

The undersigned organizations and campaigns condemn statements by the Egyptian President Abdelfattah el-Sisi, who has denied the existence of human rights violations in Egypt while announcing on live television that the largest prison complex in the country will be inaugurated soon.

Sisi, who made the [remarks on Wednesday to state television](#), is attempting to improve Egypt's deteriorating image internationally, by issuing statements that do not truly reflect the situation on the ground.

Sisi announced that the largest prison complex in Egypt will be opened within a few weeks, saying it would be the first of "seven or eight" more prisons set to be opened across the country.

"We will bring a full American version... even if a person sins and we punish him, we will not punish him twice, we will punish him once, by serving a sentence in prison."

He added: "The prisoner in the compound will serve his sentence in a humane way... including movement, subsistence, health care, humanitarian, cultural and reform care."

He added that prisoners will not need to be transported via the prison's deportation vehicles to attend hearings, because the judiciary will also be based within the prison complex.

The undersigned organizations and campaigns believe that Sisi's statements depict a false image of the situation in Egypt. Statistics and research by the bulk of rights groups in Egypt and internationally confirm the continued deterioration of the human rights situation in the country.

The documented evidence shows the [high number of deaths in detention centres](#) and prisons in Egypt.

During the [first six months of 2017](#), 81 cases of extrajudicial killings perpetrated by Egyptian authorities were documented, and the [following year witnessed 245](#) cases of extrajudicial killings and deaths in custody.

In 2019, [95 deaths were recorded](#) inside detention facilities as follows: 11 cases of suicide, 75 cases of denial of health care, 9 cases of death due to torture.

In 2020, [101 deaths were documented](#) inside detention facilities, and the incidents were distributed between death as a result of deprivation of health care (89 deaths), death as a result of poor conditions of detention (6 deaths), as a result of torture (five deaths), and one case of suicide.

In the first half of 2021, [28 deaths have been documented](#) so far inside detention facilities.

The undersigned organizations and campaigns stressed that these data regarding deaths inside detention centers and prisons confirm the falsehood of Sisi's statements and their contradiction with the existing reality.

The documented and verified violations include the lack of necessary health and living care for detainees, the denial of freedom, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance. Most of these violations take place in unofficial places of detention, rather than official prisons of the state.

As for the construction of prisons, the undersigned organizations and campaigns said that Egypt does not need to build more prisons and detention centers, at a time when the Egyptian people are suffering from deteriorating health conditions during a pandemic that is the most widespread in modern history. Egypt is also suffering deteriorating educational conditions amidst the density of students in classes at all stages of education. Sisi has emptied the state's treasury from money in order to build more prisons. Instead of building minds and taking care of them, he detains them.

The undersigned organizations and campaigns stated that, according to the observed figures on the number of prisons and detention centers in Egypt, during the era of Sisi, about 35 out of 75 prisons were built throughout the country.

In addition to these prisons, there are 382 [detention centers](#) inside police stations in various governorates, in addition to secret prisons in the security camps, according to several reports issued by Egyptian human rights organizations.

Prisons established during Sisi's era include the Salhia Public Prison, to which the Sharkia Governorate allocated an area of ten acres in 2014, and the May 15 Central Prison in Cairo, which opened in mid-2015 on an area of 105,000 square meters.

The undersigned organizations and campaigns indicated their concerns that Sisi's statements about building prison complexes that contain judicial facilities constitute a serious threat to [ensuring the independence of the judiciary](#) and the implementation of fair trial standards. It appears that the Egyptian authorities seek to replicate the example of the police academy and the Institute of Police Officers Court in the Tora Prisons Complex, despite the violations committed against lawyers and the families of detainees there.

The undersigned organizations and campaigns call on Sisi to be transparent in his statements regarding the human rights situation in Egypt, and not to ignore the observed reality while urging him to fulfil his promises to provide good living and health conditions for detainees in accordance with Nelson Mandela's international rules for protecting the rights of detainees and persons deprived of liberty.

Signatories:

1- Article 55 Campaign (Committee for Justice)

2- HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement

3- Zenzana Voice

4- The Arab Organization for Penal Reform

5- Their Right (Haqquhum) Campaign

6- Sinai Foundation for Human Rights