

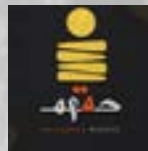


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Egypt: Article 55 Coalition report documents 14 violations in detention centers and prisons in September



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Article 55 of the Egyptian Constitution states: “Anyone who is apprehended, detained, or has their freedom restricted must be treated in a manner that preserves their dignity. Torture, intimidation, coercion, physical or psychological harm shall not be inflicted upon them. Their detention or imprisonment shall only take place in designated facilities that are suitable, both in terms of humane and health standards...”

Developments in Egypt in September 2023:

At the beginning of September 2023, [videos](#) surfaced on social media platforms that purportedly showed Muslim Brotherhood leaders inside Egyptian prisons, mainly in the new Badr Prison Complex, showing footage from surveillance cameras allegedly documenting inhumane conditions for political prisoners. While these videos, claimed to be related to political figures like Mahmoud Ezzat and Salah Sultan, stirred widespread controversy, the Ministry of Interior issued a brief statement denying any connection between these videos and the mentioned individuals. The statement did not address the identity of the individuals shown in the videos or the actual conditions of the prisoners in Badr prisons, even though the cell’s appearance in the videos closely matched that featured in promotional videos released by the Ministry of Interior. In the same context, the official gazette published a [decision](#) by the Ministry of Interior (No. 1776/2023) to establish a new prison in the Borg El Arab area in Alexandria, expanding its jurisdiction within the Alexandria Security Directorate. This increases the number of prisons in Egypt to 169.

At the end of the month, the official Facebook page of the Public Prosecution issued a statement indicating that it had conducted a “surprise inspection” on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at the Community Rehabilitation Centers (prisons) in Wadi El Natrun to assess the living conditions of inmates, verify the suitability of detention facilities and rehabilitation areas, and evaluate the readiness of the attached hospital, outpatient clinics, and pharmacy. This inspection was carried out following directives from the new Attorney General, Mohamed Shawky, amid complete disregard for the fact that 30 detainees in Wadi El Natrun 2 were on a hunger strike. Details regarding this will be provided in the second part of the report.

In terms of the presidential elections scheduled for December 2023 instead of April 2024, security agencies continued their efforts to hinder and undermine opposition candidates, especially Ahmed El-Tantawi. [Citizen Lab](#) published a report about the personal phone of Tantawi being targeted with a series of spyware attacks called Predator between May and September 2023. Additionally, there were security measures including [arrests](#) related to his campaign members and relatives. In response, the Ministry of Interior issued a concise statement denying the validity of claims made by a citizen regarding the arrest of individuals for their membership in his forthcoming election campaign.

Regarding judicial verdicts during the month, an economic misdemeanors court sentenced Hisham Kassem, the head of the Free Current movement, to six months in prison – three months for insulting the former Minister of Labor, Kamal Abu Eita, and three months for defamation against a public employee. This sentence also included a fine of 20,000 Egyptian pounds and a civil compensation of ten thousand Egyptian pounds. The case lasted only one month and did not seem to provoke any notable response from the Egyptian judicial system.

On the international front, particularly concerning Egyptian-American relations, tensions escalated when the District Attorney of New York City [charged](#) Democratic Senator and Chairman of the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee, Robert Menendez, his wife, and three businessmen of involvement in a “bribery scheme that has been ongoing for years and allowed Egyptian officials to gain direct, illegitimate access to some of the most influential makers of U.S. foreign policy.” The accusation was supported by evidence, including communications between the five accused individuals, financial sums, gold bars, and other assets. Consequently, some members of the U.S. Congress [demanded](#) that the U.S. government suspend \$235 million in military aid to Egypt, a move that had recently been approved by the Biden administration.

Summary of findings:

In September 2023, Article 55 Coalition documented the following violations within Egyptian prisons and other detention facilities:

- 5 cases of death.
 - 3 cases of medical negligence.
 - 5 cases of poor detention conditions.
 - A mass hunger strike by 30 detainees in Wadi El Natrun 2 prison.
1. [Ahmed Moseilhi Abdelbar El Najjar](#): He passed away inside his cell in Gamasa Prison in Dakahlia Governorate on September 6, 2023, due to the poor detention conditions and deliberate medical negligence. The Ministry of Interior issued a [statement](#) about his death, stating, “As a result of heart muscle failure during his treatment after feeling fatigue,” without providing details about the nature of the fatigue he experienced, the reason for heart muscle failure, or specifying his place of detention. The statement merely attributed these to “the terrorist Muslim Brotherhood group.”
 2. [Adel Qasem Ahmed Mostafa](#): He passed away on September 7 after being arrested and forcibly disappeared at the National Security headquarters in Suez for a month. He was transferred to the prison hospital after his health deteriorated and died there due to deliberate medical negligence.
 3. [Gomaa Mohamed Ali Hashhash](#): He passed away on September 17, inside his cell in Toukh Prison in Qalyubia. He was arrested just days before, prior to any official investigation, which raises the likelihood of his death being a result of torture.
 4. [Ibrahim El-Sayed Abdelmutaleb El-Sheikh](#): He passed away on September 18, inside his cell in Abu Zaabal 2 Prison, due to poor detention conditions and deliberate medical negligence.
 5. [Kamel Shadid Shahin](#): Passed away on September 29 inside his cell in the Tenth of Ramadan Prison, due to deliberate medical negligence throughout five years of detention.
 6. Family of [Mohamed Mahfouz Abdel Latif](#) said their son has been in pretrial detention for three years, suffering from poor health conditions. He has chest allergies and kidney disease and is deprived of continuous medical treatment, receiving only pain relievers in the Tenth of Ramadan Prison.
 7. Family of [Mohamed Fathi Hassan Haredi](#) raised an alarm due to his denial of proper healthcare in Wadi El Natrun 440 Prison. He has become almost paralyzed for over a year and a half due to

- a slipped disc, knee osteoarthritis, prostatic hypertrophy, and several chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes. The prison clinic provides him only with pain relievers.
8. Family of [Mohamed Saad Khatab](#): At the age of 70, he is suffering from health deterioration inside the Tenth of Ramadan Prison, dealing with high blood pressure, diabetes, autoimmune disease, and requiring specific medical care and medications not available within the prison.
 9. [30 detainees in New Wadi El Natrun 2 prison](#) began an open hunger strike on September 9, protesting against the ban on visits ordered by the National Security officer in charge of the prison. They have been deprived of visits for many years, including their time in the maximum security Tora Prison 1, known as The Scorpion.
 10. [Galal El-Beheiry](#): Attempted suicide inside his cell in Badr 1 Prison on September 9, in protest of his extended pretrial detention.
 11. Tenth of Ramadan Women's Prison: The administration re-imposed a ban on the visit of [Hoda Abdel Moneim](#), after allowing it for the first time since her detention and imprisonment.
 12. Family of [Abdullah Rabea Ibrahim Ramadan](#): They raised concerns about his third arrest, suffering from coronary artery disease and being diagnosed as a psychiatric patient by the prison doctor due to the violations and shocks he experienced during his detention.
 13. [Osama Mohamed Morsi](#): His case was rotated into a new one while continuing to be denied visits, kept in solitary confinement, and deprived of medical treatment and rehabilitation.
 14. Family of [Ahmed Mohamed Abdel Latif Ali Qassem](#) raised an alarm due to the rotation of his detention, which has lasted for 8 years, while his health condition remains critical as he suffers from esophageal reflux.

The details of the violations can be viewed on the online outlets of the organizations that are members of the coalition.

The violations that have been documented inside Egyptian prisons and other detention centers from the beginning of 2023 until the present time are as follows:

- 30 cases of death.
- 56 cases of medical neglect for detainees in critical condition requiring medical intervention.
- 40 individual and collective appeals regarding visitation restrictions, including the complete closure of some prisons and other detention centers.

In light of all of the above, the organizations within the Article 55 Coalition believe that the conditions inside Egyptian prisons and detention centers are not surprising, and they do not deviate from the general framework of the Egyptian authorities' treatment of detainees, especially political detainees. This is a systematic issue, not just isolated individual violations as promoted by the Egyptian Ministry of Interior.

Furthermore, the policy of impunity employed by the Egyptian authorities in dealing with human rights violations within detention centers has encouraged and perpetuated these practices, to the extent that they have become standard operating procedures within the Egyptian prison system. Notably, there has been no punishment or even reprimand for any of the documented and well-documented violations.

Therefore, the organizations in the Article 55 Coalition emphasize that these practices taking place inside Egyptian prisons and detention centers raise serious concerns about the fate of detainees, especially given the increasing number of deaths within these facilities in recent times and the deteriorating living conditions.

As a result, the organizations in the Article 55 Coalition call for an investigation into these violations and the accountability of those responsible in accordance with both Egyptian and international law. They also call for the implementation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the Egyptian prison regulations, and the cessation of any violations. Additionally, they demand that living conditions be provided that are suitable for the humanity of the detainees.

The webpage of the coalition: <https://www.facebook.com/Article55egypt>



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Article 55 Coalition

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Egyptian Network for Human Rights, Their Right, We Record, HuMENA for Human
Rights and Civic Engagement, Arab Foundation for Civil and Political Rights-Nedal)

