



General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 June 2023

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-second session

27 February–31 March 2023

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by ArabEuropean Forum for Dialogue and Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[1 February 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Human Rights In Egypt

Human rights in Egypt have faced many challenges. They were recently influenced by economic conditions, war on terrorism, overpopulation and instability of Middle East region. However, the situation has improved after the government ended the state of emergency law and declared a national human rights strategy. This strategy was drafted with a participatory approach between the government and human rights organizations. That was followed by the announcement of the national dialogue with the participation of all political parties and the reconstitution of a presidential amnesty committee, which made its breakthrough in the file of prisoners.

These unprecedented steps have been well received by the 47 members of the International Council and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It followed up Egypt's efforts and desire to implement the recommendations made to it by member states through the mechanisms of the universal periodic review in 2019. The release of prisoners with political profiles was on the top of those recommendations.

It also recommended that announcing the formation of the National Council of Human rights is a significant step to reconnect with the international community and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The mechanisms of specialized national councils have a great role in following up the state of human rights in Egypt and reporting the human rights developments rapidly and impartially. It is also important to reactivate the subcommittees working in parallel with those working in Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

These procedures have accomplished a huge progress in the state of human rights and guaranteed the development of civil and political rights. It also contributed in modifying the file of rights and freedoms which is considered one of the cornerstones of human rights. These results came through the national dialogue with political parties and civil society with the government. A long-term policy to improve and rehabilitate prisons has been developed, and the Presidential Amnesty Commission's work within this system continues to study prisoners' files and release them successively. These positive procedures put Egypt on the top of the list of countries in the region to take serious steps to improve the human rights situation in general and the situation of prisoners in particular.

The Presidential Amnesty Commission was formed for the first time in 2018 as one of the outputs of the National Youth Conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh in 2017, with the task of reviewing all files and cases of prisoners with political profiles not involved in any acts of violence, to be released by republican decision by the president in accordance with (art. 155) of the Egyptian Constitution, which provides that "the President of the Republic shall, after taking the opinion of the Council of Ministers, pardon or commute the sentence"

The Amnesty is only applied by a law approved by the consent of the majority of the House of Representatives. On 24 April 2022 during the presence of the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in the Egyptian family breakfast, the launch of a "national dialogue" was announced. It was called for by all Egyptian national forces. The second formation of the Amnesty Commission was announced, which was greatly welcomed by all Egyptian political parties, particularly opposition parties and personalities, who described the decision as a step towards democratic and political reform. They cooperated with the Human Rights Committees of the House of Representatives or the House of senate, and sending requests to the National Council for Human Rights Complaints Committee and members of the Presidential Amnesty Committee.

The committee had many positive influences, including supporting the political reform process, where it confirmed the successive releases of political prisoners during 2022, which were completed at the beginning of this year 2023 reaching more than 1,000 cases. The state's seriousness in the process of political reform, as the state itself began to review its decisions and procedures in preparation for the start of a new phase of political action in Egypt, in line with the requirements of Egyptian society as well as improving the conditions of civil and political rights. The release of prisoners is a part of the State's efforts to promote the concepts of social, economic, cultural and political human rights. It is also an implementation of the principles of transparency and legal justice. It shows the social desire to contain and integrate

their children into society, especially those who have not been involved in acts of violence and terrorism. This creates a situation of internal and external stability, considering Egypt as the most important pillar of stability in the Middle East region.

Initiatives have also emerged from the civil society to integrate those released and to move the coordination of young parties and politicians by establishing an integration and rehabilitation commission to return those released to their jobs and universities to finish their education, so that they do not face difficult economic and social conditions. They have already succeeded in returning cases to their jobs, which is an important sign of the success of national mechanisms through social negotiation to resolve the crisis of prisoners of speech cases.

Another positive indicator is the implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy for the development of state policies and directions dealing with files related to promote respect for all civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. It promotes freedoms, working on 4 key themes, that are complementary:

civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, the human rights of women, children, persons with disabilities and youth, and education and capacity-building. Through the Committee's work and the continued release of prisoners, the application of the strategy is shown, as it guarantees the freedom of the individual and the freedom of his or her political work and represents the application of a more comprehensive concept of human rights.

The announcement of the reformation of the Presidential Amnesty Commission coincided with the announcement of the national dialogue because it has a significant reflection on the creation of an atmosphere of effective and fruitful national political dialogue to produce the best results. This can occur by building bridges of trust between the state and its institutions and the peaceful political opposition of its various streams, provided that none of them is involved in any acts of violence; This will lead to diversity and enrichment of the national dialogue and Egyptian political life in general once these personalities participate.

The Commission of Human Rights and Public Freedoms, which follows from the political focus of the national dialogue, has identified seven topics, including the conditions of correction and rehabilitation centers, the regulations governing detention centers and judicial supervision, as well as amending the provisions of preventive detention, restriction of liberty, rules of compensation, safeguarding their property, prohibition of travel, resumption of crimes, protection of witnesses and reporting persons, and freedom of expression and opinion (Provisions on the freedom, independence, impartiality and pluralism of the media and the press, and penalties for the deprivation of liberty in publishing and publicity cases, and the Freedom of Information Act) and the rules and provisions to encourage interaction between the Egyptian academic community and its counterpart abroad, the freedom and requirements of scientific research, the penalties for the deprivation of liberty in publishing and public matters, creativity and freedom of opinion, and the establishment of an independent commission to eliminate discrimination.

The selection of these controversial topics reflects the seriousness of the national dialogue's handling of the topics agreed upon by political parties and human rights organizations, namely the need to amend the provisions of preventive detention, restriction of liberty, rules of compensation, custody of their property, prohibition of travel, resumption of crimes, protection of witnesses and reporting persons, all of which the Egyptian community has been required to amend in order to comply with international standards and to ensure that justice is achieved.

With regard to freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of the media and the press, and their independence and impartiality, there is general agreement on the necessity of issuing a law for the circulation of information that guarantees journalists access to information from its official sources and ensures that citizens have access to the correct information, in addition to working to clear Egyptian legislations from penalties for the deprivation of liberty in publishing cases.

Egypt's escalating human rights trajectory faces challenges affecting the human rights situation, including the file of prisoners, the lack of legislation prohibiting long-term preventive detention and the delayed issuance of information. However, its submission to the

national dialogue and the escalating work of the Presidential Amnesty Committee indicates that Egypt is responding to international and national demands to improve the conditions of human rights.

Arab Network for Digital Media and Human Rights, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.