



National Council for Human Rights

**The National Council for Human Rights Assessment of  
The Civil and Political Rights Situation in Egypt  
From November 2020- September 2022**

**Report Presented to the 137<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights  
Committee**

**On the Occasion of the Discussion of Egypt's Periodic  
Review in accordance with Article no.40 of the International  
Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**

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## **Introduction:**

**Egypt's National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) is the national independent institution in charge of the promotion protection and monitoring of human rights in Egypt. The NCHR was established in accordance with the Paris Principles, and has acquired and maintained a Status A classification by GANHRI since its inception in 2004. On October 2021, and based on nominations by civil society organizations, the Egyptian Parliament voted on the selecting 27 NCHR members, including woman with track record on human rights as President of the council for the first time in its history. Women account for 44% of the new NCHR's structure, while NGOs account for 50% of the members. The new structure of the NCHR was widely appreciation among the human rights community in Egypt.**

Egypt's government delay in presenting its periodic report on the state of implementation of civil and political rights in accordance with Egypt's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) unveils abstinent challenge in the country where human rights were perceived as a foreign agenda which does not suit the Egyptian



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community. This is underscored by the numerous obstacles. The resistance facing the process of addressing female genital mutilation and child marriage in Egypt, in early 2000 is one example. Defenders of the rights of girls and women to be protected from such heinous crimes were taken to court accusing them of promoting a foreign agenda inconsistent with the Islamic Sharia and Egyptians' traditions. Furthermore, Egyptian women have long suffered from a flagrant discrimination, including their deprivation of their right to register their children in case the father denied child's fatherhood, while men were entitled to register their children without providing any documentation. While men back then enjoyed the absolute right to divorce their wives without their consent or even their knowledge, women in Egypt spend decades in courts trying to divorce men they are unable to cohabit. Furthermore, the rapist's punishment was to marry his victim significantly subjugate women and embody a legal and societal violation of the victim's right to dignity and to make decisions that affect their life. These simple examples do not include girls' deprivation of their right to education, in addition to passive acquiescence of high rates of child labor.

Moreover, the political parties have historically seen major crackdowns which included their elimination following the 1952 revolution. Attempts to restore their ability to engage in the political life, were not viable. Al-Wafd party was the only one



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that survived ever since. The Egyptian state has recently encouraged youth to engage in the political life and join political parties. Most of such parties are still infants.

Against such a backdrop, the launch of Egypt's first ever national strategy for human rights on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021, represents a paradigm shift underscoring a major leap in addressing human rights enjoyment in a country that contributed actively in the forties of the past century towards drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and has been at the forefront of states that supported the global movement of human rights. Furthermore, the state has ratified ten human rights instruments.

The National Human Rights Strategy (NHRS) was drafted by the Standing Human Rights Committee which includes in its membership representatives of the relevant line ministries and governmental authorities, in collaboration with civil society organizations; NGOs operating in the field of human rights and; the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR). The launch of the strategy aims to advance human rights in Egypt, by promoting and protecting human rights in its entirety. It underscores the state's commitment to ensure that its citizens enjoy their rights. NHRS was launched under the auspices of, and in the presence of the President of the Republic, demonstrating a solid commitment to adhere to international human rights standards.



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NSHR is composed of four-axis; civil and political rights as the first pillar which comprises 9 articles (the right to life and physical safety, personal freedom, litigation and the safeguards to a fair trial, humane treatment of prisoners and detainees, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and of association, freedom of religion and belief, and the right to privacy). Each article lists the related achievements, the underlying opportunities and challenges, as well as the target outcomes.

Moving forward, the strategic plan (2021-2026) comprises 4 key pillars that includes 27 areas of rights, structured on a mathematical basis, aiming to achieve its objectives within the proposed timeline of the strategy. Economic, social and cultural rights constitute the second axis, which comprises 8 areas of rights. The third axis consisted of the rights of women, children, youth, people with disabilities and the elderly.

The National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) argues that the NSHR should have included the first two pillars, with the assertion of the core principle of the right to non - discrimination. Such reference would be in compliance with international human rights standards. first two pillars were sufficient, noting that this distribution is disregarding the fact that human rights as stated in the first two pillars have to be implemented without discrimination on basis of gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, or age among other reasons. Therefore, this



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notion was sufficient to avoid overlooking any possible aspect of discrimination in the enjoyment of rights, as stipulated in all human rights conventions. Moreover, the strategy has allocated a third pillar for human rights awareness and the fourth for capacity building. NCHR considers this classification as confusing human rights with its measures of implementation namely capacity nurturing and promoting a culture supportive of the implementation of human rights.

The Egyptian President, on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in another positive step has announced his decision not to extend the state of emergency, underscoring the country's stability and security, as well as the successes of the security forces in eliminating terrorism. In April 2021, President El-Sisi called for the launch of a national dialogue that involves all Egyptians without discrimination, the call was coupled with the restructuring of the "Presidential Pardon committee", in line with the article no.155 of the 2014 Constitution enabling the President to issue pardon resolutions to release prisoners or reduce their sentence.

At the time of drafting this report, over 1,500 prisoners were released by the Presidential Pardon committee. A significant number of the aforementioned releases came as an outcome of the NCHR's efforts and requests. Moreover, NCHR has called on January 20<sup>th</sup> to release prisoners who committed no violence in light of the President's call for the national dialogue and





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under the framework of respect for the right to freedom of expression.

In accordance with the aforementioned, the Presidential Pardon Committee, on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022, has launched a website to receive presidential pardon applications and facilitate the progress of grievance for detainees' families. The individuals applying for presidential pardon are required to include the full name of the applicant, his/her national ID number, case number and the governorate.

The presidential pardon resolutions issued from May to October 2022 13 pardon resolutions. Moreover, the committee issued a statement on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 stressing that it is coordinating with the relevant state institutions upon a presidential directive to receive requests of the released individuals to meet their needs. it expanded its mandate to include, rehabilitation, support and reintegration of freed persons. The declared objective was to ensure their return to normalcy including resolving any family; economic; or employment related problems as a result to their imprisonment.



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## **First: The right to life, physical safety and torture prevention:**

The NHRS aims to set a framework to revisit the hardcore crimes punishable by the death sentence putting into account the societal conditions and the relevant studies and in line with the regional and international human rights conventions ratified by Egypt. There are no reports on the progress made in this matter until present.

Furthermore, the strategy aims to prevent all forms of torture and to ensure investigating the related allegations and protect the rights of torture victims. The main achievements accomplished in this area include Gender based violence GBV, ie. harshening the penalties of sexual harassment and female genital mutilation. The relevant achievements also include the witness protection law, promoting legal awareness about the practices that constitute cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment through the launch of several campaigns aimed at addressing and preventing violence, in addition to raising the awareness and capacities of the relevant state officials and employees.

On the promotion of the right to life and physical safety, the Egyptian state has issued the law no. 214 of 2020 regulating medical clinical research on December 2020, which is a legislative breakthrough towards setting the necessary



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foundations, standards and controls to conducting medical clinical research studies, and the protection of the volunteers in these experiments, which apply to preventive, diagnostic, treatment and non-treatment medical research. The aforementioned law came consistent with the key international ethical principles related to human experimentation including the Nuremberg code, and the WMA Helsinki Declaration.

### **Awareness raising and capacity building pillars of NSHR:**

The human rights administration at the Public Prosecutor's office has conducted 31 training courses benefiting 575 public prosecution employees.

Capacity building and training of police personnel on commitment to and adoption of the human rights international standards and principles, have continued as well as the capacity building of the prison and places of detention management personnel in accordance to the prisons regulations (which were later renamed as societal protection centers). Moreover, advanced training programs in human rights were implemented in specific areas, namely the rights of women, children, people with disabilities, human trafficking and illegal migration, while codes of conduct were also integrated in the training and awareness programs designed for law enforcement personnel.



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## **The treatment of people deprived of their liberty:**

The Ministry of Interior (MOI) has launched a new strategy related to the management of punitive and correctional institutions, and has renamed some of its divisions, including renaming the prisons division to the societal protection division.

The NHRS calls for the adoption of the modern punitive philosophy, which consists of turning the old places of detention to modern facilities capable of rehabilitating the inmates and to provide them with adequate care during the period of their detention. The rehabilitation plans involved comprehensive programs which were drafted by a slew of specialists in various areas of social sciences and mental health, aiming to prioritize education, re-integration and the reform of concepts and ideas as well as adjusting behavior to ensure that the released individuals would not breach the law after their release.

Following the establishment of a new modern facility “Wadi el-Natroon reform and rehabilitation center”, which is set to replace 12 prisons (25% of the total number of public prisons in Egypt), it is considered as a first step to replacing all Egypt’s prisons with similar centers complying with human rights standards. Three other reform and rehabilitation centers were established in Badr city. Old prison are, however, still functioning.



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Furthermore, the Egyptian state has set advanced mechanisms to organize prison visitations by pre-setting visitation dates with the families of inmates using an electronic application, in addition to the allocation of specific phone lines for this purpose.

The Public Prosecution has taken into account the COVID-19 pandemic conditions while issuing pretrial detention orders. In this regard, the Public Prosecution has extensively used the article no. 201 of the penal procedures code, including house detention or suspects oversight where they are required to visit police stations at specific timings or prohibiting them from going to specific places.

The Public Prosecution's Department of International Cooperation, Execution of Sentences, and Prisoners Care, in 2020, has addressed the Ministry of Interior's division of societal protection, highlighting the key measures and procedures to be followed by prisoners to ensure the inmates safety. On the other hand, the Public Prosecution is performing its key role in overseeing prisons and places of detention and ensuring they are consistent with the law.

Furthermore, the Public Prosecution's Department of International Cooperation, Execution of Sentences, and Prisoners Care has also addressed the Ministry of Interior to



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extensively implement article no, 64 bis of the law regulating prisons' regulations that address prisoners phone calls with their families during the pandemic.

The Department also addressed the MOI's societal protection division to follow up on the commitment to vaccinate the inmates against COVID-19.

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, visitation has been suspended in all reform and rehabilitation centers visits, in an attempt to protect public health amid the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, while it was resumed on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, along with implementing the following measures:

The inmates' visitation schedule were set according to alphabetical order and the visitation rooms capacity, putting into account leaving a safe distance between the inmates and their families according to the rule (one visitor for every inmate for 20 minutes per month).

MOI announced 118 phone numbers on the ministry's website, for the reform and rehabilitation centers, which were allocated to inquire about visitation schedules. The Ministry has also launched an application to enable inmates' families to set visitation schedules.

The visitation rooms have been cleaned and sanitized before being equipped with a wire barrier to implement the safe



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distancing between inmates and visitors, as well as providing face masks for inmates and visitors.

The NCHR conducted a number of visits to the new rehabilitation centers, led by NCHR President and include members and researchers, where they were able to listen to the grievances of inmates' families and assess the quality of services provided in the centers.

### **The Safeguards of a Fair Trial:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of pretrial detention alternatives were implemented and the justice system was subject to development towards digital transformation which included remote pretrial detention. Furthermore, the state introduced the online litigation in economic courts.

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Prosecutor General held and chaired an emergency meeting for the Arab Public Prosecutors' Association Executive Committee, via video conferencing, under the framework of the Egyptian Public Prosecution strategy aimed at addressing the COVID-19 pandemic's implications on the national and regional fronts. The meeting was aimed at exchanging expertise and exploring the best practices implemented by the member states public prosecution offices, as well as the procedures taken to address the pandemic's implications to protect the health and safety of citizens, public



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prosecution members and public officers as well as detainees and prisoners, without prejudice to the rules of swift justice and good law enforcement standards. Under this framework, the Egyptian parliament “House of Representatives” has announced the discussion of the penal procedures code amendments aimed at closer harmonization with human rights standards, overcoming a number of hurdles to protecting human rights.

Under the framework of strengthening the safeguards of fair trial, the House of Representatives has announced discussing the amendments of the Code of Criminal Procedures, which NCHR considers as a window of opportunity to overcome major hurdles hindering the enforcement of human rights which was among the NCHR’s most pressing demands and top priority.

### **The right to association:**

In January 2021, the executive regulations of the new NGOs law. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, the House of Representatives approved a draft law presented by the Egyptian government amending some of the provisions of the NGOs law (Law no.149 of 2019). The law no.23 of 2022 was issued, which addresses reconciling status of regulating NGOs in Egypt. The amendment stipulates that all associations, civil institutions, federations, regional and foreign non-governmental organizations, and entities that practice civil work reconcile their positions within a year from





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the date this law comes into force. The NCHR has publicly demanded to extend the deadline for NGOs to reconcile their positions, the council's request was approved and the deadline was extended until the end of 2023, in an attempt to enable the NGOs that were unable to reconcile their legal status due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related implications. Due to the aforementioned implications, many NGOs were unable to hold an extraordinary general assembly as stipulated in article no.7 of the law's executive regulation as a prerequisite for reconciling their positions and approve the amended articles of incorporation, and thus have become threatened to be dissolved for falling short of reconciling their positions. The amendment enables NGOs to enjoy the advantages guaranteed by the law.

The Egyptian President has declared the year 2022 as the year of civil society, NCHR sees this as an opportunity to deal with outstanding obstacles.

According to the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS), the number of NGOs operating in Egypt is over 52,000 organizations, of which 32,000 organizations have presented the documents required to reconcile their position before the legal deadline, while 20,000 organizations have called the government to extend the deadline and their request was approved.



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On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the National Alliance for Civil and Development Work (NASDW) was established, with the participation of major private sector and civil work organizations (24 organizations), including the General Federation of NGOs. Some members of the civil society question the role of the alliance vis -a-vis the General Federation of NGOs

The NASDW has launched a number of initiatives aimed at providing support to beneficiaries, while the alliance's efforts also included providing food and educational supplies. There have been demands calling upon NASDW to priorities development and empowerment.

### **Freedom of expression, and the right to free access to information:**

The Article no.65 of the 2014 Constitution has stipulated that freedom of thought and opinion is guaranteed, and that all individuals have the right to express their opinion through speech, writing, imagery or any other means of expression and publication. Therefore, the NHRS aims to ensure the issuance of a law regulating the right to access and circulation of information. Therefore, the Supreme Council for Media Regulation has held a series of meetings and discussion panels aiming to reach a societal consensus on the aforementioned law draft in light of the issuance of the law no.151 of 2020 on the



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protection of personal data, which was preceded by the issuance of the law on Anti-Cyber and Information Technology Crimes.

Subsequently, 100 satellite channels, websites and newspapers received their licenses in line with the provisions of the law.180 of 2018.

### **Freedom of Belief and Religion:**

The NCHR lauds the issuance of the law no.190 of 2020 on the formation of Boards of Directors of Endowment bodies for Catholic Church, Evangelical Community. In implementation for this law, the Presidential Decree no.80 of 2021 was issued to form the Board of Directors of the endowment body of the Catholic Church, which stipulated that the board's term shall be 4 years, to be chaired by the head of the church. Moreover, the Presidential Decree no.81 of 2021 was issue to form the Board of Directors of the Endowment Body of the Evangelical Community, which stipulated that the board's term is 4 years, to be chaired by the head of its church. The NCHR believes that these laws represent a paradigm shift in the process of promoting the rights of Egypt's Christians "Copts".

Moreover, Egypt's government has drafted a USD 70 million plan aimed at restoring Jewish synagogues in Cairo and Alexandria, including the Eliahu Hanavi Synagogue which was inaugurated on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 after the completion of its



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restoration, in addition to the restoration of the old Jewish cemeteries in Fustat city in Cairo.

In a step underscoring the respect for Egypt's Jews civil rights, the government has revised the construction plan of Cairo ring road to avoid the destruction of Jews' cemeteries.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Higher Education has launched a strategy aimed at addressing extremism in Egyptian Universities curriculum 2019-2023, by setting objectives, policies, programs and plans to detect the key aspects of extremism and Takfiri thought, and identifying points of strength and weakness in the efforts aimed at addressing it.

Under the same framework, the current educational curricula were revised (which is applicable until 2029) to ensure it is free from any texts restricting religious freedom, and that it promotes values of citizenship and peaceful coexistence. The aforementioned texts were repeatedly revised in collaboration with Muslim and Christian scholars, as well as University professors and public opinion representatives in Egypt.

Moreover, The Arabic Language and Religious Education curricula were also revised to reflect values of acceptance and respect for differences to be publishing in the 2021-2022 academic year. The aforementioned curricula were proven consistent with values of acceptance, respect for religious freedoms, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, they were also



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proven free of hate speech and incitement on violence, directly or indirectly.

The Ministry of Awqaf has issued over 182 books to promote the enlightened moderate Islamic approach, including the “Rou’ya” series, in addition to launching the e-awqaf portal and boosting e-publishing in over 23 languages, as well as translating the Friday’s sermon in over 18 languages. Moreover, the Ministry seeks to promote the values of citizenship through its fruitful cooperation with the Egyptian Church.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) has launched the “Awareness” program in February 2020, as part of the efforts aimed at changing the negative societal behavior that hinder the economic and human development. The aforementioned program supplies Egyptians with the necessary legal and religious information in 12 societal topics.

The Egyptian cabinet issued resolution no.51 of 2022 to form a taskforce chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the membership of relevant authorities to set the necessary mechanisms to implement the national strategy for efficient religious communication abroad drafted by Egypt’s Dar Al Ifta.

### **Seventh: Obstacles facing the promotion of civil and political rights in Egypt:**



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The culture of human rights is still ancient in Egypt. It needs strengthening among many segments of the population, as well as executive officials in charge of the protection and promotion of human rights, including professionals in areas such as education, media, religious education and providers of public services. Moreover, there is a need to amend a wide range of laws to comply with human rights standards.

A wide range of the political parties in Egypt were recently established, and many of them are in need for capacity building and support, while a significant number of NGOs are lacking human rights knowledge, approach and methodology in the planning and implementation of its activities and the monitoring and evaluation, and good governance of their internal affairs.

The relevant progress pace is generally slow, as achieving significant improvement in this field requires changing deep-rooted values, practices, laws and legislations. The NCHR will lobby for ensuring that the review of Code of Criminal Procedures will resolve many outstanding problems and will hopefully overcome the challenges posed by the current law. Most notably, the related hurdles are as follows:

1. death penalty: The need to review the gravest crimes punishable by death penalty in line with the specialized



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studies and the regional and international human rights instruments ratified by Egypt.

2. Individual practices that represent violations to the body's inviolability, including sexual harassment and violence against women, as well as the female genital mutilation.
3. The assault, physical abuse and ill treatment of children at social care centers and orphanages, mental health and addiction center inmates, and elderly care establishments.
4. The absence of an adequate framework regulating pretrial detention causes and term in the domestic laws.
5. The penal code does not include an e-monitoring system as an alternative for pretrial detention.
6. The lack of an adequate legal awareness in the society, which is considered a crime of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment according to law, as well as the lack of awareness about the rights of the victims and the necessary methods to address them.
7. The need to draft a law that allows considering pretrial detention orders remotely, which would allow the judge to directly communicate with the person on pretrial detention in the presence of his/her lawyer via video conferencing, allowing the suspect to defend himself/ herself adequately.



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8. The criminal procedure code does not include a text forbidding extinctive prescription in all crimes posing violation to personal freedoms in cases where the culprit is a public servant or assigned to conduct a public service.
9. The growing number of lawsuits pending in courts, which entails long periods of waiting before a final verdict is issued, in addition to a limited number of cases in which criminal orders may be issued to reduce the number of cases in misdemeanor courts.
10. There is a continued need to develop and modernize rehabilitation and reform centers and to enhance the level of services provided to inmates, including healthcare services, despite the ongoing efforts in this regard.
11. The criminal procedure code does not include a text enabling plaintiffs to initiate direct civil proceedings in crimes of violation of personal freedom, in case the defendant is a public servant, or an individual assigned to conduct a public service.
12. The lack of a legal framework regulating access and circulation of official information, data and statistics despite being a constitutional right.
13. The lack of a comprehensive code of conduct for media and journalist activities, including visual, paper,





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audio and read media, which set the standards of freedom of expression without prejudice to the rights of others.

14. The need to modernize the laws regulating syndicates and labor unions.
15. Human and financial resources shortage at the vast majority of political parties.
16. Fanatic religious discourse continues to pose a problem. Therefore, it is imperative to modernize the religious discourse to strengthen values of diversity, tolerance, and to reject extremism.
17. The need for a legal framework that protects the rights of defendants, witnesses and suspects.

**Eighth: The efforts of the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR):**

**promotion of civil and political rights in 2022:**

The NCHR adopts a human rights based approach in all its activities and interventions. It adopts a policy of transparency, objective handling, and compliance with international human rights standards, that motivates and encourages the state's efforts aimed at integrating a human rights approach in the public



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services and official resolutions, in addition to the integration of the human rights into national actions and programs. NCHR contributes to national debates around harmonization of domestic legislations, educational curricula and the religious and media discourse, as well as the daily life of the Egyptian population. This policy underscores the NCHR's understanding of its role and the purpose of its establishment as an independent national institution aiming to promote and protect human rights in Egypt, as well as issuing periodic reports monitoring the human rights situation in the country. NCHR plays an active role in nurturing a popular culture supportive of the protection, promotion and provision of human rights.

NCHR played a key role in encouraging law enforcement agents and public prosecutors to engage with United Nations Office on Crime and Drugs UNODC.

25- NCHR drafted a training manual in line with the Nelson Mandela standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners, awaiting coordination with the Ministry of Interior's human rights division to start the training courses.

26- NCHR partners with a number of civil society organizations and political parties, including the Coordination Committee of Parties' Youth leaders and politicians to implement a program aimed at supporting and integrating released prisoners.



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27- NCHR signed a protocol of cooperation with Ein Shams University to promote human rights and to review human rights curricula to strengthen its compliance with international human rights criteria.

28- The NCHR's civil and political rights committee comprises political activists, heads of political parties and experts in fields of development and human rights.

The NCHR's civil and political rights committee has carried out a number of initiatives and activities in 2022 directly linked to the Egyptians civil and political rights, including: conducting a high-level workshop gathering opposition political parties and blocked websites discussing their vision on the promotion of the civil and political rights in the country. The committee also organized a workshop on the freedom of innovation and academic freedoms, in addition to a series of meetings involving figures of various backgrounds including representatives of political parties, civil society organizations, youth, trade unions, journalists and intellectuals, where they exchange various views which contradicted at times with the state's views, issuing solid and free recommendations in the discussed areas.

Under this framework, the NCHR, represented by the civil and political rights committee, has contributed to the implementation



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of the NHRS. The NCHR is also implementing a project to consolidate democracy in cooperation with the Swiss Cooperation Program and the Swiss Embassy in Cairo entitled “Supporting Political Participation and Democracy Mechanisms in Egypt”.

The project seeks to provide a safe framework for the civil society organizations in Egypt to freely engage in dialogue under the umbrella of the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) and where possible in collaboration with legislative and executive branches, targeting the implementation of the NHRS.

Under the framework of the implementation of the aforementioned project, the following observations have been noted:

- The project has provided an opportunity for the representatives of political parties, NGOs, trade unions and students unions for political engagement and freedom of expression.
- It has successfully attracted the participation of the representatives of NGOs, human rights specialists, intellectuals, trade unions figures, scholars and journalists to conduct efficient dialogues with government authorities, parliamentarians and decision makers under the patronage of the NCHR.



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The NCHR continues its efforts aimed at harmonizing domestic legislations with the international human rights conventions ratified by the country. The NCHR's legislative committee has engaged in drafting a law draft criminalizing hate speech and child marriage as well as formulating a law on medical responsibility and human rights including the right to health as defined by WHO. .

The NCHR has signed moreover signed a cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to enable the council to engage with the youth in raising awareness about human rights and their role in promoting the culture of human rights, as well as the importance of political participation. Under this framework, the NCHR addressed hooliganism, as one of the concrete indicators of hate speech.

Furthermore, the NCHR President has conducted a series of dialogues which included 9 universities and youth groups on the Universal Human Rights Declaration and the National Human Rights Strategy, through which she sought to follow a participatory approach and giving youth the opportunity to lead the dialogue and freely express their views. The series of dialogues involved 4,500 young men and women in 9 Universities. During these activities, the NHRS was discussed in a simplified manner in a way that is youth friendly as part of wide-scale efforts of promoting the culture of human rights.



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Moreover, the NCHR signed a cooperation protocol with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), which entails revisiting the strategic action plan of NCCM from a human rights approach.

The NCHR also signed a cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Education, and Ain Shams University, aiming to promote the culture of human rights, building the capacities of the employees in the aforementioned entities and revisiting education curricula. With the active participation of university students.

In collaboration with the Ain Shams University, the students will be engaged in revising human rights curricula taught to university students.

Signing of a similar protocol with Cairo University is in the pipeline and will take place on 22 March 2023.

Furthermore, the NCHR has signed a cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) to build the capacity of professionals dealing with civil society associations and marginalized groups. The signing took place during the 15<sup>th</sup> Civil Society Forum held by NCHR.

In cooperation with the Medical Syndicate and the Human Rights Committee at the House of Representatives, the NCHR held a panel discussion on the Medical Liability Law and Human Rights, discussing the enjoyment of the right to health



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and dignity in line with the definition of the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as providing high-quality health services without discrimination.

On January 17<sup>th</sup> 2023, the NCHR organized the 15<sup>th</sup> Civil Society Forum with the participation of 150 NGOs on a hybrid basis, as some of them participated in the event virtually.

The NCHR has issued its action strategy (2021-2024), which is available on its official website.

### **Ninth: Challenges:**

- Lack of a culture of dialogue and the need to be able to achieve social, cultural and political consensus.
- Lack of a culture supportive of human rights within administrative bodies and the society at large.
- Transparent partnership between the civil society organizations and state institutions is still nascent.
- Fragile capacity of small CSOs.
- Despite relative improvements, there is need for further efforts to empower civil society organizations.



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- The legal and legislative structure needs further amendments to keep abreast with the NHRS, the constitution and the international human rights conventions.
- NHRS still lacks executive action plan.
- The NHRS stipulated that the Standing Human Rights Committee shall cooperate with human rights departments in line ministries without identifying the mechanism of these activities.
- The NHRS presented a number of objectives aimed at promoting the culture of human rights, along with identifying the entities that will engage in this process, the mechanism of communication with the relevant entities and the implementation of the related procedures is still not available.
- The NHRS is not clear on the role of crucial entities such as the National Council for Women and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities.

#### **Tenth: recommendations:**

- Create a safe public sphere for dialogue and expand its scope.





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- Capacity building of members of the administrative system raising awareness about human rights principles, as well as raising the public's awareness about the NHRS.
- Engage civil society organizations in order to perform their role through supporting the NHRS.
- Revisiting the policies and legislations to ensure compliance with Egypt's human rights commitments.
- Bridge the gap between vision, policies and laws in theory, and the actual implementation of laws.
- Formulation of the NHRS executive action plan, including a specific timeline, the identification of the implementing bodies, the activities, the cost and performance indicators.
- Design human rights education training programs for the employees in the human rights units in line ministries and governorates, as well as NCHR branches in 11 governorates,
- Allocation of adequate financial and human resources for each department,
- Independent monitoring and evaluation of NCHR.



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- Encourage media professionals to play a structured role in the promotion of the culture of human rights.

### **Eleventh: recommendations specific to civil and political rights:**

1. Expedite review of legislation to ensure compliance with Egypt's international human rights commitments.
2. Ensure easy access to justice with regards to civil and political rights violations allegations, including pre-trial detention.
3. Expand the space for CSOs.
4. Ensure full compliance with the law.
5. Capacity building and human rights education for personnel working in human rights related areas such as places of deprivation of liberty and institutions., as well as governmental and institutions for special care.
6. Provide technical and specialized training to raise the awareness and train youth in the educational institutions to



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participate in public life and motivate them to exercise their civil and political rights.

7. raise awareness of the public about their civil and political rights, in collaboration with the relevant institutions concerned with education, and media,
8. develop human rights education manual and simplified programs.
9. Conduct awareness raising and training workshops for public servants including police officers and religious leaders in human rights and public freedoms.
10. Promote democracy and transparency, to ensure the respect for citizens' dignity and their fundamental freedoms as stipulated by the constitution, the laws and the provisions of the international human rights conventions ratified by Egypt.
11. Conduct visits to rehabilitation and correctional centers, detention centers and treatment institutions, listen to the inmates in the aforementioned institutions to inquire about the ill-treatment allegations and the level of their enjoyment of rights.
12. Motivate political players to engage in enriching the Egyptian political experience, and training calibers by



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boosting the scope of participation, and freedom of expression.

13. Accelerate the review of the penal procedures law. Use it as an opportunity to deal with challenges such as alternatives for pretrial detention, swift justice, consolidates safeguards for justice, facilitate the procedures of conditional release and provide remedy for the victims of alleged human rights violations. Most importantly, it would be highly efficient to amend the articles (63, 210) of the penal procedures code to allow the injured party to appeal against the verdict stipulating that a penal case may not be filed in an accusation against a public servant.
14. The necessity of providing medical and psychological services aiming to rehabilitate the victims of violence.
15. The amended penal procedures code should include alternatives to pretrial detention, including the e-penal surveillance system, as well as a witness and victims' protection law.
16. Limit resort to the death penalty as well as harshening penalties of torture and ill-treatment.
17. Eliminate impunity and harshen the penalty on crimes of employing cruelty by public official as stipulated in



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article no.129 of the penal code, to protect the victims who are not classified as suspects.

18. Draft a law granting the right to free flow of knowledge.
19. Raise public awareness about article no.161 bis of the penal code, that punish perpetrators of acts of discrimination against people, or a sect of people, on grounds of gender, ethnicity, language etc. and where such discrimination has led to violating the right to equal opportunities, social justice and public peace.
20. Review human rights education curriculum for students and public employees.
21. Promote a culture of tolerance and fight all forms of violence in the society.
22. Review religious and non-religious curricula to integrate human rights principles and standards and to promote diversity, pluralism and tolerance as well as renounce violence and extremism, in addition to integrating the values contributing to strengthening values of dialogue, coexistence, addressing hate speech.
23. Promoting a culture supportive of human rights through educational curricula, media outlets and youth



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programs to disseminate rights based constructive values in the society, present a positive image about the police services, being one of the main players to respect human rights.

24. Repeal all legal texts enabling journalists' imprisonment.
25. Draft a law on freedom of opinion, expression and the freedom of access to information, consistent with international human rights conventions.
26. Include members of the NCHR in the Presidential Amnesty Committee.
27. Establish an e-platform by NCHR to boost societal dialogue on the promotion of freedom of expression for all.
28. Conduct training courses for human rights activists on the freedom of opinion and expression.
- 30- Hold an annual forum by the NCHR on the status of freedom of expression, to all segments of the society.