



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Egypt: Women

Version 2.0

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in [the basis of claim](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment on whether, **in general**:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- Claims are likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation’s (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI’s relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the ‘cut-off’ date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion.

Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 26 April 2019

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

1.1.1 Fear of gender-based persecution or serious harm by non-state actors because the person is a woman or girl.

1.2 Points to note

1.2.1 For the purposes of this note, gender-based persecution or serious harm includes domestic abuse, sexual violence including rape, 'honour' crimes, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment and forced marriage/divorce.

1.2.2 Domestic abuse is not just about physical violence. It covers any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, economic or emotional abuse. Children can also be victims of, or witnesses to, domestic abuse. Anyone can experience domestic abuse, regardless of background, age, gender, sexuality, race or culture. However, to establish a claim for refugee status or humanitarian protection, that abuse needs to reach a minimum level of severity to constitute persecution or serious harm.

1.2.3 For further information guidance on assessing gender issues, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

2.1.1 For guidance on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Refugee convention reason(s)

2.2.1 Women and girls in Egypt form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention because they share an innate characteristic that cannot be changed and have a distinct identity which is perceived as being different by the surrounding society. Other convention reasons may apply, depending on individual circumstances. For example, actual or imputed political opinion may apply, as some women who criticize the government for their failure of tackling sexual harassment are accused of

attempting to overthrow the government or harming society (See [Sexual Harassment and Rape – effectiveness of the police](#)).

2.2.2 Although women in Egypt form a PSG, this does not mean that establishing such membership will be sufficient to make out a case to be recognised as a refugee. The question in each case is whether the particular person will face a real risk of persecution on account of their gender.

2.2.3 For further guidance on particular social groups, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.3 Exclusion

2.3.1 Decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.

2.3.2 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.4 Risk

a. Discrimination

2.4.1 The 2014 Constitution establishes equality for all citizens; however discrimination towards women remains widespread and Egypt has one of the highest gender gaps in the world. In practice women do not have the same opportunities as men and continue to face widespread societal discrimination, threats to their physical security, and workplace bias in favour of men. Aspects of the law and traditional practices continue to disadvantage women in family, social, and economic life (see [Overview](#), [Sexual harassment and rape](#))

2.4.2 In general, while women do experience discrimination, it is not sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition to reach the high threshold required to constitute persecution but each case must be assessed on its merits.

b. Domestic abuse

2.4.3 Domestic abuse against women and girls is widespread across Egypt and it is considered socially acceptable. Many women fail to report it because the Egyptian personal status law puts up serious challenges for women to prove that their spouses have harmed them (see [Domestic abuse](#)).

2.4.4 Domestic abuse contains a wide spectrum of aspects (see paragraph 1.2.2), many of which would not be sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition to reach the high threshold required to constitute persecution. While domestic abuse is reportedly widespread throughout Egypt it is for the person to show she is at real risk of persecution or serious harm, with each case assessed on its own merits.

c. Rape and sexual harassment

- 2.4.5 In the country guidance case of [MS \(Coptic Christians: Egypt CG \[2013\] UKUT 611 \(IAC\) \(3 December 2013\)](#), heard on 17 and 18 September 2013, the Upper Tribunal (UT) found that:

‘As regards the position of women, police routinely fail to investigate violence and harassment against women; the authorities do not enforce the law prohibiting rape. Recently women have faced brutal treatment, including sexual abuse, at the hands of the security forces. During the protests religious and political leaders openly stated that women protestors were to blame for the beatings and rapes [...] (para 95)

- 2.4.6 The law prohibits rape in Egypt and it is punishable by death in some circumstances, although spousal rape is not defined in law. Rape remains prevalent but is likely to be under-reported as victims are often reluctant to report incidents. The law is not effectively enforced, contains high evidentiary requirements and prosecutions are rare. Sexual assaults in public are common and have increased in recent years, especially during large public gatherings (see [Sexual harassment and rape](#)).

d. Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

- 2.4.7 The law criminalizes FGM/C and in 2016 approved tougher jail terms for those who perform female circumcisions. FGM/C is widely practiced due to strongly held traditions, with over 90% of the female population having been cut, although the practice has slightly declined in recent years. Most procedures are undertaken by health professionals and there have been some high profile prosecutions of those when women undergoing mutilation have died. The government has announced initiatives to eradicate FGM/C by 2030, however it does not yet effectively enforce the FGM/C law (see [FGM](#)).
- 2.4.8 Decision makers will need to consider the individual circumstances of the woman or girl (and that of her family), including her age, prevalence of FGM/C in her extended family, socio-economic status, and education, as well as past difficulties she / her family have experienced, in order to determine the likely risk of persecution or serious harm.

e. Early and forced marriage

- 2.4.9 Despite 18 being the legal marital age in Egypt, forced marriage (often of underage girls) is still practiced, particularly in the poorer, rural areas. In some cases, women and girls are forced into temporary marriages with a wealthy foreigner as a form of sexual exploitation. Although there have been government plans to tackle early/child and forced marriages, they have been unsuccessful (see [Early and forced marriage](#)).
- 2.4.10 It is for the person to demonstrate that she is at real risk of forced/child marriage and each case must be assessed on its own merits.

f. Honour crimes

- 2.4.11 Honour crimes do take place in Egypt especially in rural areas, although the frequency of these is unknown. Honour crimes are not specifically addressed in law (see [Honour crime](#)).

g. Conclusion

- 2.4.12 Being female does not on its own establish a need for international protection. In general, the level of violence and discrimination against women in Egypt will not in most cases amount to a real risk of persecution or serious harm. The onus is on the woman or girl to demonstrate that she would be personally at risk of gender-based violence.
- 2.4.13 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 Laws protecting women against discrimination and violence are not always effective and are seen as containing loopholes. The effectiveness of such laws are undermined by poor enforcement, abuses by police themselves and a lack of adequate protection for witnesses. Women are often unwilling to report abuses to the authorities due to social stigma and sometimes pressure from the police. Professionalism of the police varies and they are reportedly reluctant to investigate cases of violence against women, particularly where it is domestic. Police effectiveness is further hampered by a lack of equipment, training, poor pay and poor investigative skills – particularly in relation to sexual assault cases. In an effort to address violence against women a police department consisting of mainly female officers has been established. Cultural and religious views can often impact police, prosecutors and judges when making a decision, particularly in rural areas. Women have been punished for speaking out about abuses against women and parliamentarians contribute to a culture of victim-blaming (see [FGM](#) and [Sexual harassment and rape](#) and [domestic violence](#)).
- 2.5.2 In addition to the state there are a number of civil society groups which offer practical help and shelter to assist women (see [Support for women](#)).
- 2.5.3 Although laws are not always effective and police are undermined, both are usually effective. The state is likely to provide effective protection from non-state actors. The onus is on the woman to demonstrate otherwise. Each case will need to be considered on its particular facts taking into account the nature of the harm and the person's age, socio-economic circumstances, and education.
- 2.5.4 For guidance and information on protection generally in Egypt, see [country policy and information notes](#) on Christians and Background information including actors of protection and internal relocation.
- 2.5.5 For further guidance on assessing the availability or not of state protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 Where the woman's fear of persecution is at the hands of non-state actors, decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation on a case-by-case basis taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular woman.

- 2.6.2 Egypt is roughly four times the size of the UK with a population of nearly 100 million with Greater Cairo having a population of over 20 million (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.6.3 In general, it will not be unduly harsh for a woman to internally relocate to escape localised threats from members of her family or other non-state actors, especially if she is single and without children to support. However, the ability to internally relocate depends on the woman's background, as those from poorer and rural areas will find more difficulties in doing so than those from middle class, urban areas. However the individual circumstances of each case will need to be taken into account.
- 2.6.4 In the country guidance case of [MS \(Coptic Christians: Egypt CG \[2013\] UKUT 611 \(IAC\) \(3 December 2013\)](#), heard on 17 and 18 September 2013, the Upper Tribunal (UT) found that, '[...] The FCO states that single mothers have difficulties in finding housing, schooling for their children and jobs generally and that there is no state support for single mothers.' (para 95)
- 2.6.5 For further guidance on considering internal relocation generally, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), and for country policy and information generally, see [Egypt: Background information, including actors of protection and internal relocation](#).

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2.7 Certification

- 2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see the [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 26 April 2019

3. Overview

- 3.1.1 In the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 'Global Gender Gap Report 2018', Egypt ranks 135 out of 149 countries. The report measures the gaps between women and men in economy, politics, education and health. Large gaps are noticeable in the labour force and political empowerment, where 24% of women have a presence in the work place compared to 78% of men and only 6.4% of women are legislator, senior officials or managers and 15% of women have a presence in parliament compared to 85% of men. Regarding other key factors, 75% of women are literate versus 87% of men. However, women have a slightly higher health and survival rate, measuring at 62% for women versus 60% for men¹.
- 3.1.2 The 2017 Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Country Information Report – Egypt, dated 19 May 2017, using information from a variety of sources, stated that:
- 'Women participate in all areas of Egyptian society, including government, business and civil society. However, societal, cultural and religious barriers continue to place considerable limits on that participation...
- 'DFAT assesses that the majority of Egyptian women, regardless of religion and socio-economic level, face societal discrimination in that long-standing traditional values and gender roles continue to restrict their participation in the community and workforce. DFAT assesses that the majority of Egyptian women face a high risk of gender-based violence, including sexual assault and domestic violence.'²
- 3.1.3 The 2017 DFAT report further noted that 'Urban middle class Egyptian women will likely have a greater ability to find work and shelter, and will likely have better access to support networks, than Egyptian women from poor and more conservative areas.'³
- 3.1.4 The United States Department of State (USSD) Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 (USSD 2018 report), published on 14 March 2019, noted that, 'Women faced widespread societal discrimination, threats to their physical security, and workplace bias in favor of men that hindered their social and economic advancement.'⁴
- 3.1.5 A 2017 Thomson Reuters Foundation Survey found Cairo, out of the 19 world's biggest megacities as ranked by the UN, to be the most dangerous megacity in the world for women. The poll, which was the first of its kind, explored four key areas with experts in women's issues. These were sexual

¹ WEF, 'The Global Gender Gap Report 2018', Egypt, 17 December 2018, [url](#)

² DFAT, 'Country Information Report Egypt', (paras 3.70, 3.79), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

³ DFAT, 'Country Information Report Egypt', (paras 5.27), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

⁴ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt', (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

violence, access to healthcare, cultural practices and economic opportunities⁵.

3.1.6 Furthermore, the survey noted that Cairo ‘fared worst when it came to harmful cultural practices for women such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage and was named the third worst city when respondents were asked if women were at risk of sexual harassment and violence.’⁶

3.1.7 Freedom House noted in its 2019 Freedom in the World report:

‘Domestic violence, sexual harassment, and female genital mutilation (FGM) are still among the most acute problems in Egyptian society. The country has adopted laws to combat these practices in recent years, and FGM is reportedly becoming less common over time. However, the effectiveness of such laws is hindered by societal resistance, poor enforcement, abuses by the police themselves, and lack of adequate protection for witnesses, which deter victims from reporting abuse and harassment. Spousal rape is not a crime.’⁷

The 2017 DFAT report noted that ‘Urban middle class Egyptian women will likely have a greater ability to find work and shelter, and will likely have better access to support networks, than Egyptian women from poor and more conservative areas.’

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Section 4 updated: 26 March 2019

4. Legal Framework

4.1.1 Article 11 in the 2014 Egyptian Constitution sets out Women’s rights:

‘The state commits to achieving equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

‘The state commits to taking the necessary measures to ensure appropriate representation of women in the houses of parliament, in the manner specified by law. It grants women the right to hold public posts and high management posts in the state, and to appointment in judicial bodies and entities without discrimination.

‘The state commits to the protection of women against all forms of violence, and ensures women empowerment to reconcile the duties of a woman toward her family and her work requirements.

‘The state ensures care and protection and care for motherhood and childhood, and for breadwinning, and elderly women, and women most in need.’⁸

4.1.2 The 2017 DFAT report observed ‘Article 11 of the Constitution commits the state to achieving equality between women and men, and commits the state

⁵ Thomson Reuters Foundation, ‘The world’s most dangerous megacities for women 2017’, [url](#)

⁶ Thomson Reuters Foundation, ‘The world’s most dangerous megacities for women 2017’, [url](#)

⁷ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the world 2019’, (para G3), [url](#)

⁸ Constitute project, ‘Egypt’s constitution of 2014’, , (page 13), 27 July 2018, [url](#)

to ensuring appropriate representation of women in national bodies. There are considerable legal protections for women in many areas, including on personal safety, participation in the workforce, and mandatory schooling for girls.⁹

- 4.1.3 The USSD report observed, ‘The constitution provides for equal rights for male and female citizens. Women did not enjoy the same legal rights and opportunities as men, and discrimination was widespread. Aspects of the law and traditional societal practices disadvantaged women in family, social, and economic life.’¹⁰

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Section 5 updated: 26 April 2019

5. Domestic abuse

5.1 Legal rights

- 5.1.1 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development noted in its gender index profile of Egypt, which is based on various sources:
‘Domestic violence is not explicitly covered in legislation... Article 60 of the Penal code is often invoked in legal cases to appeal to the right for husbands to discipline their wives.
‘There are no legal provisions regarding restraining orders or other measures protecting survivors of domestic violence from perpetrators... Efforts made by the El-Nadeem Centre for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture (no longer active) in 2012 to draft a law criminalising domestic violence gained no political traction.’¹¹
- 5.1.2 Regarding marital rape, the same OECD report noted, ‘Marital rape is not explicitly criminalised, although a wife may file a complaint against her husband in such instances.’¹²
- 5.1.3 The USSD Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018, published in March 2019, observed that ‘Domestic violence was a significant problem. The law does not prohibit domestic violence or spousal abuse, but authorities may apply provisions relating to assault with accompanying penalties. The law requires that an assault victim produce multiple eyewitnesses, a difficult condition for domestic abuse victims. Police often treated domestic violence as a social rather than criminal matter.’¹³
- 5.1.4 DFAT and the USSD also reported that marital rape is not a criminal offence in Egypt^{14,15}.

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⁹ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.69), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

¹⁰ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

¹¹ OECD, SIGI, ‘gender index profile’, (section 2b), 2019, [url](#)

¹² OECD, SIGI, ‘gender index profile’, (section 2c), 2019, [url](#)

¹³ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.74), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

¹⁵ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

5.2 Prevalence of domestic violence

5.2.1 The 2018 USSD report noted that ‘An NCW study found that approximately 1.5 million women reported domestic violence each year.’¹⁶

5.2.2 TRT World reported on 27 August 2018 that, ‘A study by the National Council of Women found about 1.5 million Egyptian women report being subjected to domestic violence each year. It comes down to an average of 4,000 cases per day, though unreported figures may be much higher.’¹⁷

5.2.3 DFAT reported:

‘Domestic violence is prevalent and commonly accepted. A lack of comparative, adequate and up-to-date official statistics make the levels, trends and exact nature of domestic violence difficult to assess. However, a 2009 study commissioned by the NCW (The National Council for Women) found that over 60 per cent of married female respondents had experienced some form of violence during their married lives, while around 28 per cent had experienced a physically violent act. The study reported that 80 per cent of married male respondents admitted to inflicting violence against their wives, while 28 per cent acknowledged being physically abusive. DFAT assesses that these statistics are credible and unlikely to have changed significantly since the study was undertaken.’¹⁸

5.2.4 In a March 2019 report the World Bank documented that:

‘A study conducted on the economic cost of gender-based violence estimated that 7.9 million Egyptian women suffered from all forms of violence yearly, perpetrated by spouses, close relatives and stranger in public spaces. [...]

‘Violence within marriage is considered socially acceptable, especially in rural areas and among the less educated. Moreover, many women do not recognize domestic violence as an unacceptable act, but rather as part of married life. 26 percent of women reported that being beaten or hit by a husband is justified if the wife goes out without telling him. A slightly lower percent (24 percent) justifies hitting or beating for neglecting children. One in every five women reported that it is justified that a husband hits or beats his wife if she refuses to have sexual intercourse with him. This behavior is accepted by 13 percent of women if the wife argues with her husband and by 7 percent if the wife burns the food. Women are more likely to agree that wife beating is justified when they have 5 or more children, are from rural Upper Egypt, did not attend school or have basic education, and belong to the lowest wealth quintile.’¹⁹

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¹⁶ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷ TRT World, ‘Over one million women face domestic violence in Egypt’, 27 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.75), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

¹⁹ World Bank, Egypt: Women Economic Empowerment Study (pp.57), 3 March 2019, [url](#)

5.3 Support for victims

5.3.1 The USSD report for 2018 noted, ‘Civil society organizations reported police pressure not to pursue charges.’²⁰

5.3.2 The USSD report further noted:

‘The Ministry of Social Solidarity supported eight women’s shelters. The Interior Ministry includes a unit responsible for combating sexual and gender-based violence. The National Council for Women (NCW), a quasi-governmental body, was responsible for coordinating government and civil society efforts to empower women. In 2015 the NCW launched a five-year National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women with four strategic objectives: prevention, protection, intervention, and prosecution.’²¹

5.3.3 The OECD report noted, based on various sources:

‘According to an Amnesty International report (2015) the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs runs eight shelters for women survivors of domestic violence ... housing approximately 214 shelter beds... The report notes that these services frequently operate below capacity due to a lack of awareness of their existence, stigmatisation of women living outside the family home, and procedures deterring violence survivors from using their services ... There are no medical services specifically dealing with forensic examination, trauma support or counselling... although under the NSAVW strategy, a public hotline to receive reports of violence against women is foreseen.’²²

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Section 6 updated: 27 March 2019

6. Honour crime

6.1 Legal protection

6.1.1 The 2017 DFAT report observed:

‘Several Articles of the Criminal Code in effect condone the committing of such crimes, including: Article 17, which provides for reduced sentences in light of mitigating circumstances; Article 60, which does the same for offences committed in good faith of a sharia right; and Article 237, which provides for reduced sentences when a husband surprises his wife in the act of adultery and kills her. According to the US State Department, the practice of honour killings is more common in rural areas. Some victims of honour killings may be officially categorised as suicides or accidents.’²³

6.1.2 The USSD report observed, ‘the law does not specifically address “honor” crimes, which authorities treated as any other crime. There were no reliable statistics regarding the incidence of killings and assaults motivated by

²⁰ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

²¹ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

²² OECD, SIGI, ‘gender index profile’, (section 2c), 2019, [url](#)

²³ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.77), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

“honor,” but local observers stated such killings occurred, particularly in rural areas.’²⁴

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6.2 Incidents

- 6.2.1 DFAT reported that, ‘there are no reliable statistics regarding the incidence of killings and assaults motivated by ‘honour’ - these are not specifically addressed in the Criminal Code, and are considered as any other crime.’²⁵

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Section 7 updated: 26 April 2019

7. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

7.1 Legal rights

- 7.1.1 The 2017 DFAT report observed ‘Female genital mutilation (FGM) has been illegal in Egypt since 2008 (Law 126/2008, amending the provisions of the Child Law). However, prosecutions under the Law are rare, and have generally been limited to cases where girls die after undergoing the procedure’.²⁶

- 7.1.2 The USSD also reported that although FGM is illegal in Egypt, it continued to be an ongoing problem²⁷. The report further stated:

‘A 2016 amendment to the law designates FGM/C a felony, as opposed to a misdemeanor as it was previously, and assigns penalties for conviction of five to seven years’ imprisonment for practitioners who perform the procedure or 15 years if the practice led to death or “permanent deformity.” The law granted exceptions in cases of “medical necessity,” which rights groups and subject matter experts identified as a problematic loophole that allowed the practice to continue. According to international and local observers, the government did not effectively enforce the FGM/C law.’²⁸

- 7.1.3 In a June 2018 report, the British charity ‘28 Too Many’ observed:

‘The development of FGM-related law in Egypt has been a lengthy and complex process... New FGM legislation was introduced in Egypt in 2008 through amendments to the Child Act (1996) and the Penal Code. In September 2016, Law No. 58 was further strengthened and penalties were increased. This main law includes the following provisions:

- Article 242-bis defines FGM as ‘acts of female genital mutilation, by removing any of the external female genital organs, whether in part or in whole, or by inflicting any injuries to these organs without medical justification.’ The law does not, however, define what constitutes ‘medical justification’.
- Article 242-bis criminalises the performance of FGM; and

²⁴ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

²⁵ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.77), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

²⁶ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.72), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

²⁷ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

²⁸ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

- Article 242-bis(A) makes it a criminal offence for anyone to ‘request’ FGM. It does not make reference to anyone aiding or abetting the practice.

‘The failure to report FGM, whether it has taken place, is taking place or is planned, is not specifically referred to in this law. More generally, anyone who learns of the commission of a crime in Egypt is obliged to report it to the authorities under Article 25 of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act No. 150 of 1950.

‘In addition to the main law, the Child Act No. 12 of 1996 (as amended by Law No 126 of 2008)³ prohibits FGM on children (under 18 years of age). Article 7-bis provides that ‘the State shall ensure the right of the child, in all settings, to a suitable, healthy, and clean environment and shall take all effective measures to eliminate harmful practices to his health.’ Article 7-bis(a) states further that it is prohibited for a person responsible for the care of a child ‘to intentionally expose the child to any illegitimate physical abuse or harmful practice...

‘There is currently no national legislation in place in Egypt specifying that the performance of FGM by a health professional is medical malpractice (a draft law is reportedly under consideration). Historically, there have been several ministerial decisions and decrees around FGM being performed in government hospitals or private clinics:

- ‘Ministerial decisions 261 and 518 in 1996 reportedly banned FGM from being performed in hospitals and public or private clinics except under the supervision of specialised physicians and in cases of medical conditions.
- ‘Ministerial Resolution No. 238, issued by the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) in 2003, stated that a physician must inform the competent authorities of injuries and accidents of criminal suspicion. Though not specifically referring to FGM at the time, it became applicable once FGM was criminalised.
- ‘Ministerial Decree No. 2714, issued by the MOHP (Ministry of Health and Population) in 2007, closed a former loophole, whereby non-government medical practitioners could perform FGM in a private home, by prohibiting nurses or physicians from performing “any cut or modification to any natural part of the female genital reproduction system, whether this occurred in public or in private hospitals or other places.” Breach of this decree is treated as a violation of the code of conduct of the medical profession, but can also implicate the criminal code.

‘These various bans were not accompanied by penalties, however, and do not have the power of enforcement that laws have once passed through the national legislature.

‘At the time of writing, it is also noted that activists in the country report that the House of Representation in Egypt is due to discuss further amendments to the law to ensure doctors and medical facilities that perform FGM are criminalised. No further details are publicly available yet [...]

‘Existing national laws do not directly address cross-border FGM.’²⁹

7.1.4 CPIT was unable to find any further updates on this with the [sources consulted](#).

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7.2 Prevalence of FGM

7.2.1 The DFAT report noted in its 2017 report that:

‘FGM is a strongly held tradition in Egypt. It is widely practised throughout the country among both Muslim and Christian communities, and strong social and patriarchal pressures exist on young women and girls to undergo the procedure in order to get married. A comprehensive UNICEF study on FGM published in July 2013 found that 27.2 million Egyptian women (91 per cent) had undergone the procedure, which was conducted by a medical professional in 77 per cent of cases. A February 2016 update to the report found that there had been a noticeable decline in the percentage of girls aged 15-19 who had undergone the procedure. In June 2016, Egypt’s highest religious authorities issued a statement saying the procedure was un-Islamic and should be stopped, which followed an earlier statement to the same effect made in 2007.’³⁰

7.2.2 The USSD report observed that ‘according to the 2015 Egypt Health Issues Survey, published during 2016 by the Ministry of Health and Population, 70 percent of girls between ages 15 and 19 had undergone FGM/C, a decrease from 81 percent in 2008. In May authorities reportedly arrested a doctor from Sohag University Hospital for allegedly conducting FGM/C on a 12-year-old girl.’³¹

7.2.3 In a June 2018 report, the British charity ‘28 Too Many’ observed:

‘With an FGM prevalence of 87.2% among all women aged 15 – 49 in a population of nearly 95 million, Egypt has the greatest number of women and girls who have experienced FGM of any country in the world.

There is a markedly higher prevalence among women and girls living in Upper Egypt than among those living in Lower Egypt and the Urban Governorates...

- Prevalence among young girls is low, but increases dramatically from the age of nine; most girls undergo the practice at or before puberty.
- Type I and II are the most common types of FGM practice.
- Among girls aged 0 – 14, 78.4% of incidents of FGM are carried out by a health professional.’³²

7.2.4 The same report further added:

‘Since at least 2008, there has been a significant shift in Egypt away from traditional practitioners and towards health professionals performing FGM.

²⁹ 28 Too Many, ‘Egypt: The law and FGM’, (page 4), June 2018, [url](#)

³⁰ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.72), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

³¹ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

³² 28 Too Many, ‘Egypt: The law and FGM’, (page 1), June 2018, [url](#)

Overall, 78.4% of incidences of FGM are medicalised. The use of health professionals is more common in urban than in rural areas...'³³

7.2.5 The United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) noted in its 2017 – 2018 annual report 'Focusing on the Future', that '82% of circumcisions are regrettably performed by trained medical personnel.'³⁴

7.2.6 UNICEF mentioned in its Egypt country brief:

'Based on data from the DHS, MICS, and SHHS from 1997-2012, UNICEF estimates that 91 per cent of girls and women aged 15 to 49 in Egypt have undergone FGM/C. Findings from this study support this evidence, with almost all informants noting that it is one of the most important human rights issues girls still face in Egypt, particularly in rural areas. Respondents also suggested that child marriage tends to follow immediately after FGM/C has been performed.'³⁵

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7.3 Societal attitudes

7.3.1 28 Too Many noted in its 2018 report, 'In May 2018 the Egyptian Dar Al-Iftaa (Centre for Islamic Legal Research) made a significant ruling that FGM is religiously forbidden and that the practice is not required under Islamic laws and should be banned, as it mutilates the most sensitive organ in the female body.'³⁶

7.3.2 The USSD report for 2018 noted, 'On June 1 [2017], the Egyptian body, Dar al-Iftaa, responsible for issuing Islamic fatwas, declared FGM forbidden in Islam. On November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the country's grand mufti Shawqi Allam highlighted Dar al-Iftaa's issuance of several fatwas confirming the rights of women and preventing FGM.'³⁷

7.3.3 The OECD report of 2019 also reported, based on various sources, that 'Ongoing work and campaigns done by local and international NGOs and CSOs (including but not limited to: Plan International Egypt, the Centre for Egyptian Women Legal Assistance (CEWLA), and CARITAS Egypt) aim to shift public attitudes to FGM and raise public awareness regarding the harms and risks involved in the procedure.'³⁸

7.3.4 The UNDP mentioned in its report 'Combatting Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt' that :

'FGM has been practiced in Egypt for thousands of years. Many Egyptians believe that for a girl or woman to be "clean," "pure" and "feminine," she must have her genitals cut at a young age.

'Many parents will have their daughters cut as a proactive measure so that they will be "marriageable." Many religious leaders tacitly or actively lend

³³ 28 Too Many, 'Egypt: The law and FGM', (page 3), June 2018, [url](#)

³⁴ UNDP, Annual Report 2017 2018 'Focusing on the future', (page 4), 2018, [url](#)

³⁵ UNICEF, 'Egypt country brief', (page 8), November 2017, [url](#)

³⁶ 28 Too Many, 'Egypt: The law and FGM', (page 6), June 2018, [url](#)

³⁷ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018', (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

³⁸ OECD, SIGI, (section 2e), 2019, [url](#)

their support, even though there is no language in scripture to back the practice. In some communities, men refuse to marry any woman who has not been cut. So strong is the belief that even some girls and young women buy into the validity of the practice.’³⁹

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7.4 Government response

7.4.1 The 28 Too Many report observed:

‘While some arrests have been made and isolated cases brought to court in Egypt, generally, implementation of the national law and its enforcement remain a challenge.

‘Between 2007 and 2013, several girls died undergoing FGM, which led to calls for strengthened legislation and improved law enforcement.

‘Despite this, very few prosecutions appear to have been carried out in recent years, and the following two high-profile cases remain those most widely discussed in public and the media:

‘Following the death of 13-year old Soheir al-Batea in June 2013, the doctor who performed the FGM, Raslan Fadl, was finally prosecuted in 2015 under Articles 238 (manslaughter) and 242-bis (prohibiting FGM) of the Penal Code. He was sentenced to two years for manslaughter and three months’ imprisonment for FGM, and his clinic was closed for one year. He was also fined EGP500 (US\$286). The father, who requested the FGM, was given a three-month suspended sentence.

‘In May 2016, shortly before the law was further strengthened, 17-year-old Mayar Mohamed Mousa from Suez died in a private hospital while undergoing FGM. The primary physician, nurse, anaesthetist and victim’s mother were all found guilty of FGM under various articles of the Penal Code and charged in January 2017. The doctor, anaesthetist and mother were all given one-year suspended prison sentences and fines of between EGP1,000 and EGP5,000 (US\$56–279). The attending nurse, who fled the country, was given a five-year suspended sentence and an EGP50,000 (US\$2,794) fine, which will be reduced if she voluntarily attends court.

‘The most recent report published by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme confirms that just two cases were brought to court and six convictions made in Egypt during 2016.’⁴⁰

7.4.2 Regarding government strategies in tackling FGM practices in Egypt, the organisation reported:

‘The Egyptian Government’s Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, which is closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda document, lists improving gender equality as a key strategic goal. There are several government authorities and associated committees responsible for tackling gender issues and harmful practices such as FGM, including the following:

³⁹ UNDP, ‘Combatting Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt’, [url](#)

⁴⁰ 28 Too Many, ‘Egypt: The law and FGM’, (page 5), June 2018, [url](#)

'Government departments responsible for protecting women and girls from FGM in Egypt include the Ministry of Health and Population, the National Population Council (NPC) and the Ministry of Justice.

'The National Council for Women was established in 2000 by presidential decree, with the aim of addressing issues faced by Egyptian women such as FGM, sexual harassment and domestic violence. It works to increase awareness of women's and girls' rights, combat gender-based violence and enhance women's access to public services.

'The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, affiliated with the Ministry of Health and Population, is officially responsible for matters relating to FGM and, together with the UNDP, launched Egypt's national FGM-Free Village Model in 2003. It has also been responsible for mobilising various campaigns that led to changes in FGM legislation.

'The National FGM Abandonment Strategy 2016–2020 is State's official strategy for eradicating FGM. Its goals are to address 'inconsistencies within the legal culture' and enforce existing laws against FGM. It also aims to build a culture that supports human rights and develop a system to monitor the abandonment process.

'In 2008, Egypt was one of the first countries to become part of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme to end FGM (UNJP). It has supported programmes and services, which include launching a training programme in 2014 for prosecutors, in partnership with the NPC and the Office of the General Prosecutor, to raise awareness of FGM issues and improve reporting and documentation.'⁴¹

7.4.3 The organisation further added:

'The Minister of Health and the Administrative Court of Justice has also stated that "FGM should be banned in hospitals and public/private clinics" (except in circumstances of serious disease and specific approval from the Minister of Health).

'The Egyptian Minister of Health, Ahmed Emad, presented six steps to eliminate FGM by 2030:

- '1. criminalise and punish FGM in the Penal Code;
- '2. the attorney general to record crimes as a reference in the investigation of FGM incidents;
- '3. require hospitals to inform the police when they receive FGM cases;
- '4. require the Ministry of Health's sectors to carry out training and educational programmes on the law, covering the penalties and negative consequences of FGM;
- '5. implement the Supreme Council of Universities' approval in 2017 of adding educational material on the crime of FGM into the curriculum of obstetrics students in medical school programmes; and

⁴¹ 28 Too Many, 'Egypt: The law and FGM', (page 6), June 2018, [url](#)

'6. commit all ministries and agencies to integrating the curriculum against FGM within their training and service programmes.'⁴²

7.4.4 However, the organisation also mentioned:

'Civil society in general comments that there is a continuing failure to protect women and girls from FGM in Egypt and a lack of political will to implement and enforce the law. Punishments given to date do not reflect the penalties set out in the legislation and are not adequately followed through. Raslan Fadl, for example, who was eventually convicted to two years and three months in prison following the death of Soheir al-Batea in 2013, reportedly only served three months in total. The UNJP also notes that doctors who continue to perform FGM have actually raised their prices in response to higher penalties set out by the law; it is a lucrative business, often practised secretly outside office hours.'⁴³

7.4.5 Human Rights Watch reported in its 'World Report 2019' that 'In May, the Task Force to Combat FGM issued a statement condemning the extremely lax efforts made to advance the National Strategy Against FGM (2016-2020) and the law's inadequate protection of girls' lives and health.'⁴⁴

7.4.6 For more information on FGM, see [Support for Women](#).

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Section 8 updated: 26 April 2019

8. Sexual harassment and rape

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 The 2017 DFAT report observed that:

'Sexual harassment is a frequent occurrence for women across the socio-economic spectrum. A 2013 UN Women study found 99.3 per cent of Egyptian women had experienced sexual harassment, while 91.5 per cent reported experiencing unwanted physical contact. Sexual harassment was found to be particularly prevalent during mass street celebrations such as religious feasts, or political demonstrations. The study found that most sexually assaulted women would not report the crime to the police or tell their families.'⁴⁵

8.1.2 The USSD reported sexual harassment as a serious problem and that 'Media and NGOs reported sexual harassment by police was also a problem, and the potential for further harassment further discouraged women from filing complaints'.⁴⁶ It also stated that, 'media, NGOs, and UNHCR staff reported multiple cases of attacks against refugees, particularly women and children. According to UNHCR, refugees sometimes reported harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination. Refugee women and girls,

⁴² 28 Too Many, 'Egypt: The law and FGM', (page 6), June 2018, [url](#)

⁴³ 28 Too Many, 'Egypt: The law and FGM', (page 7), June 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴ HRW, 'World Report 2019 – Egypt events of 2018', [url](#)

⁴⁵ DFAT, 'Country Information Report Egypt', (para 3.73), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁶ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018', (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

particularly sub-Saharan Africans, faced the greatest risk of societal, sexual, and gender-based violence.¹⁴⁷

- 8.1.3 According to UNHCR Operational Update – Egypt: ‘During May and June (2018) 263 SGBV (sexual and gender based violence) incidents were reported to UNHCR and UNHCR partner CARE International in Cairo and Alexandria, with survivors being predominantly women and girls.’¹⁴⁸
- 8.1.4 The 2017 DFAT report observed that ‘Approximately 20,000 cases of rape are reported annually, although the actual number is credibly estimated to be much higher.’¹⁴⁹
- 8.1.5 Regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment in Egypt, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies stated in a report in April 2017:
‘The mob-sexual assault of a university student in the early hours of Friday 31 March 2017 in the Qawmia area of the city of Zagazig, Sharkia governorate, tragically corroborates the persistence and prevalence of sexual violence against women in the Egyptian public sphere. Although the state has recently adopted policies to protect women from gender-based violence, the mob-sexual assault and the enduring endemic nature of gender-based sexual violence throughout Egypt confirms the need for a truthful evaluation of these policies, and a revised strategy to ensure perpetrators are held accountable.’¹⁵⁰
- 8.1.6 Nazra for Feminist Studies mentioned in a joint statement with over 20 organisations of April 2017, ‘The mob-sexual assault that took place in the early hours of Friday 31 March 2017 in Qawmia area in Zagazig city in Sharkia governate against a university student confirms the continuance of these crimes and their endemic nature in the Egyptian public sphere.... Sexual violence in the public sphere is almost a daily phenomenon and facing it mandates daily and strong efforts to enable and develop designed mechanisms.’¹⁵¹

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8.2 Legal protection and effectiveness

- 8.2.1 Based on various sources, the 2019 OECD report noted:

‘...The penalty for convicted rapists is a minimum of life imprisonment, increasing to capital punishment for aggravated forms of rape, such as gang rape or the rape of a minor... Following fierce opposition from women’s rights activists and groups, article 291, permitting the perpetrator to evade sentencing by marrying the plaintiff, was also repealed in 1999 by presidential decree...

‘While the law contains no suggestion of what might constitute the nature of consent, case law has pointed to certain requirements in order for a conviction to be successful. These include proof of the “material” element

⁴⁷ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁸ UNHCR, Operational Update- Egypt May June 2018, (page 3), [url](#)

⁴⁹ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.74), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁰ Cairo Institute for human rights studies, ‘Circles of hell from Tahrir to Zagazig...?’, 4 April 2017, [url](#)

⁵¹ Nazra for feminist studies, ‘Circles of hell from Tahrir to Zagazig: ...?’, 6 April 2017, [url](#)

attesting to the physical sexual intercourse, as well as a “mental” element, encompassing duress, coercion and deception... Acts of sexual violence falling outside of the criteria stipulated in article 267 for rape are treated as “indecent assault” and punished accordingly.’⁵²

8.2.2 Based on various sources, the same report added that ‘In practice, Article 17 of the Penal Code has been cited as a legal loophole that can be used to lower sentences in cases of rape and honour crimes. This, along with Article 60, grants the judge discretion in pardoning perpetrators believed to have acted in good faith...’⁵³

8.2.3 Furthermore, the same report observed:

‘As of 2014 the legal framework extends to harassment, which criminalizes the act of “accosting” in a “private or public or frequented place implying sexual or obscene gestures, whether by verbal or nonverbal means or through actions, in any manner including modern means of communication”... Sexual harassment is defined under this with the additional proviso that the perpetrator must have the intention of “receiving sexual gratification from the victim”... Sexual harassment carries a harsher penalty than harassment – or accosting—although in each case a fine and a prison term are applied.’⁵⁴

8.2.4 The DFAT report observed:

‘Decree 50/2014 criminalised sexual harassment for the first time, providing for prison sentences of up to five years. Nine men received lengthy prison sentences in July 2014 for participating in mob sexual assaults, and a man received a five-year sentence in April 2015 for sexually harassing a woman on public transport in Cairo. However, such prosecutions and sentences remain rare.

‘Article 267 of the Criminal Code makes rape punishable by death... Legal definitions for rape and sexual assault are weak. According to Amnesty International, authorities treat rape and sexual assault as a social nuisance rather than a crime to be prosecuted, and rarely make serious attempts to prosecute those responsible for sex crimes.’⁵⁵

8.2.5 The USSD reported that ‘The law criminalizes rape, prescribing penalties of 15 to 25 years’ imprisonment, or life imprisonment for cases of rape involving armed abduction...The government did not effectively enforce the law.’⁵⁶

8.2.6 Regarding sexual harassment, the USSD report also mentioned that ‘Sexual harassment remained a serious problem. The government claimed it prioritized efforts to address sexual harassment. The penal code defines sexual harassment as a crime, with penalties including fines and sentences of six months’ to five years’ imprisonment if convicted.’⁵⁷

⁵² OECD, SIGI, (section 2c), 2019, [url](#)

⁵³ OECD, SIGI, (section 2a), 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁴ OECD, SIGI, (section 2d), 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁵ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.73), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁶ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁷ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

8.2.7 Egypttoday.com (the news website of the English language social affairs magazine Egypt Today) reported in June 2017:

‘Eid in Egypt has come to be associated with sexual harassment over the last decade, stirring controversy across the country. This has led the Ministry of Interior to increase female police patrols in an effort to detect and report incidents of harassment and arrest harassers...

‘Female officers have been equipped with several items to assist them in their duties, such as iron batons.

“Anyone who would harass a woman would regret it,” one policewoman said.

‘Female police will be present heavily in Greater Cairo, where most incidents occur, especially in parks, cinemas, metro stations and other crowded areas...

‘Due to the increase in crimes of violence against women, the Ministry of Interior established a department to combat the phenomenon in May 2013; the department recruits mainly female officers.’⁵⁸

8.2.8 On 30 March 2019, BBC Monitoring reported:

‘(Sisi) also hailed the government measures to combat violence against women, tasking the government with passing "proper legislation" to protect women against "all forms of psychological and physical violence".

‘He noted that early marriage and depriving girls of education are "different forms of violence".

‘He also urged the government to further study the phenomenon of "female debtors" and to take necessary legislative measures and policies to put an end to it.

‘Female debtors, known locally as "Gharemat", are women who are imprisoned for failing to pay their debts.’⁵⁹

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8.3 Effectiveness of the police

8.3.1 The 2017 DFAT report observed:

‘The implementation of constitutional protections can be unpredictable, and frequently dependent on the individual discretion of police, prosecutors or judges. Human rights organisations have told DFAT that some judges, particularly in rural areas, allow their religious or cultural view of women to influence their findings. The accountability of police is also an issue, both in terms of their capacity to enforce laws preventing violence and harassment against women and as perpetrators of such acts, particularly in custody... DFAT understands that police have targeted some women living alone (a social taboo) for arrest or extortion under Law 10/1961, which prohibits prostitution.’⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Egypttoday.com, ‘Female police officers to combat sexual harassment in Eid’, 24 June 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁹ BBC Monitorig, ‘Egypt Sisi seeks more women’s empowerment’, 30 Mar 2019, subscription only, [url](#)

⁶⁰ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.70), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

8.3.2 The same DFAT report noted:

'Professionalism varies across the police. The effectiveness of the police in general is limited by a shortage of equipment, a lack of training, low pay, and poor investigative skills, particularly in relation to investigating cases of sexual assault. In May 2015, the Ministry of Interior commenced a new policing strategy aimed at improving responses to violence against women, including through human rights training and the deployment of more female physicians to hospitals.'⁶¹

8.3.3 The USSD report noted with regards to rape that 'Civil society organizations reported police pressure not to pursue charges.'⁶²

8.3.4 The same USSD further reported:

'On August 31, journalist May al-Shamy filed a complaint accusing the editor in chief of the newspaper Youm7 of sexually assaulting her physically, on several occasions in the preceding month. The prosecution suspended its investigation into the case on October 31 due to a lack of evidence. Shamy's appeal to reopen the investigation was rejected on November 5...

'...Media and NGOs reported sexual harassment by police was also a problem, and the potential for further harassment further discouraged women from filing complaints...

'Authorities arrested individuals who complained of their experience with sexual harassment online, including activist Amal Fathy and Lebanese tourist Mona el-Mazbouh.

'On September 9, the Qasr al-Nil misdemeanor court sentenced a man to two years in prison for sexually harassing two women while they were walking in downtown Cairo. The man also was fined and received a three-month sentence for assault. Authorities acquitted a second man of the same charges. When police responded to the incident, the two men alleged the women had assaulted them, and authorities took all four into custody. Authorities held the women in detention for 10 hours until their lawyer assured that they would return them for questioning.'⁶³

8.3.5 The same source noted with regards to the general effectiveness of the police that:

'The government does not have effective mechanisms to investigate and punish abuse. Official impunity was a problem. Police investigative skills remained poor. Police did not investigate reported police abuses sufficiently, according to local and international human rights groups. The government investigated and prosecuted some, but not all, reports of abuse, and some prosecutions resulted in acquittals due to insufficient or contradictory evidence. The government frequently called for investigations of abuses by security forces, although these investigations rarely resulted in judicial punishment.'⁶⁴

⁶¹ DFAT, 'Country Information Report Egypt', (para 5.6), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

⁶² USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018', (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶³ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018', (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁴ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018', (section 1d), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

8.3.6 Freedom House, in its 2018 report, Freedom on the Net observed:

‘In May 2018, activist Amal Fathy was arrested two days after posting a video to her Facebook page criticizing the government for its failure to protect women from sexual harassment, deliver public services, and improve the human rights and socioeconomic situation. Fathy and her husband Mohamed Lotfy, the director of the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), were detained, as well as their three-year-old child. They were later released, but Fathy was charged with "disseminating a video on social media to publicly incite overthrowing the government," "publishing a video that includes false news that could harm public peace," and "misusing telecommunication tools." At the end of the coverage period, she was held in detention for a second set of charges including "belonging to a banned group," "using a website to promote ideas calling for terrorist acts," and "intentionally disseminating false news that could harm public security and interest." Prosecutors allege Fathy is a member of the banned April 6 Youth Movement. After Fathy posted a video to Facebook detailing her own experience of sexual harassment, online trolls reposted it to Facebook and Twitter "alongside gender-based insults and calls for her arrest." The case was picked up by state-owned and progovernment media, which falsely claimed that she is an April 6 activist currently working at ECRF.’⁶⁵

8.3.7 In September 2018, Reuters reported the eight year prison sentence of a Lebanese tourist, Mona el-Mazboh, after she had posted a video on social media complaining about her experiences of sexual harassment in Egypt. The report stated:

‘A Lebanese tourist who was sentenced to eight years in prison for posting a video on Facebook the authorities claimed had insulted the country is set to walk free after a court cut the prison term and suspended it, the state-run MENA news agency said on Sunday.

‘A Cairo court in July found Mona el-Mazboh guilty of deliberately spreading false rumors that would harm society, attacking religion, and public indecency.

‘El-Mazboh was arrested at Cairo airport in June at the end of her stay in Egypt after a 10-minute video in which she was complaining of sexual harassment and conditions in Egypt using explicit language went viral on social media.

‘The court reduced her sentence to one year and suspended it, MENA said...

‘Egyptian rights activists say they face the worst crackdown in their history under President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, accusing him of erasing freedoms won in the 2011 Arab Spring uprising that ended Hosni Mubarak’s 30-year rule.’⁶⁶

8.3.8 Human Rights Watch reported in its ‘World Report 2019’ that ‘other women’s activists continue to face trial for their women’s rights activism including Mozn Hassan, head of Nazra for Feminist Studies, and Azza Soliman, head

⁶⁵ Freedom House, ‘Freedom on the net 2018 – Egypt’, 1 November 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶ Reuters, ‘Egypt set to release Lebanese tourist jailed over Facebook post’, 9 September 2018, [url](#)

of the Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance, who remain under travel bans.⁶⁷

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8.4 Government response

8.4.1 The USSD report noted that 'The government did not effectively enforce the law.'⁶⁸

8.4.2 Human Rights Watch reported in its 'World Report 2019' that 'The government has failed to adequately protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, and, in some cases, even punished them for speaking out on this issue.'⁶⁹

8.4.3 The OECD 2019 report observed:

'A national five-year strategy to combat violence against women was drafted by the National Council for Women (NCW) and launched in June 2015 (NSVAW). The strategy is coordinated by the NCW (a quasi-governmental body) alongside other NGOs, and is overseen by a range of ministry departments, including the Ministry of Interior... There are four key pillars to the strategy, including: reviewing and improving legislation on combating violence against women; developing coordination mechanisms to strengthen law enforcement; awareness-raising initiatives of existing laws and legal services; and supporting survivors in reporting incidents of violence and in benefiting from protection programmes...

'The NSVAW strategy outlines a number of goals and outputs it expects to achieve, such as organising workshops with law enforcement agencies and Ministerial representatives with a view to drafting amendments to existing laws, and establishing hotlines in the Ministry of Interior to process reports of violence against women. It has nevertheless received some criticism for failing to provide specific benchmarks and mechanisms to review and monitor progress against implementation... There is no reference to a budgetary commitment behind the strategy, and it remains unclear whether there is any specific budget allocated to supporting non-governmental organisations implementing activities combating violence against women. As it is coordinated by the NCW, its nature is non-binding...'⁷⁰

8.4.4 However, the report added:

'Examples of government initiatives and political frameworks to address violence and sexual violence have been fragmented and disjointed... with little coordination between the NCW, Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice, among others.

'In one initiative, the Department to Follow Up Violent Crimes Against Women was set up in May 2013 to promote awareness-raising campaigns in order to encourage survivors of violence to report their crimes to the Police and the Public Prosecution.. It is unclear what progress these campaigns have had, although the Department has articulated a priority in increasing

⁶⁷ HRW, 'World Report 2019 – Egypt events of 2018', [url](#)

⁶⁸ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt', (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁹ HRW, 'World Report 2019 – Egypt events of 2018', [url](#)

⁷⁰ OECD, SIGI, '2019 results in Africa', (section 2a), 2019, [url](#)

the number of female police and security officers to encourage survivors to come forward.

'The broader NSVAW strategy to combat violence against women coordinated by the NCW outlines a number of measures to address rape and sexual violence, including the development of guidelines and protocols for medical professionals dealing with survivors of violence, together with accompanying training in how to use the guidelines... In addition, a forensic unit related to violence against women has been established, and serves three of Egypt's largest cities, including its capital, Cairo... The unit provides both medical and psychological support to survivors of violence.

'The strategy also foresees providing legal assistance to survivors of violence, including through support offered to girls throughout the investigation process... This is intended to complement wider awareness-raising initiatives such as the 'Safe Cities for Women & Girls Initiative', which aims to offer legal counsel and advice to strengthen women's awareness about their legal rights.. While a key tenet of the strategy has focused on the creation of specialised tribunals to deal with survivors of violence, it is unclear what progress has been made towards implementing this... It also remains unclear what budgetary commitments, if any, are stipulated in the strategy.'⁷¹

8.4.5 Furthermore the report noted with regards to sexual harassment that:

'In the absence of official government campaigns specifically targeting this issue, there have been a number of concerted efforts made by civil society organisations to increase awareness regarding violence against women in the public sphere. In response to the media attention around the surge in incidences of sexual harassment during the 2011 popular uprisings, NGOs such as OpAniSH/A, Tahrir Bodyguards and "I saw harassment" have emerged to monitor instances of sexual harassment in public spaces...'

8.4.6 The Cairo Institute for Human Rights studies stated in an April 2017 report:

'The culture of victim-blaming has dominated both the governmental and cultural responses to the mob-sexual assault. Members of the Egyptian Parliament (MPs), rather directing their efforts towards preventing men from brutally assaulting women, have instead conducted ad-hoc meetings blaming cultural decay or women themselves for male sexual violence. PM Ahmed El-Awady stressed the importance of "saving new generations from the demise of morals." PM Amaal Tarabeya focused on halting the spread of pornographic websites in addition to "conducting seminars to reclaim morals and piety in society, away from wearing make-up and short clothes, as this attracts the attention of young men, resulting in flirtation." Further adding insult to injury, the Zagazig Security Directorate stated that the survivor was wearing "extremely short clothes in front of a café, so several young men gathered around her, trying to harass her."⁷²

8.4.7 Amnesty International (AI) noted in its 2017/2018 report:

⁷¹ OECD, SIGI, (section 2c), 2019, [url](#)

⁷² Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 'Circles of hell from Tahrir to Zagazig...?', 4 April 2017, [url](#)

'Women and girls continued to face inadequate protection from sexual and gender-based violence, as well as gender discrimination in law and practice. The absence of measures to ensure privacy and protection of women reporting sexual and gender-based violence continued to be a key factor preventing many women and girls from reporting such offences. Many who did report offences faced harassment and retaliation from the perpetrators or their families. In some cases, state officials and members of parliament blamed victims of sexual violence and attributed the incidents to their "revealing clothing". In March a young student was attacked and sexually assaulted by a mob in Zagazig city, al-Sharkia governorate. Instead of arresting the perpetrators and bringing them to justice, the Security Directorate in al-Sharkia governorate issued a statement mentioning that by "wearing a short dress" the victim had "caused the mob attack".'⁷³

- 8.4.8 Nazra for Feminine Studies [a group that aims at contributing to the continuity and development of the Egyptian and regional feminist movement in the Middle East and North Africa⁷⁴ stated:

'The culture of survivor blaming for these crimes was very clear and evident by some members of parliament, where several parliamentary members stressed the importance of conducting ad-hoc meetings to identify the reasons for the spread of these crimes, while parliamentary member Ahmed El-Awady stressed the importance of "saving new generations from the demise of morals", parliamentary member Amaal Tarabeya signaled the necessity of sending a briefing request to the Ministries of Communications and Interior regarding finding ways to stop the spread of pornographic websites that help spread these crimes in addition to "conducting seminars to reclaim morals and piety in society, away from wearing make-up and short clothes, as they are things that attract youthful men and attract attention, and result in flirtation". Moreover, the Zagazig Security Directorate stated that the survivor was wearing "extremely short clothes in front of a café, so several young men gathered around her trying to harass her".'⁷⁵

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8.5 Support for victims

- 8.5.1 The OECD report noted that, 'A more recent example of an NGO working to curb sexual harassment is the Aman (Security) Initiative, launched by the Musawah Organisation for Training and Counseling in September 2016 to encourage affected women to speak about their experiences and confront the stigma associated with speaking publically about sexual harassment...'⁷⁶

- 8.5.2 UNHCR reported in its May – June 2018 Operational Update:

'Access to multi-sectorial response services including safety, medical, psychosocial, livelihoods [sic] and legal services and case management have been continuously ensured for identified SGBV (Sexual gender based violence) survivors. A set of SGBV prevention activities were conducted by

⁷³ AI, 'AI International Report 2017/18 – Egypt', 22 February 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁴ Nazra, About Us, undated, [url](#)

⁷⁵ Nazra for feminist studies, 'Circles of hell from Tahrir to Zagazig: ...?', 6 April 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁶ OECD, SIGI, (section 2c), 2019, [url](#)

UNHCR's partner CARE, reaching out 608 refugees and asylum-seekers. Activities included awareness sessions on early marriage, legal issues, reproductive health and basic psychosocial sessions. Training on gender and SGBV was provided to support staff.⁷⁷

- 8.5.3 The USSD report for 2018 observed 'On November 25, the Investment and International Cooperation Ministry launched a national initiative for combating violence against women. The initiative groups international and local partners to conduct an awareness campaign against sexual harassment in means of transportation, in addition to all other forms of violence against women.'⁷⁸

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Section 9 updated: 13 March 2019

9. Marriage and family

9.1 Marriage

- 9.1.1 The USSD noted in its 2018 report 'Laws affecting marriage and personal status generally corresponded to an individual's religious group. A female Muslim citizen cannot legally marry a non-Muslim man. If she were to do so, authorities could charge her with adultery and consider her children illegitimate. Under the government's interpretation of Islamic law, any children from such a marriage could be placed in the custody of a male Muslim guardian.'⁷⁹
- 9.1.2 Freedom House reported in 2018, 'Personal status rules based on religious affiliation put women at a disadvantage in marriage, divorce, and custody matters. Muslim women cannot marry non-Muslim men, for example, and the Coptic Church rarely permits divorce.'⁸⁰
- 9.1.3 The OECD Social Institute and Gender Index stated in its 2019 report:
'In the absence of a unified family code, personal status laws govern the overarching legal framework for marriage and divorce. This is based on an interpretation of the principles of Islamic law (Shari'a)... Personal status laws are adopted by the Parliament, although under special circumstances, the President can bypass the Parliament and enact reforms through the issuance of decree-laws...
'Christian and Jewish faiths have the right to apply their own laws concerning family matters, including in marriage and divorce... Other faiths and faiths of different non-Muslim denominations... must resort to the Islamic personal status laws, which is the "general" law...
'Egypt has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), although a reservation is currently in force in respect of Article 16, which demands the equality of men and women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. In its reservations, Egypt cited Shari'a as the legal basis governing marital

⁷⁷ UNHCR, Operational Update- Egypt May June 2018, (page 3), [url](#)

⁷⁸ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt', (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁹ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt', (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁰ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Egypt', (para G3), 16 February 2018, [url](#)

relations in Egypt... Under Shari'a, women are entitled the same rights as men to enter into marriage, and marriages are not to be registered in the absence of the spouses' consent... One notable exception is the right to marry a non-Muslim spouse, which is granted to Muslim men but not Muslim women...

'Customary (urfi) marriages are widely practised in Egypt, and take effect under informal contracts signed in the presence of two witnesses. While these marriages are not considered illegal, the law does not allow these marriages to be registered and as such does not accord them the same status as official (formal) marriages... This is also the case for "traveller" or "tourist" (misyar) marriages, in which the couple agree to live in separate residences and meet up at their discretion, while the husband is absolved of any financial obligations towards his wife...

'The rights to be recognised as the head of the household is not explicitly codified in law... Men are de facto the head of the household and are responsible for providing maintenance for their children... A woman is also required by law to obey her husband... In cases where she does not do so and deserts the marital home, the law permits a husband to file an obedience (ta'a) complaint and may subsequently entitle him to withdraw maintenance payments to his wife...'⁸¹

9.1.4 The OECD report added:

'Although slavery, coercion, sex and human trafficking are all forbidden and punishable by law..., the CEDAW Committee has expressed concerns that misyar (traveller or tourist) marriages may substantiate a form of trafficking, due to their prevalence among poor Egyptian girls from rural areas seeking to marry wealthy foreign men... In their report they outline recommendations to the government in promoting awareness-raising campaigns to highlight the effects of temporary marriages...'⁸²

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9.2 Early and forced marriage:

9.2.1 The 2017 DFAT report mentioned:

'Egyptian girls are vulnerable to early or forced marriages, particularly those from rural areas... Some early marriages are temporary marriages intended to mask child prostitution, known as "tourism" or "summer" marriages. These "marriages" involve wealthy foreign men (generally from Gulf States) purchasing Egyptian girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation, with the transaction often facilitated by the girl's family. In December 2015, the Ministry of Justice introduced measures to make such "marriages" more difficult to obtain, but refrained from eliminating the practice altogether.'⁸³

9.2.2 The USSD report also noted:

'The legal age of marriage is 18. According to UNICEF 17 percent of girls married before age 18, and 2 percent of girls were married by age 15.'

⁸¹ OECD SIGI, '2019 results in Africa', (section 1a, 1c), 2019, [url](#)

⁸² OECD SIGI, '2019 results in Africa', (section 1e), 2019, [url](#)

⁸³ DFAT, 'Country Information Report Egypt', (para 3.78), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

According to NCW (National Council for Women) statistics, nearly 36 percent of marriages in rural areas in the southern part of the country included a partner who was not yet age 18. Families reportedly sometimes forced adolescent girls to marry wealthy foreign men in what were known locally as “tourism” or “summer” marriages for the purpose of sexual exploitation, prostitution, or forced labor. According to the law, a foreign man who wants to marry an Egyptian woman more than 25 years younger than he is must pay a fine of LE 50,000 (\$2,790). Women’s rights organizations argued that allowing foreign men to pay a fine to marry much younger women represented a form of trafficking and encouraged child marriage. They called on the government to eliminate the system altogether. The Antitrafficking Unit at the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), a governmental body, is responsible for raising awareness of the problem.’⁸⁴

9.2.3 The same USSD report added that ‘the law provides for sentences of not less than five years’ imprisonment and fines of up to LE 200,000 (\$11,150) for conviction of commercial sexual exploitation of children and child pornography. The government did not adequately enforce the law. The minimum age for consensual sex is age 18.’⁸⁵

9.2.4 Based on various sources, the 2019 OECD SIGI report observed, ‘While consent is required in order for the registrar (ma’dhun) to contract the marriage, there are no laws criminalising forced marriage, and no penalty imposed for those seeking to enter or facilitate such arrangements.’⁸⁶

9.2.5 The same report further noted:

‘Following the 2008 reforms of the Child Law, the legal age of marriage was raised from 16 for women to 18 for both men and women, without exception... The law does not recognise marriages between underage parties, and those who provide false information that would result in such a marriage or facilitate such marriages are subject to a penalty of imprisonment and/or a fine...

‘Despite these legal safeguards, research has found early marriages to be common, particularly among girls from rural areas or poorer socio-economic groups... In some areas, such as Upper Egypt, the proportion of girls being married before 18 is thought to be on the rise... In an attempt to address this phenomenon, the National Population Council in 2014 devised a five-year national strategy to end child marriage... which is thought to be the only country in the region to have dedicated a stand-alone response to tackling the issue... This strategy is embedded within Egypt’s wider population and development strategy, and aims to reduce early marriage by 50% at the end of the five-year plan, through a rights-based approach aiming to raise awareness among women and young girls... The strategy includes different measures, including: economically empowering and educating girls; providing support to girls who have married early to minimise any adverse effects; reviewing and updating existing laws and legislation to ensure they

⁸⁴ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁵ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁶ OECD SIGI, ‘2019 results in Africa’, (section 1a), 2019, [url](#)

work in favour of women; and raising awareness among families and communities of the harmful consequences of child marriage’...⁸⁷

9.2.6 However, UNICEF mentioned in its Egypt country brief:

‘In 2013, Egypt developed the National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Prevention of Early Marriage, aiming to reduce the prevalence of early marriage by 50 per cent within a five years’ timeframe. The plan was developed by the NPC in collaboration with key stakeholders working on child marriage in Egypt. However, according to Girls Not Brides, the implementation of the strategy slowed down due to shifts in the Ministry of Population and the fluid political situation and restrictions on civil society. This led to uncertainty on the strategy’s status amongst those working on the ground on child marriage issues This point was confirmed by several key informants who noted that the political instability makes it difficult to address child marriage due to its sensitive nature.’⁸⁸

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9.3 Divorce

9.3.1 The 2017 DFAT report observed:

‘As noted in “Personal Status Laws”, laws relating to family (including marriage, divorce and inheritance) are drawn from religious tradition. Both Muslim and Christian women tend to be disadvantaged by these laws. While Muslim men can unilaterally divorce their wives without providing any justification, Muslim women must either forfeit their financial rights by accepting a “no-fault” divorce, or fight a long and costly court battle to prove that their husband harmed them. Christian women married to Christian men are only able to access divorce if their partner converts to another religion or is unfaithful, which results in many women being unable to leave abusive relationships.’⁸⁹

9.3.2 DFAT further reported:

‘Socio-economic factors can make it very difficult for a woman to escape an abusive marriage. Attempting to do so in conservative or rural areas will usually result in communal and familial ostracism. Amnesty International reported in January 2015 that Egypt had only eight operating government-run shelters, with the ongoing government crackdown on NGOs preventing them from filling the vacuum. The shelters aim primarily to reconcile women with their husbands, and tend to shelter women on a limited basis. The shelters are poorly resourced and advertised, and apply rules and procedures that greatly limit their accessibility and utility to survivors of violence.’⁹⁰

9.3.3 The USSD report mentioned that “Khula” divorce allows a Muslim woman to obtain a divorce without her husband’s consent, provided she forgoes all her financial rights, including alimony, dowry, and other benefits. The Coptic

⁸⁷ OECD SIGI, ‘2019 results in Africa’, (section 1b), 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁸ UNICEF, ‘Egypt country brief’, (page 10), undated, [url](#)

⁸⁹ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.71), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

⁹⁰ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Egypt’, (para 3.76), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

Orthodox Church permits divorce only in rare circumstances, such as adultery or conversion of one spouse to another religion. Other Christian churches sometimes permitted divorce on a case-by-case basis.⁹¹

9.3.4 The OECD mentioned in its 2019 report:

‘The right to initiate divorce is not equal for men and women, with different requirements and conditions for each sex. Under existing personal status laws, Muslim Egyptian men have a unilateral right to divorce – repudiation – without resort to legal proceedings (talaq)... whereas women are required to seek and justify their decision in a court of law.

‘Under Article 5 of the Law No. 100 of 1985, a man seeking to repudiate his wife must register the repudiation with the ma’dhun within 30 days of declaring his intention to do so. The role of the ma’dhun is both to document the repudiation, and to notify the wife if she is not present at the time this is documented... Where the divorce occurs without the consent or fault of the wife, she is entitled to compensation payment (mut’a) of at least two years, in addition to maintenance payments during the waiting period (‘idda), during which she is not permitted to remarry...

‘Women seeking to divorce their husbands, however, must do so in one of two ways: fault-based (tatliq) or no fault-based divorce (khul). Tatliq is granted on the following grounds: (1) where the husband suffers from a serious mental or physical illness, which pre-dated their marriage or was otherwise not made known to the wife; and which renders her unable to live with him due to the harm inflicted on her... (2) failure of the husband to provide maintenance payments... (3) in the absence of the husband for more than one year without a valid reason... or as a result of being condemned to prison ... and (4) experiencing intentional injury or darar from the husband, which spans a range of physical and mental harms...

‘Since 2000, women in Egypt can also apply for a no fault-based divorce, or khul... While applying for khul exempts women from having to provide evidence of harm (and can be done without the consent of their husband), doing so requires certain financial rights being forfeited, including the right to maintenance or alimony payments... Wives are also required to repay the original dowry and forgo the deferred part of the dowry... Women married in urfi marriages do not have recourse to khul...

‘Women and men are also free to negotiate the terms of their marriage contract, which can provide the basis for equalising their rights to initiating divorce under yad al-‘isma, or ‘isma. This would grant wives permission to seek divorce unilaterally by registering the repudiation with the ma’dhun.. In practice, however, most couples are reluctant in stipulating these conditions owing to prevailing social practices favouring a man’s exclusive right to divorce...

‘Other factors obstructing women’s legal rights to initiate divorce include: prevailing social norms regarding a woman’s responsibility in ensuring the stability of the family; concern among mothers that exercising their right to

⁹¹ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt’, (section 6), 14 March 2017, [url](#)

divorce would tarnish the image of their daughter to prospective suitors; difficulties enforcing mut'a payments in successful legal outcomes; and the time and monetary costs involved in divorce and litigation proceedings...'⁹²

9.3.5 The same report noted:

'Non-Muslim communities apply their own personal status laws governing divorce. Under Coptic Orthodox law, for example, the only basis for filing a divorce is on the grounds of adultery (of either spouse) or of a change of religion... In practice, those wishing to seek other grounds for divorce are still able to do so by changing religion in order to defer to Shari'a de facto. In a small number of cases, divorced Orthodox Copts have been known to contract urfi marriages, although this is not legally permitted to non-Muslims...'⁹³

9.3.6 The OECD also added that 'divorced women retain no ownership rights over the marital home or any other property upon divorce. Husbands and wives retain separate property.'⁹⁴

9.3.7 A BBC Monitoring article, 'Egypt Sisi comments on anti-divorce programme', reported:

'Egyptian President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi has said he was looking forward to the outcome of a government-sponsored programme aimed at limiting divorce rates.

'Addressing a celebration held on 30 March for honouring Egyptian women and exemplary mothers, Sisi said: "In the light of the previous directives to draft a family awareness project and prepare youth for the responsibilities of marriage, I am looking forward to the effective and positive implementation of the Mawada [affection] initiative, which will benefit the stability of the family and preserve the rights of both husband and wife."

'The initiative, launched by the Ministry of Social Solidarity in November 2018, seeks to teach young people in universities and youth centres how to protect their families from divorce, the privately owned website Youm7 reported on 30 March.

'Minister of Social Solidarity Ghada Waly had earlier said that divorce rates had sharply increased and become a threat.

'She added that Al-Azhar (the highest Sunni authority in the Muslim world) and the Egyptian Orthodox Church had established different programmes to educate young people on how to put an end to this phenomenon, according to the privately owned website Al-Masry al-Youm.

'In January 2017, President Sisi said he was informed by the head of the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) that about 40 per cent of annual marriages in the country ended up in divorce after five years.

"'[Can't] we issue a law stipulating that divorce becomes invalid except in the [presence of] the marriage official to give people [who decide to get divorced]

⁹² OECD SIGI, (section 1d), 2019, [url](#)

⁹³ OECD SIGI, (section 1d), 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁴ OECD SIGI, (section 3a), 2019, [url](#)

the chance to rethink their decision?" Sisi said at the time, calling for invalidating oral divorce.

'Divorce rates in Egypt are markedly increasing, compared with marriage rate, according to a report issued by CAPMAS in February 2018.'⁹⁵

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9.4 Child custody

9.4.1 The DFAT report of 2017 noted that 'women have fewer custodial rights than men, and may not remove a child from Egypt without the specific permission of the father. Fathers are able to place travel bans on their children to prevent them from leaving the country... Abortion is criminalised in all cases'.⁹⁶

9.4.2 The OECD SIGI 2019 report added:

'Existing personal status laws favour men with regards legal guardianship over children. Under Shari'a law, the father is their natural guardian (al waley), while the rights of the mother extend to physical, rather than legal, custody of the child (Uhlmann, 2004). Moreover the law stipulates different responsibilities for men and women with regard to their children. Women are responsible for the care of the family... while personal status law deems the father financially responsible for maintenance of the children...

'Women and men also have different rights regarding legal guardianship of their children after divorce. In 2005, amendments to personal status laws saw an extension of the mothers' custody (hadana) of her children in divorce from up until the age of 10 (for boys) and 12 (for girls), to up until a minimum age of 15, with possible extension... In cases where the mother cannot take hadana over her children, the right to custody falls to the closest female relative... The law also grants the matrimonial home to the mother if she has custody over the children, although this terminates upon children reaching custodial age... Low levels of literacy and awareness of legal rights, however, means that women do not always lay claim to their custodial rights or demand alimony or maintenance payments...

'While hadana favours custody with the mother, wilaya, or guardianship, is granted to the father of the children throughout this period (Büchler, 2017: 13). This means that the father, or, in his absence, his closest male relative, is responsible for the decision-making and management of the child's upbringing, including financially maintaining and providing for the children...'⁹⁷

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9.5 Inheritance

9.5.1 The 2017 DFAT report stated that 'women are entitled to inherit only half as much as their male relatives'.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ BBC Monitoring, '... Sisi comments on anti-divorce programme', 30 Mar 2019, subscription only, [url](#)

⁹⁶ DFAT, 'Country Information Report Egypt', (para 3.71), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

⁹⁷ OECD SIGI, '2019 results in Africa', (section 1c), 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁸ DFAT, 'Country Information Report Egypt', (para 3.71), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

9.5.2 The USSD report mentioned:

'The law follows Islamic sharia in matters of inheritance; therefore, a Muslim female heir generally receives one-half the amount of a male heir's inheritance, and Christian widows of Muslims have no inheritance rights. A sole Muslim female heir receives one-half her parents' estate, and the balance goes to the siblings of the parents or the children of the siblings if the siblings are deceased. A sole male heir inherits his parents' entire estate.'⁹⁹

9.5.3 Freedom House stated in its Freedom in the World report 2018, 'Women are at a legal disadvantage in property and inheritance matters, typically receiving half the inheritance due to a man. Societal biases also discourage women's ownership of land.'¹⁰⁰

9.5.4 Regarding inheritance rights, the OECD observed:

'Women and men in Egypt do not have equal inheritance rights... While inheritance laws apply to all Egyptians, regardless of religion, non-Muslims are not entitled to inherit from Muslims...

'Assets (land and non-land) are allocated to both male and female relatives in accordance with a share system. Female relatives and spouses are, however, only entitled to half the value given to a male relative in a similar position... In February 2016, the government approved an amendment to Inheritance Law No. 77 of 1943, imposing financial and penitential sanctions for those depriving heirs of their rightful inheritance or withholding documents that could otherwise lay claim to an inheritance... As of the time of preparing this report, it is unclear whether this law has been approved by parliament, and up to date legal sources were not available...

'Discriminatory social practices, prevalent particularly in rural areas and Upper Egypt, impose additional challenges for women in accessing their inheritance... Women face social pressure to waive or relinquish their share of inheritance to their brothers... With regards property inheritance, it has been observed that men often prevent women from accessing their rightful share, owing to social norms regarding their responsibility to provide the matrimonial home or domicile for their own families... Even while women may be granted temporary stay in the property, this practice prevents them from selling, purchasing or benefiting from renting out the home...

'Widows face additional pressures in laying claims to property, since remarrying or choosing to live independently is perceived to weaken their claims to inheritance... This is particularly the case among women in rural areas, who, owing to pressures insisting the property remain within the husband's family name, tend to marry the brother of their late husband... These are compounded by administrative and financial obstacles with regards property ownership that make it difficult for women to register land in their name...'¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 – Egypt', (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Egypt', (para G2), 16 February 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ OECD SIGI, '2019 results in Africa', (section 1e), 2019, [url](#)

- 9.5.5 Additionally, the OECD report stated, ‘Christian widows in Egypt do not have inheritance rights to their deceased husband’s estate.’¹⁰²

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9.6 Testimony

- 9.6.1 Regarding marriage and divorces, the USSD report noted that ‘a woman’s testimony must be judged credible to be admissible. Usually the woman accomplishes credibility by conveying her testimony through an adult male relative or representative. The law assumes a man’s testimony is credible unless proven otherwise.’¹⁰³

- 9.6.2 The OECD 2019 report noted:

‘A woman’s testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in court as a man in all courts except for family courts, owing to the religious nature of Personal Status Laws... The law does not discriminate between married and unmarried women. The law on sexual harassment... is intended to protect women from violence in public life, including in political life. Although a woman’s testimony carries the same evidentiary weight as a man’s in civil law, in personal status courts this is only worth half as much... Women also face other procedural obstacles in accessing justice, such as not being granted anonymity when reporting cases of sexual and domestic violence...’¹⁰⁴

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Section 10 updated: 26 April 2019

10. Employment, finance, public life and housing

10.1 Access to employment

- 10.1.1 In a March 2019 report the World Bank detailed that:

‘Indicators reflecting the economic participation of women have not improved as expected. Estimated at 23.1 percent, women’s labor force participation rate is low, and their unemployment rate of 23.6 percent in 2016 is more than double that of men.[...]

‘The unemployment rate of young females is more than five times that of young males (38.1 percent versus 6.8 percent). Despite the large employment gap, there is evidence that a significant number of women do not seek employment because they feel it would be difficult to find jobs. Hence, unemployment rates among women, high as they are, omit another segment of women, and do not fully reflect the reality of the situation. Furthermore, women’s transition to a stable or satisfactory job is more difficult, while 51.7 percent of young men have transitioned to stable and/or satisfactory employment, only 16.3 percent of young women have managed to do so. Moreover, women are disproportionately represented in the informal sector, where they work at the lower productivity and lower paying jobs, and more young working women (28.9 percent) than men (14.2

¹⁰² OECD SIGI, ‘2019 results in Africa’, (section 3a), 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰³ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ OECD, SIGI, (section 4d), 2019, [url](#)

percent) are unpaid family workers. Finally, 7.4 percent of men are self-employed as compared to only 2.1 percent of women.¹⁰⁵

10.1.2 In 2017, the USSD reported that, ‘labor laws provide for equal rates of pay for equal work for men and women in the public but not the private sector. Educated women had employment opportunities, but social pressure against women pursuing a career was strong. Large sectors of the economy controlled by the military excluded women from high-level positions.’¹⁰⁶

10.1.3 OECD’s report, based on various sources, stated that according to the law:

‘...discrimination in employment on the basis of gender is banned... Moreover, Article 11 of the Constitution states that “The State shall guarantee the proper coordination between the duties of the woman towards the family and her work in society, considering her equal with man in the fields of political, social, cultural, and economic life, without violation of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence”...

‘The CEDAW report (2008) states that employment laws in Egypt “do not discriminate between males and females with respect to employment opportunities and selection criteria for new hires”, and, furthermore, that workers are not hired on the basis of their sex... There are no specific provisions targeting discrimination in recruitment processes or hiring practices however... nor in regulating the terms and conditions of employment or progression opportunities...

‘Although wage discrimination for equal work is prohibited under Article 35 of the Labour Law... the ILO (International Labour Organization) has suggested that this should be extended to address situations where men and women perform different work of equal value... Furthermore, there is no suggestion that the law requires companies to report on how they pay women and men, nor that there are penalties for companies that discriminate against women in recruitment.

‘Women face restrictions regarding the night hours they can work, and they are prohibited from entering certain professions deemed arduous or harmful to their ‘health or morals’ specified by a Ministerial decree (Decree No.183 of 2003 organizing the employment of women in night work shift; Law No. 12 of 2003; Decree No. 155 of 2003; ILO 2016). Regarding maternity leave, women are legally entitled to 90 days per child at full pay... There are no legal provisions regarding paternity leave or any other parental leave.

‘While dismissal of pregnant women is prohibited, there are no legal provisions ensuring an equivalent position for mothers after maternity leave... Similarly, the law does not prohibit prospective employers asking about family status, including a woman’s pregnancy or intention to have children... Women do not require permission from a legal guardian in order to seek employment or register a business... There is no evidence to suggest that the law may apply to certain groups of women differently from others.

¹⁰⁵ World Bank, Egypt: Women Economic Empowerment Study (pp.31), 3 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018’, (section 6), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

'The World Bank (2014) report on Egypt highlights a number of practical barriers women face in the workplace. For example, in cases where a married woman chooses to enter into a profession against the permission of her husband, she risks losing maintenance payments from him... The report also cites commuting distance as a barrier to working in the private sector, as well as tension between marital and work commitments... In Upper Egypt, female entrepreneurs often require their husband or father's permission to take up employment, which has been cited as a barrier to registering their own business...

'The Women's Ombudsman Office established within the NCW is an example of a government initiative that monitors and handles complaints from women arising from discrimination or access to their constitutional and legal rights. Within this remit they offer a channel for women to submit complaints related to discrimination in the workplace...'107

10.1.4 BBC Monitoring reported on 30 March 2019:

'Egyptian President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi has expressed his appreciation of women, voicing hope that their participation in politics and other various sectors will increase.

'Addressing a celebration held on 30 March for honouring Egyptian women and ideal mothers, Sisi thanked every Egyptian woman who contributes to consolidating ties in the society.

"Egyptian women have proven that they are a key party to the nation's equation and a basic partner in facing all challenges," he said.

"As we achieved progress in the course of supporting and empowering women, we are still looking forward to further progress until we reach a society characterised by justice and equity," he added.

'Sisi urged the government to study ways to achieve more women's participation in the labour market.'108

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10.2 Women in politics and law

10.2.1 The USSD report observed:

'No laws limit participation of women... in the political process, and they did participate. Social and cultural barriers, however, limited women's political participation and leadership in most political parties and some government institutions. Voters elected a record number of 75 women... to parliament during the 2015 parliamentary elections, a substantial increase compared with the 2012 parliament. The House of Representatives law outlines the criteria for the electoral lists, which provides that the House of Representatives must include at least 56 women... In 2015 the president appointed 28 additional members of parliament, including 14 women... The House of Representatives law grants the president the authority to appoint House of Representatives members, not to surpass 5 percent of the total number of elected members. If the president opts to use this authority, one-

¹⁰⁷ OECD SIGI, (section 3a), 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ BBC Monitoring, '... Sisi seeks more women's empowerment', 30 Mar 2019, subscription only, [url](#)

half of his appointments must be women, according to the law. Parliament included 89 women...

'Eight women led cabinet ministries... In August authorities appointed Manal Awad Michael, a Coptic woman, governor of Damietta, making her the country's second female governor. No women were on the Supreme Constitutional Court. In August the Supreme Judiciary Council promoted 16 female judges to higher courts, including the Qena Appeals Court. Legal experts stated there were approximately 66 female judges serving in family, criminal, economic, appeals, and misdemeanor courts; that total was less than 1 percent of judges.'¹⁰⁹

10.2.2 Amnesty International observed in its 2017/2018 international report, 'Women continued to face discrimination in the judiciary. A number of women who attempted to apply to the State Council for appointment as judges were not given the papers needed to process their requests. One woman filed a suit against the State Council on grounds of discrimination.'¹¹⁰

10.2.3 The OECD report of 2019 noted:

'Women have equal rights as men to hold public and political office in the legislature, executive and judiciary branches as enshrined in the Constitution...

'The National Council of Women (NCW) has organised a series of training and awareness-raising programmes designed to support women's effective participation in political life... This includes training 12,000 women candidates to support them in participating in local city councils, as well as running awareness-raising campaigns in a number of different governorates to encourage women to exercise their political rights and participate in elections... As an advisory body, however, the NCW is limited in its ability to support individual women candidates, as it does not have a budget to financially cover the costs of their election campaigns...

'In February 2017, Nadia Abdu became the first ever woman in Egypt to hold the position of governor... a position previously denied to women...'¹¹¹

10.2.4 The 2017 DFAT report noted:

'Law 46/2014 stipulates the presence of 56 women on party lists as well as 14 women appointed directly by the President. This contributed to an improvement in female political representation in the current Parliament, which has 89 female MPs making up 15 per cent of the Parliament (compared with two per cent during the last Parliament in 2012). Four Ministers in Sisi's Cabinet are women, and Sisi's national security advisor is a woman. President Sisi appointed Egypt's first female Governor in February 2017...'¹¹²

10.2.5 BBC Monitoring reported: '(Sisi) expressed his pride in women's representation in the government and parliament, saying it is currently the

¹⁰⁹ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018', (section 3), 14 March 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ AI, 'AI International Report 2017/18 – Egypt', 22 February 2018, [url](#)

¹¹¹ OECD SIGI, (section 4c), 2019, [url](#)

¹¹² DFAT, 'Country Information Report Egypt', (para 3.69), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

highest in Egypt's history. However, I call for more [women] involving in politics and in various sectors," he said.¹¹³

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10.3 Access to finances and assets

10.3.1 The USSD report for 2017 observed that the law 'makes it difficult for women to access formal credit. While the law allows women to own property, social and religious barriers strongly discouraged women's ownership of land, a primary source of collateral in the banking system.'¹¹⁴

10.3.2 The OECD 2019 report noted, based on various sources:

'Women by law have equal rights to own and use land... and this extends to property and non-land assets... This applies to both married and unmarried women...

'While women have equal legal rights to register land in their name, in practice this tends to be registered in the father's or husband's name... Existing social and traditional norms often mean that women appoint male guardians to manage their land rights, such as their father or brother, particularly in rural areas and in Upper Egypt... This is understood to be in part driven by a desire to keep land and property ownership within the family, and in part due to feelings of shame in demanding their rightful inheritance share... Many women are moreover prevented from using their property as collateral for loans...

'...At the local level, the Land Centre for Human Rights in Egypt is an example of a civil society organisation working to support farmers and rural communities, including rural women, and improve their knowledge and understanding of their legal rights.'¹¹⁵

10.3.3 Furthermore, the same report stated:

'In terms of women's access to finance, a World Bank study notes that women face a higher rejection rate from commercial banks in credit applications and therefore tend to rely on credit from family and friends... Barriers to women's ability accessing finance include financial illiteracy and a lack of collateral... The World Bank report cites examples of local initiatives designed to address women's access to credit, including the Sherouk program supported by the National Council of Women (NCW) and the Ministry of Local Development... The NCW has also launched the Women's Business Development Centre to enhance the economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs...

'With regards to government policy, the Ministry of Finance launched a gender-sensitive small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) policy paper in 2007, with details of an action plan to target women entrepreneurs and access to finance. Among other measures, the plan proposed to implement innovative approaches to credit lending that support female entrepreneurs, as well as put forward the suggestion to carry out an assessment of current

¹¹³ BBC Monitoring, '... Sisi seeks more women's empowerment', 30 Mar 2019, Subscription only, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017', (section 6), 3 March 2017, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ OECD SIGI, (section 3a), 2019, [url](#)

lending schemes against the needs of female entrepreneurs (Ministry of Finance, 2007: 61). The Central Bank of Egypt has also highlighted the need to enhance women's access to finance as a strategic priority (Egg, 2015: 4). However, the lack of an overall strategy or coordinated government response in this area has attracted some criticism...'¹¹⁶

- 10.3.4 The UNDP noted in its annual report for 2017 - 2018 'Focusing on the future', 'UNDP continued to support the Social Fund for Development while it transitioned to the new Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Development Agency. The Agency extended financial services to over 180,000 MSME.'¹¹⁷ The report noted that 49 per cent of these are owned by women¹¹⁸.

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10.4 Access to housing

- 10.4.1 According to the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context:

'Of the 23.5 million households in Egypt, 3.3 million are headed by women. Women's access to affordable housing is constrained due to their lack of economic autonomy in part due to their low labour force participation rate, for example, women represented just 22.2 percent of the labour force in 2017. Though women have equal opportunity to apply for the social housing programme, women's poverty makes it difficult for them to access credit for mortgages, or to save for down payment required to access rental accommodation. Women, therefore, disproportionately rely on the informal housing market or on family homes.'¹¹⁹

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Section 11 updated: 13 March 2019

11. Freedom of movement

- 11.1.1 DFAT observed in its 2017 report:

'Article 62 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of movement, residence and emigration. There is no legal impediment to internal movement within Egypt, and Egyptians can and do relocate for a variety of reasons. Major cities, such as Cairo and Alexandria, offer Egyptians greater opportunities for employment. Some Egyptians from the poorer parts of Upper Egypt have moved to the north coast of the country in search for better jobs and living conditions. Urban middle class Egyptian women will likely have a greater ability to find work and shelter, and will likely have better access to support networks, than Egyptian women from poor and more conservative areas.'¹²⁰

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¹¹⁶ OECD SIGI, (section 3b), 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ UNDP, Annual Report 2017 - 2018 'Focusing on the future', (page 4), 2018, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ UNDP, Annual Report 2017 - 2018 'Focusing on the future', (page 4), 2018, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ UN, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing ...' (para 75), 28 February 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁰ DFAT, 'Country Information Report Egypt', (para 5.27), 19 May 2017, [url](#)

12. Support for women

12.1.1 UNDP noted in its annual report 2017 – 2018 ‘Focusing on the Future’:

‘UNDP is operating on the ground, supporting the Government of Egypt and delivering to people the best solutions particularly to the most vulnerable, Women and Youth...

‘In 2017, UNDP disbursed around \$2.6 million supporting a number of initiatives targeting women’s legal, social and economic empowerment. These initiatives include legal aid and dispute settlement, skills development, and combatting FGM and gender-based violence, as well as small and micro-credit programmes for women...

‘UNDP contributed to women’s empowerment through different projects: the Abandonment of FGM and Empowerment of Families Joint Programme, the ‘Support to Legal Aid and Dispute Settlement in Family Courts’, ‘Egypt Network for Integrated Development (ENID)’ and the support to the MSME Development Agency...

‘The initiative aims to combat the medicalization of FGM and integrate a module on the harms of FGM and the paralegal aspect of engaging in the practice of FGM within the Medical Curricula taught in Egyptian medical school. The launch of the campaign was endorsed by a number of Deans of Medical schools at various Universities as well as the Supreme Council of Universities.’¹²¹

12.1.2 28 Too Many observed:

‘There are many international and national non-governmental organisations (INGOs and NGOs) working throughout Egypt and striving to build strong partnerships in practising communities; for example, since it started in 2009, the NGOs Coalition against FGM/C has brought together a network of 120 expert organisations from different sectors across Egypt to advocate for an end to FGM. The challenges to continuing this work and ending the practice are significant, however, particularly in light of the Egyptian Government’s potential tightening of NGO operating laws. Many Egyptian women still lack the power to make decisions in the home or about their own health, and yet activists who are working to protect the rights of women and girls and enforce the state laws against FGM are increasingly finding their operations restricted by the Government.

‘The Centre for Egyptian Women Legal Assistance (CEWLA) is one such organisation that has worked across Egypt to combat discrimination against women and has undertaken activities including raising awareness of the FGM law, advocating for the strengthening of legislation and offering legal training and advice. Organisations such as CEWLA have fought for justice in the highprofile FGM cases that have reached court, but have received much opposition to their work, and members have been directly targeted by the authorities.’¹²²

¹²¹ UNDP, Annual Report 2017 – 2018 ‘Focusing on the future’, (page 2, 4, 5), 2018, [url](#)

¹²² 28 Too Many, ‘Egypt: The law and FGM’, (page 7), June 2018, [url](#)

Terms of Reference

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Legal framework
- Domestic violence
 - Legal rights
 - Prevalence of domestic violence
 - Support for victims
- Honour crime
 - Legal protection
 - Incidents
- FGM
 - Legal rights
 - Prevalence of FGM
 - Societal attitude
 - Government response
- Sexual harassment and rape
 - Overview
 - Legal protection and effectiveness
 - Effectiveness of the police
 - Government response
 - Support for victims
- Marriage and family
 - Marriage, incl. early and forced marriage
 - Divorce and child custody
 - Inheritance
 - Testimony
- Employment, finance, public life and housing
 - Access to employment, housing
 - Women in politics and law
 - Access to finances and assets
- Freedom of movement
 - Support for women

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Version control

Clearance

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- valid from **21 June 2019**

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Update of country information and assessment.

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