

Human Rights Watch

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/13/egypt-no-end-systematic-repression>

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Human Rights Defenders and Ordinary Citizens Targeted, Harassed, Tortured

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(Beirut) [Egypt's](#) superficial attempts to create an impression of human rights progress failed to disguise the governments brutal repression of all manner of dissent in 2021, Human Rights Watch said today in its [World Report 2022](#).

Despite ending the nationwide state of emergency in October, the government attached emergency decree provisions to other laws, and Emergency State Security [Courts](#) continued to prosecute human rights and peaceful political activists. In January 2021, the [implementing](#) regulations for the associations law formalized extensive and arbitrary restrictions on independent civil society organizations, requiring groups to [register](#) by January 11, 2022, or risk dissolution. The authorities used discriminatory morality and debauchery laws to arrest and detain female social media influencers on unjust charges of undermining family values.

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi government in 2021 continued down its well-trod path of unrelenting repression, said [Joe Stork](#), deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch.

In the 752-page World Report 2022, its 32nd edition, Human Rights Watch reviews human rights practices in nearly 100 countries. Executive Director [Kenneth Roth](#) challenges the [conventional wisdom that autocracy is ascendent](#). In country after country, large numbers of people have recently taken to the streets, even at the risk of being arrested or shot, showing that the appeal of democracy remains strong. Meanwhile, autocrats are finding it more difficult to manipulate elections in their favor. Still, he says, democratic leaders must do a better job of meeting national and global challenges and of making sure that democracy delivers on its promised dividends.

Egypt's security forces acted with impunity, routinely conducting [arbitrary arrests](#), enforced disappearances, and [torture](#) of real or suspected political activists as well as ordinary citizens. A Human Rights Watch [report](#) in September documented more than a dozen extrajudicial killings of alleged terrorists by National Security Agency forces in so-called shootouts, despite evidence that those killed posed no danger to security forces or anyone else and in many cases were already in custody.

The authorities extended repression to advocates [abroad](#) by arresting and sometimes disappearing family members in Egypt, including the family of US-based human rights defender, Mohamed Soltan.

The army imposed severe restrictions on freedom of movement in North Sinai and demolished hundreds of homes and razed [most of the farmland](#) in the governorate, where the military has been battling the armed group Wilayat Sina. Many demolitions took place in the absence of absolute military necessity and may constitute war crimes.

The authorities [arrested](#) Safwan Thabet, a businessman, in December 2020 and his son, Seif Thabet, in February 2021 and kept them in pretrial detention in conditions amounting to torture after they reportedly refused security officials requests to relinquish control of their company's assets to the state.

In September, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi introduced a National Strategy for Human Rights, which Egyptian rights groups roundly [criticized](#) for failing to address the country's manifold human rights crisis.

In a joint [statement](#) delivered at the 46th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in March, 32 countries said that they were deeply concerned about the trajectory of human rights in Egypt and highlighted the governments restrictions on freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly, the constrained space for civil society and political opposition, and the application of terrorism legislation against peaceful critics.

Suspicious Killings and Extrajudicial Executions by Egyptian Security Forces

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