

Submission to CEDAW for the 79th Pre-Sessional Working Group - Adoption of the list of issues on Egypt

Annex: Sexual and gender based violence against women and girls

The **State** commits SGBV systematically including: threats of rape by security/military forces, rape, sexual harassment and assault, [extra-judicial killings against peaceful protestors](#), torture, enforced disappearances, virginity tests¹², and [forced genital examinations](#) for transgender women. Detention conditions in [female prisons](#) in themselves amount to ill-treatment. Transgender women are detained in male detention centers, which puts them at risk of SGBV; legal efforts by activists to challenge it have failed.³ Impunity for these violations is widespread, despite legal and constitutional protections.

Non-State actors also commit SGBV systematically with impunity. Mass [sexual harassment](#) and [assault](#) is widespread. Of hundreds of documented cases of mass sexual assaults in protests between 2012-2014, only [one case](#) was prosecuted.⁴ Rape, sexual harassment and assault are under-reported due to legal and social barriers. Media reports [promote](#) “victim-blaming” questioning the testimonies of victims/survivors and implying that their behaviour/dress code justifies the SGBV against them. Harmful practices such as virginity tests, forced marriages and [female genital mutilation](#) and cutting (FGM/C) by families is also reported.

Women face additional **violence online** including publishing of private photos/videos without their consent and also to blackmail them. Women face cyber-bullying, including women who [identify as feminists to](#) deter them from expressing themselves online. Several online pages/accounts promote sexual harassment by publishing videos and photos of women taken in the public and private sphere without their knowledge.

Women in **North Sinai** are [killed](#) in their homes, they face [arbitrary arrests](#) to [pressure their husbands](#) to turn themselves in, they are subjected to [enforced disappearances](#); they later re-appear at the Prosecution and are charged with “joining a terrorist group”. Women who don’t have IDs and give birth in prison sometimes are unable to register their children. Women are [not able to receive pensions](#) of their disappeared relatives since authorities do not acknowledge their detention and so they can’t prove to their relatives’ employers their imprisonment, depriving them of their financial claims.

Christian women face additional discrimination and violence due to their religious beliefs. For example, Muslim men in North Sinai [demanded](#) that some women wear head-scarves and Christian women were [occasionally harassed](#) in the streets. In addition, Christian-Muslim [emotional and sexual relations](#), or [reports](#) of religious conversion of women have [resulted](#) in many incidents of sectarian violence.

While the adoption of **a national strategy on violence against women** is welcome, the strategy did not provide comprehensive definitions of the various types of violence nor sufficient resources to address it.⁵ For example, the strategy did not adopt definitions based on international human rights standards such as rape, but rather relied on definitions in Egyptian legislation, and did not provide sufficient protections for victims/survivors of violence. It also failed to address mass sexual assault and violence perpetrated by security/military forces.

¹ See FIDH, [Sexual Violence by Security Forces in Egypt](#) (2015); Amnesty International, Egypt: ‘Circles of Hell’ domestic, public and state violence against women in Egypt (2015)

² Despite the [ruling](#) by the State Administrative Court in December 2011 banning virginity tests.

³ A transgender WHRD filed a case against the Ministry of Interior demanding that it provides detention centers that respond to the gender identities of transgender persons. The court [ruled](#) that the defender had no right to file the case.

⁴ Which occurred on 8 June 2014 during the inauguration of President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi.

⁵ See detailed analysis by [EIPR](#) and [Nazra](#)