by EFHR. After the demands were presented to the national security officer through negotiations, they were rejected. The prison administration responded by increasing daily cell inspections, including disruptive night searches where detainees were exposed to bright lights during sleep, believed to be a pressure tactic against the strikers, impacting their psychological and physical health. Furthermore, the authorities separated the striking detainees from non-striking ones based on lists provided. They isolated these individuals in separate cells within Badr 1 Prison and transferred some to Minya Prison on June 8, with additional plans to move them to New Valley Prison, according to the families of detainees. For those who remained, conditions worsened with cuts to water and electricity, restricted access to food and canteen services. Additionally, the prison authorities took a group of detainees, shaved their heads, and did not allow them to take any extra clothing or food with them, confiscating their medications and essential items.
23. In 2024, several detained girls in the 10th of Ramdan Prison for women were being harassed and treated harshly. They are being harassed by inmates incited by the prison security and are forced to sleep on the floor without beds.
24. In June 2024, the administration of the 10th of Ramadan Prison for Men did not allow former presidential candidate Ahmed Tantawy to receive a lawyer visit, despite him having obtained permission from the Public Prosecution. Tantawy also faces challenges regarding family visits, which he is only allowed once a month compared to the standard every 15 days for others. Additionally, he suffers from sleep difficulties related to his detention conditions and has requested a blindfold, which his family believes is due to the constant lighting in his cell. This situation makes his family worried about his safety inside the prison.

Recommendations for Action by the State Under Review

The Egyptian Front for Human Rights calls on the Egyptian government to:

Torture and other ill-treatment

¹⁶ EFHR, “Before it becomes another Badr 3: EFHR calls for improving detention conditions in Badr 1 Prison and an immediate halt to arbitrary punitive measures in response to a protest strike by detainees inside”, June 2024 <https://egyptianfront.org/2024/06/before-it-becomes-another-badr-3-efhr-calls-for-improving-detention-conditions-in-badr-1-prison-and-an-immediate-halt-to-arbitrary-punitive-measures-in-response-to-a-protest-strike-by-detainees-insi/>

- End the practice of torture and ill-treatment and adopt a zero-tolerance policy in all places of detention.
- Adopt a definition of torture which fully corresponds to the definition in Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention that prohibits torture for purposes of punishment, coercion or intimidation, or discrimination, as well as against persons not in police custody or suspected of committing a criminal act.
- Guarantee that all complaints of torture or ill-treatment, including those relating to death in custody, are investigated promptly, impartially and independently.
- Prosecute perpetrators of torture, including those with command or superior responsibility.
- Adopt a system of independent national monitoring of all places of detention.
- Accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Conditions of Detention Places

- Ensure effective independent and impartial investigation into the unlawful deaths of all detainees/prisoners who had died in custody since 2013, for the prosecution of the alleged perpetrators, and compensation for the victims' families.
- Ensure that detained persons have access to necessary and proper medical care while in detention.
- Ensure that detention facilities have adequate sanitation, ventilation, food, exercise, and meaningful contact procedures.
- Opening of an independent and impartial investigation into allegations of torture, sexual assaults and suicide attempts inside Badr Rehabilitation Center III and other prisons.
- Protect those in custody from ill-treatment, and solitary confinement and ensure their regular access to their families and lawyers.