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Egypt's unprecedented construction of prisons warns of further restriction of freedoms

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK ([AOHR UK](https://www.aohr.org.uk)) condemned the construction of new prisons, which is a worrying indicator for the present and future conditions of prisoners.

In this context, the Egyptian regime ordered the construction of dozens of prisons that cost tens of millions of dollars, while the country suffers from economic crises and unprecedented rates of poverty.

Over the past 10 years, the Egyptian authorities have established 48 prisons in various places in the country, including the [Badr 1, 2, and 3 prison complex](#), Wadi Al-Natroun prison, Al-Obour prisons, Gamasa, Damietta, Beni Suef, and many others.

AOHR UK criticised prioritising the building of prisons over building hospitals and schools, especially with the high costs, which could have been utilised efficiently to tackle poverty.

The condition of prisoners has never improved despite several international demands to improve detention conditions, but it rather worsened, leading many prisoners to attempt suicide. As a result, the death rates have also increased due to deliberate medical negligence.

Leaked videos and letters revealed the inhumane conditions of prisons, including food quantities, lack of blankets, and constant lighting of the cells, in addition to violating the privacy of women by keeping CCTV cameras on all the time, thus forcing female prisoners to keep their headscarves on the whole time despite the very high temperatures in summer.



Ironically, the Egyptian regime utilises its media to promote these prisons more it promotes tourism, where the new prisons are filmed with high quality camera and given cheerful names. For example, the Egyptian media promoted the opening of Badr prison under the title “New Life”, despite all human rights violations and lack of justice in this prison, where prisoners remain in detention for several years after completing their arbitrary sentences.

The Egyptian regime abuses the rights of prisoners by holding pretrial detention renewal sessions over video conference. These online sessions deprive the detainees from being presented before the court, representing themselves and speaking about the violations they are being subjected to inside prisons. It also deprives them of seeing their family members, which they would have been able to inside courts.

The regime also breaches the Egyptian law and constitution, which stipulates that the defendant must not be imprisoned for more than two years in the same case. However, once the prisoner finishes his prison sentence, the Egyptian authorities then subject him to enforced disappearance and fabricates new charges against him in new cases.

Given the current situation and the Egyptian regime’s attempts to tighten its grip on all powers of the state, especially the justice system, and using all international capabilities to serve its interests, subjugate the Egyptian people, and silence all critics; AOHR UK appeals to all international bodies to monitor the security situation in Egypt and investigate the conditions of prisoners, especially politicians, who were arrested simply for expressing their opinions.

AOHR UK also calls on the [international community](#) to cut all financial, political, and legal support to the Egyptian regime, particularly the US military aid, which contributed to violating the rights of detainees until now. It also urged the international community to take effective legal measures to hold the Egyptian regime accountable for its crimes since 2013, and until now.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK