

Egypt: Deaths in custody increase due to deliberate neglect

The high incidence of deaths in detention centres and prisons in Egypt is evidence of the level of neglect that these detention centres and prisons have reached, the undersigned groups said in a statement. These practices reflect the general approach of authorities in Egypt rather than exceptional practices that are to be remedied, and those responsible for them should be held accountable.

In only 36 days, between July 6 and August 11, 2021, at least ten deaths in custody have been documented.

These deaths have occurred at a rate of one death every three days approximately, which is a high rate that requires urgent intervention to stop the violations that led to the death of all that number in this short period.

The undersigned organizations and campaigns have documented the deaths of:

- 1- Reda Muhammad al-Sayyid Muhammad Abu al-Anin (63 years old): He died on 7-6-2021, in Tora Liman Hospital, after suffering from liver cancer. He has been detained since the Rabaa sit-in dispersal and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.
- 2- Farouk Maher Shehata (26 years old): He died on 7-17-2021 in the Wadi al-Natrun prison area (Prison 430). He was arrested in September 2013, and he was tried in Case 1010 of 2013, known in the media as "The storming incidents of Kerdasa Police Station." He was sentenced to life imprisonment.
- 3- Abdel Aziz Ahmed Hassan Hassanein: He died on 7-7-2021, in Minya prison, and was arrested on August 17, 2013, pending the case known in the media by 'The events of the Al-Fateh Mosque'. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison, and the Court of Cassation rejected the appeal.
- 4- Ahmed Saber Mahmoud Muhammad (45 years old): He died on December 7, 2021, after suffering a sudden illness inside his prison cell in a high-security prison (Al-Aqrab 2). He was arrested at the end of 2014, pending the Helwan Brigades case. He was forcibly disappeared and subjected to psychological and physical torture before being presented to the prosecution.

5- Saleh Badawi: He died in July 2021 in the Wadi al-Natrun prisons complex. He died a while ago without informing his family. Rather, his family was recently surprised by his death, and his death was due to cancer that afflicted him in his prison, amidst his suffering from medical negligence.

6- Muhammad Anwar (70 years old): He died on August 2-2021, in Gamasa General Prison, and has been arrested since 2013, pending the case known in the media as “The fire of the court complex in Ismailia”, and had been sentenced to 15 years in prison.

7- Khaled Saad Al-Adawi (48 years old): He died on August 3-2021, at one of the National Security headquarters in Giza. He was arrested on July 17, and he remained under enforced disappearance inside the National Security headquarters until his family was contacted to receive his body to bury it.

8- Walid Saleh Saudi: He died on August 11-2021, at the 1st police station of Al-Mahalla Al-Kubra. He was arrested a week before his death and forcibly disappeared in one of the National Security headquarters in Mahalla. He was presented to the prosecution, which released him, and he died before completing the procedures; Affected by high temperature and inability to breathe.

9- Mahmoud Abd al-Hakim al-Hamshari (43 years old): He died on 8/11/2021 in the Tora prisons area. He was in good health until his family received a phone call from the prison administration that he was transferred to the hospital after his health deteriorated, and upon their arrival at the hospital, they informed them about his death.

10- Taj al-Din Abdullah Abd al-Qadir Allam (43 years old): He died on 8-9-2021 in Tora.

The undersigned organizations and campaigns indicated that the presence of elderly people among these deaths is evidence that the Egyptian authorities deliberately killed them slowly through the health neglect they were subjected to inside their prison, with the high probability of infection with the COVID-19 virus, in light of the poor detention conditions experienced by detainees in Egypt.

Neglect did not spare anyone among the deaths. Young people were subjected to torture and enforced disappearance, then health neglect that claimed their lives, with the complicity of officials in their killing, even indirectly, which exposes them to legal accountability and does not absolve them from the criminal consequences of the violations and neglect they committed against these victims.

The undersigned organizations and campaigns also pointed out that deaths in detention centres and prisons in Egypt are witnessing a noticeable increase during the summer period, due to the poor conditions of detention centres and their overcrowding in a manner that far exceeds their capacity, in addition to the policy of health neglect pursued by the Egyptian Ministry of Interior, which promotes the falsehood and allegations that the ministry is promoting about providing good conditions of detention for its detainees compared to the rest of the world.

We call on Egyptian authorities to stop the deliberate policy of neglect that they pursue in their prisons and detention centres, and to work to improve the living conditions of detainees, enabling them to obtain their basic human rights, to open a transparent, impartial and effective investigation into these deaths, and to hold those responsible to account, ensuring that they do not go unpunished.

We also call on Egypt to release the elderly and those with chronic diseases, either through conditional release for those under investigation or a health pardon for those who have been sentenced because they are the most vulnerable to infection with COVID-19.

We also call on the international community and UN mechanisms to pressure the Egyptian authorities to implement these measures, with visits to review and monitor Egyptian prisons and detention centres in an attempt to stop the flood of deaths caused by the deliberate neglect of the Egyptian authorities.

Signatories:

Article 55 Campaign

Committee for Justice

The Arab Foundation for Civil and Political Rights – Nedal

Their Right (Haqquhum) Campaign