



Statement Statement on the UPR Pre-session on the Egypt of Refugees, Migrants and People on the Move rights

Speaking on behalf of the "Refugees Platform in Egypt," a non-governmental organization committed to supporting people on the move and advocating for their rights. First, I want to express our support for the recommendations made by human rights organizations in their joint report, as well as those presented today by my colleagues.

From this international stage, I extend my deepest respect and support to all people on the move in Egypt and around the world who struggle every day for survival, safety, and access to their fundamental rights.

We are here today to shed light on the ongoing violations of the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers in Egypt. Unfortunately, no tangible progress has been made by the Egyptian government on these issues. On the contrary, the human rights crisis has deepened. Authorities have adopted a security approach focused on militarization and the criminalization of migrants and those supporting them, thereby worsening the situation rather than addressing it.

Documented ongoing violations include:

- **Illegal policies against people on the move:**

Despite prior recommendations, the legislative amendments to the laws came with further criminalization of migrants, such as the amendments to Law 82 of 2016, and the militarization of borders, such as the amendments to Presidential Decree 444 of 2014, Refugees now face risks both at borders seeking asylum and within Egypt while allowing perpetrators of crimes against them to escape punishment , where they are denied basic protections and exposed to serious abuses.

- **Deprivation of the right to seek asylum**

A deficient asylum registration system for years have restricted thousands from applying for asylum, especially outside Cairo. Long delays that might extended to one year and lack of access expose individuals to exploitation, detention, and denial of basic services.

- **Enforced disappearances**



The authorities have not investigated complaints by refugees about the enforced disappearance of themselves or their relatives. We have documented hundreds of cases of arrest by police and border guards over the past years, after which people were forcibly disappeared, some of whom were later found guilty in cases without evidence, while the authorities have not clarified the fate of others, such as the passengers of the September 14, 2014 boat, whose families are still searching for them.

- **Torture**

Refugees are subjected to arrest, torture, and detention in military facilities without legal recourse. Testimonies document torture during enforced disappearance, and despite reports to the Public Prosecution, investigations remain insufficient.

- **Arbitrary detention in inhumane conditions, including women and unaccompanied minors**

The Egyptian government has arrested thousands of people of various nationalities while attempting to enter or exit Egypt irregularly in search of safe haven. In addition to what we have documented in our investigations and published reports about a nationwide security campaign to arrest people who were forced by the legal system to not have valid residency permits, detainees are subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. We have documented the detention of children, women and sick people without any medical care in extremely poor detention facilities, before being forcibly deported to their countries without the opportunity to apply for asylum or to allow UNHCR to visit detention facilities.

- **Violence against migrants at border points**

Intensified militarization has led to increased violence against migrants at Egypt's borders, where border guards frequently resort to extreme force, including shootings and direct assault - as we recently documented on the southern border. Air strikes on civilian vehicles, as documented on the western border with Libya. Meanwhile, the authorities have militarized those areas to prevent media, humanitarian organizations, and independent observers from documenting conditions or providing critical support

- **Forced deportation of refugees and asylum seekers**

People from high-risk regions, including Sudan, Syria and Eritrea often including children, women and sick people, are deported to places where there is a life threatens and in violation of international law. For a year and a half, en masse Sudanese deported without adequate assessment, violating their right to protection.



- **Financial exploitation of displaced persons**

People face severe economic exploitation, often paying thousands of euros to companies linked to Egyptian authorities to cross to Egypt (Platenians & Syrians). People whome denied regular entry have been forced into costly irregular routes, with authorities later imposing a legalization fee of up to a thousand dollars for temporary residency. This process, misleadingly referred to as an “Asylum Regulation Law,” obscures these exploitative practices before the international community.

- **Criminalization of refugees and asylum seekers based on gender identity, belief, or irregular status**

Egyptian authorities persecute LGBTQ+ refugees and those with certain beliefs, subjecting them to detention and deportation. Proposed new law could further endanger these populations

- **Denial of access to the Justice**

Barriers prevent refugees from accessing legal representation or pursuing justice for rights violations, while authorities offer minimal recognition of their protection needs.

- **Failure to carry out search and rescue operations and blocking civil organizations from working in border areas**

Egyptian law does not mandate search and rescue operations for refugees at borders, leading to numerous deaths, including entire families along the southern border as documented. Investigations into these cases have been superficial and closed, while authorities prevent rescue organizations from operating in border areas.

- **Criminalization of defenders of the rights of people on the move:**

Activists and defenders of migrant rights are often criminalized facing security prosecutions, informal investigations, the closure of their offices, and threats of forced deportation, as seen in case of Osman Hussein, who was deported to Sudan among the , which is witnessing the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, and he is still at risk. Meanwhile, dozens of community schools have been closed. Egyptian laws already criminalize providing any kind of support to people on the move, while the recent asylum law proposal comes to tighten penalties

Our urgent recommendations to the Egyptian authorities are:

1. **Suspend Passage of the Asylum Law:** This draft centralizes registration without oversight, contravening international standards. We urge reconsideration of the draft should include input from stakeholders, NGOs, and impacted communities.
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2. **Amend laws related to irregular migration and border areas:** Laws such as Law No. 82 Decree No. 444 have legitimized abuses and allowed violators to evade accountability. Amendments should prioritize migrant protections and accountability for abuses.
3. **Facilitate and ease asylum procedures:** Remove barriers that prevent refugees from seeking asylum, with timely, fair access to registration across Egypt.
4. **End arbitrary detention and deportations:** Halt deportations to conflict zones and cease illegal detention practices, allowing UNHCR access to detainees.
5. **Allow UNHCR and humanitarian organizations access to detention centers:** granting asylum seeking even while detained. Criminalizing people for irregular entry, especially victims of human trafficking, must stop.
6. **Provide full access to essential services for refugees:** Such as health, education, and communications, especially for women and children.
7. **Protect people's rights to justice:** Conduct transparent investigations into torture and abuse cases, with equitable access to the legal system.
8. **Protect and defend human rights advocates:** Cease retaliation against defenders, particularly those supporting refugees, and stop targeting NGOs offering essential services.
9. **Issue temporary residency for evacuated palestinians:** Facilitate residency and educational access for Palestinian refugees, including a waiver of school fees.
10. **Allow vulnerable refugees and migrants to access civil society services without obstacles:** Revoke restrictions preventing NGOs from aiding individuals without residency permits.

Our medium and long-term demands include:

1. **Investigate disappearance, torture, and loss claims:** Egyptian legislation must offer recourse for missing persons and a pathway to justice for affected families..
2. **End border violence and expand rescue operations:** Transfer search and rescue operations to civilian authorities and grant NGO access to border areas.
3. **Accountability for smuggling and migration violations:** Investigate human rights abuses related to irregular migration and publicize findings.
4. **Facilitate access to official documents and work permits for migrants:** Ensure legal protection against exploitation and trafficking, securing their rights as workers.

In closing, we urge the Egyptian authorities to implement concrete measures to halt these violations, comply with international human rights obligations, and safeguard the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants.

Thank you.
