

Timeline of Human Rights Violations in Egypt Since the Fall of Mubarak

The fall of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 raised expectations for a democratic transition in Egypt. However, over the past 30 months, severe human rights violations have continued, first under the interim military junta, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), and then under the presidency of Mohamed Morsi and his Freedom and Justice Party, affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Human Rights Violations under the SCAF

25 February 2011: Military police used force for the first time against protesters demanding the dismissal of Ahmed Shafiq, the prime minister whom Mubarak appointed before stepping down. On the following day the SCAF issued an official statement to apologize for the “unintended assaults by military police.”

9 March 2011: Military police violently cracked down on a Tahrir Square sit-in demanding the dismissal of Ahmed Shafiq. They beat protesters and performed “virginity tests” on arrested women.

8 April 2011: A violent attack was carried out at Tahrir Square to arrest military officers who had joined the sit-in. Ali Maher, a 17-year-old activist, was killed.

15 May 2011: Violent clashes broke out between the army and police on one side and protesters on the other near the Israeli Embassy in Giza. The police and army used rubber bullets and live ammunition against the protesters.

28 June 2011: Clashes erupted between protesters and police after police attacked a sit-in for families of the revolution’s victims. More than one hundred were injured, and many protesters were arrested and referred to military trials.

23 July 2011: Protesters called for a march to the Ministry of Defense to demand lustration of the state’s institutions, trials of Mubarak regime officials, and a handover of power to civilians, and to protest the way the SCAF was handling the transition. A harsh propaganda campaign was waged by the SCAF against the protesters, with an explicit accusation that they were unpatriotic foreign agents. The official incitement resulted in clashes between protesters and police-controlled thugs, the death of 23-year-old political activist Mohamed Mohsen, and injuries to dozens of protesters.

1 August 2011: Military forces cracked down on a Tahrir Square sit-in demanding the prosecution of Mubarak and officials of his regime. The crackdown came on the first day of Ramadan. Dozens were arrested and referred to military trials.

9 October 2011: Egyptian Copts carried out a peaceful protest in reaction to the demolition of a church in Upper Egypt and intended to stage a sit-in at the Maspero television building. The army responded with a brutal assault, resulting in 28 deaths and 212 injuries, mostly among the Coptic protesters. The military used live ammunition, and its armored vehicles ran over

protesters. During the clashes, state television explicitly incited Egyptian Muslims against the Christian protesters, asking them to “defend their army.”

19 November 2011: After the police attacked a sit-in by victims of the revolution, major clashes erupted between protesters and police backed by the army and lasted for five days. The clashes resulted in the death of at least 90 protesters and injuries to tens of thousands. Many lost their eyesight, as the police shot projectiles into the eyes of the protesters. The Muslim Brotherhood strongly denounced the actions of the protesters and praised the army and police. One of the main outcomes of this episode was that Defense Minister Hussein Tantawy declared that presidential elections would be held by June 2012 and power would be handed over to an elected government.

16 December 2011: Demonstrators held a sit-in in front of the Egyptian government headquarters to protest the appointment of Kamal el-Ganzoury as prime minister. The army attacked the protesters, and clashes lasted for a week. The attacks included deployment of special paratrooper units, shoot-to-kill orders, and brutal beatings of female protesters. Fifteen people were killed and at least 900 were wounded.

29 December 2011: Security forces raided and shut down the Cairo offices of four American nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including Freedom House; Germany’s Konrad Adenauer Foundation; and several Egyptian human rights groups. The American and German NGOs were accused of operating an organization and receiving funds from a foreign government without a license.

1 February 2012: A massive riot occurred at Port Said stadium following a football match between the rival clubs Al-Masry and Al-Ahly. At least 74 people were killed and more than 1,000 were injured. The victims were from Al-Ahly Ultras Block, an organized group that played a significant role in the street fights between security forces and protesters over the year since Egypt’s revolution. On the next day, protesters marched to the Ministry of Interior, where a large clash ensued. This clash lasted five days and more people were killed and injured.

Recurrent Violations under the SCAF

Military Trials: Some 12,000 citizens faced military trials during the 18 months of SCAF rule. Hundreds of them were imprisoned; some were released after a year or more, while others are still behind bars. While most of the trials were for criminal charges, military trials were widely used against political activists and protesters. These proceedings deny defendants many of their basic rights.

Torture and Virginity Tests: In detention centers and military prisons, torture was widely used against protesters and prisoners. “Virginity tests” were carried out on female activists, as Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, then head of military intelligence and current minister of defense, has admitted.

Violations against NGOs: From the earliest days of the post-Mubarak period, state security services carried out a campaign against NGOs. This crackdown started in February 2011 with a raid on the Hesham Mubarak Center for Law and the detention of its staff for a day, and it continued with a smear campaign over the 18 months of military rule against both domestic and international NGOs. The SCAF planned to issue a restrictive NGO law but backed down in the face of strong opposition. The campaign against civil society culminated in the raids on

international and Egyptian NGO offices in December 2011 and the subsequent trial of 43 NGO workers, which ended in the conviction of all defendants in June 2013.

Sectarian Violence: Egyptian Copts faced a high level of sectarian violence and discrimination. Islamists attacked churches and Christian citizens in Rafah, Giza, Imbaba, Aswan, and other places, with no appropriate response from the military rulers. The military itself attacked Coptic protesters in Maspero, resulting in the death and injury of hundreds of victims. This incident included clear sectarian incitement against Christians by state television.

Censorship: Military prosecutors summoned many journalists and television hosts for their opinions or criticism of the SCAF. The same happened to political activists who criticized the SCAF online. Representatives of the military tried more than once to censor newspapers and prevent publication of articles criticizing the military performance's in ruling the country.

Human Rights Violations and Democratic Backsliding under Morsi

15 November 2012: The Morsi government started a campaign against independent media by stopping the broadcast of Dream TV (which was allowed by a court decision to resume broadcasting one week later). Commenting on the government's decision, the minister of information pointedly criticized independent Egyptian television stations. Near the end of Morsi's rule, in June 2013, the minister of investment sent a warning to all independent stations that their coverage of the June 30 protests would be "closely watched" by the government. Between these two incidents, many threats against journalists and violations of media freedom took place.

21 November 2012: During a protest calling for lustration and the restructuring of the Interior Ministry, protesters were killed by police or by Muslim Brotherhood militants. The most prominent victims were Mohamed Elgindy, Mohamed Kristy, and the journalist Al-Housseiny Abu Deif.

22 November 2012: Morsi issued a constitutional declaration that removed the authority of the judiciary to contest his decisions or to dissolve the Shura Council or Constituent Assembly. He also illegally dismissed Egypt's prosecutor general and replaced him with a political ally.

29 November 2012: Following the withdrawal of all liberal, secular, and Christian members of the Constituent Assembly, the remaining Muslim Brotherhood members passed a controversial draft constitution, which limited the freedoms of belief and expression and omitted protections for women's rights.

2 December 2012: Thousands of Muslim Brotherhood supporters laid siege to the Supreme Constitutional Court and prevented the judges from ruling on the legitimacy of the Constituent Assembly and the Shura Council. The court suspended its work.

5 December 2012: Armed supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood attacked 300 of Morsi's opponents during a sit-in near the presidential palace. Violent street battles erupted between Morsi's supporters and opponents. Four of Morsi's advisers resigned their posts in protest against the violence, which they claimed was orchestrated by the Muslim Brotherhood. Numerous protesters were tied to the gates of the presidential palace and beaten by Morsi supporters.

6December 2012: While the investigation into the clashes at the presidential palace were still ongoing, President Morsi declared that the arrested protesters had confessed to receiving money and weapons from political forces to create chaos in the country. The prosecutor in the case found most of the protesters not guilty and released them. The prosecutor general tried to pressure the prosecutor to detain the arrested protesters, and when he refused, the prosecutor general decided to end the prosecutor's mandate and transfer him to another location.

23 March 2013: Pro-Morsi Islamists held a sit-in at the Media City facility, where independent television stations have their studios. During the sit-in, many journalists as well as opposition politicians were physically assaulted by pro-Morsi protesters.

26March 2013: The prosecutor general charged journalist Gamal Fahmy with insulting the president. This was the beginning of a pattern of harassment against journalists and media personalities. A few days later the satirist and television host Bassem Youssef was summoned for the same charge and for insulting Islam. Other journalists and hosts summoned for such offenses included Mahmoud Saad, Gihan Mansour, and Magdy al-Galad.

27March 2013: The prosecutor general summoned a group of young anti-Morsi political activists on a charge of incitement against the Muslim Brotherhood. This was the beginning of a crackdown on anti-Morsi youth activists that included the imprisonment of Ahmed Douma for insulting the president. Six other activists were referred to criminal court, though their cases were subsequently dropped after Morsi was ousted.

7 April 2013: After sectarian violence in El-Khosous, near Cairo, the main Coptic cathedral was attacked by mobs. Morsi condemned the attack, but no official investigation took place.

11 April 2013: The Shura Council approved the draft law on parliamentary elections despite criticism from the opposition. The law divided electoral districts in a new way that distributed opposition (non-Islamist) voters among different districts. It also gave the president the right to change some procedures during the electoral process and removed the representation of women and Copts granted under the previous law. In response, the Constitutional Court blocked the law and asked the Shura Council to revise it.

8 May 2013: The Shura Council approved in principle a law that restricts the right of peaceful assembly by allowing protests for only a few hours and requiring permission from the police. Requests must be submitted three days before the protest and can be denied by the police without providing clear reasons.

25 May 2013: The Shura Council approved in principle a draft law on the judiciary that would force into retirement 3,500 judges who were over the age of 60, allowing the promotion of new judges affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. The law also abolished many of the General Assemblies of the Courts' authorities protecting the independence of the judiciary, and gave these authorities to the minister of justice.

4 June 2013: Following a lengthy, politically motivated trial, a criminal court convicted all 43 international and Egyptian NGO workers accused of operating unlicensed organizations and receiving foreign funds illegally. They were given prison sentences ranging from one to five years.

7 June 2013: Morsi supporters set fire to the main headquarters of the Tamarrud (Rebel) campaign, which was collecting signatures to call for Morsi to step down. This was the culmination of a series of violent reactions by Morsi supporters to Tamarrud in the previous weeks. After trying to stigmatize Tamarrud activists as “infidels and apostates,” Morsi supporters physically assaulted many of them while they were collecting signatures.

17 June 2013: The Shura Council approved in principle a draft law on NGOs that was more restrictive than Mubarak’s NGO law. The measure put the creation, funding, and activities of domestic and international NGOs under the control of a committee appointed by the government.

21 June 2013: Morsi supporters rallied in Nasr City in what they called the “Antiviolence Friday Protest.” They carried out military-style drills with sticks, shields, nunchakus, and other weapons. Speakers threatened that the opposition would be “smashed” in the streets on June 30 and that it would be a bloody day for those who would protest against Morsi. For the two weeks before June 30, Islamists leaders stated that the date would bring an end to the opposition and begin an Islamic revolution. They made explicit threats against opponents of Morsi’s rule.

24 June 2013: After a conference at which Morsi’s allies, in his presence, incited hatred against Egyptian Shiites, a mob attack on a Shiite village left four people dead.

26 June 2013: Morsi gave a two-hour speech in which he strongly attacked the opposition, offered no solutions or initiatives to resolve Egypt’s political crisis, and implied that he would use military trials against his opponents. He also stated that “one year is enough,” implying that the year of freedom for the opposition and the media was all they were going to get.

Recurrent Violations under Morsi

Incitement against Religious Minorities: Incitement against religious minorities continued during Morsi’s rule and was never punished. High-ranking Islamist leaders, sometimes in Morsi’s presence, incited hatred against non-Muslim minorities and even against non-Islamist Muslims.

Misuse of Power

- Under the policy of “Ikhwanization of the state bureaucracy,” Muslim Brotherhood supporters were appointed to posts throughout the state bureaucracy, not only in political and senior positions. Loyalty to the Muslim Brotherhood was the main criterion for filling public positions. One of the clearest examples was the president’s appointment of a pro-Morsi campaigner as the head of the official Information and Decision Support Center, even though he was a dermatologist with no research or management experience.
- Two weeks before the June 30 mass anti-Morsi protests, President Morsi appointed as governor of Luxor a member of a hard-line Islamist group that had massacred 58 tourists there in 1997.

Acts of Violence

- Militants repeatedly attacked police and army checkpoints and security camps with guns and rockets in Sinai.
- A bus filled with workers and civilian homes were bombed in Sinai.

- In Giza, Cairo, and Alexandria, Morsi supporters attacked anti-Morsi protesters and neighborhood residents with guns and other weapons; dozens were killed and hundreds injured.
- Morsi supporters reportedly detained and tortured opponents inside their sit-in camp; these allegations include the testimony of a journalist who claimed to have been tortured for an entire day.

Persistent Violations under both the SCAF and Morsi

Impunity has remained the norm throughout the post-Mubarak period. Hardly any security officials were prosecuted and convicted for use of excessive force against demonstrators under the SCAF or Morsi.

Human Rights Violations under Interim President Adly Mansour

4 July 2013: A day after the military ousted President Morsi, security forces closed down Islamist broadcast outlets, and prosecutors sought the arrest of hundreds of Brotherhood officials.

8 July 2013: Military and police forces opened fire on hundreds of Morsi supporters as they were demonstrating outside a military facility where he was believed to be held. At least 53 people were killed and more than 300 were wounded during the attack.

15 July 2013: Clashes between police and Morsi supporters led to seven deaths and injuries to 240 people.

23 July 2013: Fighting between Morsi supporters and opponents that extended through several of Cairo's neighborhoods left 12 people dead and 86 wounded.

24 July 2013: The defense minister, General Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, called for mass protests against "terrorism" after an explosion outside a police building in the city of Mansoura left one person dead and 19 wounded.

27 July 2013: At least 72 Morsi supporters were shot dead by security officials, and many more were injured, during a sit-in in Rabaa al-Adawiya, in eastern Cairo. While the interior minister claimed that his officers "have never and will never shoot" at Egyptian citizens, witnesses shared videos, photographs, and written accounts that contradicted that assertion.

29 July 2013: Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim announced the reinstatement of Egypt's state security investigations service, known as the "secret police" during Mubarak's rule.

31 July 2013: The military-backed government called for security forces to end sit-ins held by tens of thousands of Morsi supporters.

14 August 2013: Security forces raze two pro-Morsi protest camps in Cairo, leaving more than 700 dead and more than 3,000 injured. Mobs carry out reprisal attacks on government buildings, police stations, and Coptic churches.