



January 2025

Egypt: Consideration of State Report - Persons with Disabilities in Detention
20th Pre-Sessional Working Group
(24 Mar 2025 - 28 Mar 2025)

1. Introduction

This report evaluates Egypt's State Report submitted under Article 35 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), particularly focusing on its claims concerning the rights of persons with disabilities in detention facilities. The State Report emphasizes legislative measures and policy frameworks to ensure accessibility, healthcare, and non-discrimination for persons with disabilities. However, the documented experiences of detained individuals reveal substantial gaps between these claims and the lived realities.

Persons with disabilities face significant challenges in detention facilities in Egypt, particularly those detained on political grounds. These challenges include inadequate accessibility, denial of medical care, and systemic discrimination. The case of Mr. Oqba Alaa Labib Hashad serves as a stark example of these issues. Despite international commitments, Egypt has yet to fully implement measures that protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, as stipulated under the CRPD. This report highlights these shortcomings using credible sources and provides recommendations to address these violations effectively.

2. Case Study: Oqba Alaa Labib Hashad

Mr. Oqba Hashad, born in 1997, has lived with a disability since the age of six due to the amputation of his right leg below the knee [1]. Relying on a prosthetic limb for mobility, he was arrested on May 20, 2019, and subjected to enforced disappearance for 75 days. During this period, Mr. Hashad endured severe physical and psychological torture, including electrocution and beatings. His detention was an act of retaliation against his brother who is a human rights defender.

Mr. Hashad's experience highlights systemic failures in Egypt's detention facilities, including the denial of his prosthetic limb for extended periods. This treatment contravenes Articles 9, 14, 15, and 17 of the CRPD, which mandate accessibility, the prohibition of torture, and the respect for physical and mental integrity. His case underscores the urgent need for reforms to ensure that detainees with disabilities are treated in accordance with international standards.

3. Analysis of State Report Claims and Realities on the Ground

Commitment to Accessibility (Articles 9 and 14): The State Report asserts that Egypt has taken significant steps to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, including in detention facilities. It highlights measures such as adaptations in prisons and the establishment of specialized wings for detainees with disabilities.

Reports from independent human rights organizations and testimonies from detainees indicate that accessibility measures in detention facilities remain minimal and poorly implemented. Many prisons lack essential

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infrastructure such as ramps, handrails, or accessible restrooms, leaving detainees with mobility impairments unable to navigate the environment safely or independently [2]. The case of Mr. Oqba Alaa Labib Hashad illustrates this gap, as he was deprived of his prosthetic limb for prolonged periods, causing severe physical and psychological suffering [3]. Additionally, human rights reports emphasize systemic neglect in accommodating individuals with disabilities [4].

Ensuring Healthcare and Rehabilitation (Article 25): The State Report outlines initiatives to provide healthcare and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, emphasizing efforts to align with Article 25 of the CRPD. We monitored a systemic denial of necessary medical care for detained individuals with disabilities. Detainees with chronic conditions or requiring assistive devices, such as prosthetics or wheelchairs, often face neglect. In the case of Mr. Hashad, the denial of appropriate medical care, including a properly fitted prosthetic limb, exacerbated his condition, highlighting the inadequacy of the healthcare measures described in the State Report.

Non-Discrimination and Equality, Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Articles 5 & 15): The State Report states that Egypt has ensured equality and non-discrimination for persons with disabilities through legislative measures, including Law No. 10 (2018). While Law No. 10 provides a strong legal framework, its implementation has been inconsistent. Civil society reports indicate systemic discrimination against detainees with disabilities, particularly those detained on political grounds [5]. These individuals often face harsher conditions and denial of reasonable accommodations, contradicting Egypt's commitments under the CRPD. Recent UN communications on Egypt also highlighted that many detention facilities operate far beyond their capacity, leading to inhumane living conditions where detainees are crammed into small spaces [6]. Detention places remain overcrowded, and unsanitary conditions disproportionately affect detainees with disabilities, who may have heightened vulnerability to infections and require more sanitary environments. While there have been announcements about specialized wings for disabled detainees in certain prisons, such as Wadi Al-Natron and Borg al-Arab, these measures are limited in scope and poorly implemented. Furthermore, in 2023, the Committee for Justice, along with several human rights organizations, submitted an alternative report to the UN Committee Against Torture ahead of Egypt's review. The report emphasized that the systematic and widespread use of torture in Egypt constitutes a crime against humanity [7]. The UN Committee Against Torture shared concerns regarding the overcrowding and poor material conditions of detention in places of deprivation of liberty, such as the Badr Rehabilitation and Correctional Centre, in particular insalubrity and inadequate hygiene, lack of ventilation, the poor quality and insufficient quantity of the food and water provided, and limited recreational and educational activities to foster rehabilitation [8].

Egyptian detention facilities are not equipped to accommodate persons with disabilities, leading to significant hardships, such as the lack of accessibility. Prisons often lack infrastructure, such as ramps, handrails, or accessible restrooms, forcing detainees with disabilities to endure unsafe and degrading conditions. Also,

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inadequate medical care, reports indicate systemic denial of medical care, particularly for those with chronic conditions or requiring assistive devices. This neglect directly contravenes CRPD Articles 17 and 25.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Egyptian State Report under the CRPD highlights legislative and policy commitments; however, the realities faced by persons with disabilities, particularly in detention places reveal significant gaps in implementation. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities must hold Egypt accountable for these shortcomings and ensure the rights and dignity of all persons with disabilities are upheld.

- a) **Ensure Accessibility:** The Egyptian government must urgently adapt detention facilities to meet accessibility standards, including installing ramps, accessible restrooms, and ensuring access to assistive devices.
- b) **Provide Adequate Healthcare:** Ensure all detainees with disabilities receive necessary medical care, including rehabilitation services, in accordance with CRPD Article 25.
- c) **Independent Monitoring:** Allow independent bodies to regularly monitor detention facilities to ensure compliance with CRPD obligations and improve conditions for detainees with disabilities.

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January 2025

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