

UPR Pre-session on Egypt: Refugees, Migrants, and People on the Move

This statement, delivered by the Refugees Platform in Egypt, highlights the ongoing human rights crisis facing refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers in Egypt.

Deprivation of the Right to Seek Asylum

1 Deficient System

A deficient asylum registration system restricts thousands from applying for asylum, especially outside Cairo.

2 Long Delays

Delays of up to a year and lack of access expose individuals to exploitation, detention, and denial of basic services.

Enforced Disappearances and Torture

Enforced Disappearances

Authorities have not investigated complaints about enforced disappearances of refugees or their relatives.

Hundreds of cases of arrest by police and border guards have been documented, with some individuals later found guilty in cases without evidence.

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 and Forced Deportation

Detention

The Egyptian government has arrested thousands of people of various nationalities while attempting to enter or exit Egypt irregularly.

Degrading Treatment

Detainees are subjected to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, including the detention of children, women, and sick people without medical care.

Forced Deportation

People from high-risk regions, including Sudan, Syria, and Eritrea, are deported to places where there is a life threat, violating international law.

Violence Against Migrants at Border Points

1

Intensified Militarization

Intensified militarization has led to increased violence against migrants at Egypt's borders.

2

Extreme Force

Border guards frequently resort to extreme force, including shootings and direct assault.

3

Restrictions on Access

Authorities have militarized border areas to prevent media, humanitarian organizations, and independent observers from documenting conditions or providing critical support.

Financial Exploitation and Criminalization

Exploitation

People face severe economic exploitation, often paying thousands of euros to companies linked to Egyptian authorities to cross to Egypt.

Criminalization

Egyptian authorities persecute LGBTQ+ refugees and those with certain beliefs, subjecting them to detention and deportation.

Denial of Access to Justice and Criminalization of Defenders

Barriers to Justice

Barriers prevent refugees from accessing legal representation or pursuing justice for rights violations.

Criminalization of Defenders

Activists and defenders of migrant rights are often criminalized, facing security prosecutions, informal investigations, the closure of their offices, and threats of forced deportation.

Urgent Recommendations and Medium-Term Demands

Suspend Passage of the Asylum Law

This draft centralizes registration without oversight, contravening international standards.

1

Facilitate and Ease Asylum Procedures

Remove barriers that prevent refugees from seeking asylum, with timely, fair access to registration across Egypt.

3

Provide Full Access to Essential Services

Such as health, education, and communications, especially for women and children.

5

Protect and Defend Human Rights Advocates

Cease retaliation against defenders, particularly those supporting refugees, and stop targeting NGOs offering essential services.

7

Allow Vulnerable Refugees and Migrants to Access Civil Society Services

Revoke restrictions preventing NGOs from aiding individuals without residency permits.

9

Amend Laws Related to Irregular Migration

Laws such as Law No. 82 and Decree No. 444 have legitimized abuses and allowed violators to evade accountability.

2

End Arbitrary Detention and Deportations

Halt deportations to conflict zones and cease illegal detention practices, allowing UNHCR access to detainees.

4

Protect People's Rights to Justice

Conduct transparent investigations into torture and abuse cases, with equitable access to the legal system.

6

Issue Temporary Residency for Evacuated Palestinians

Facilitate residency and educational access for Palestinian refugees, including a waiver of school fees.

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