

Report for Finland: Egypt's 2019 UPR Recommendations and Proposed Actions for 2025

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1. Recommendation in 2019 UPR: Ensure, in legislation and in practice, an end to all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, and take concrete steps to investigate and prosecute all cases of sexual violence and harassment.

Egypt's Response Since 2019:

Egypt's National Report references the National Strategy for Women's Empowerment 2030 and efforts to advance women's rights. However, the country has yet to enact comprehensive legislation that addresses domestic violence and sexual harassment. Although there have been initiatives aimed at improving protections for women, gaps remain in both legal protections and enforcement. Discriminatory elements in personal status laws, as well as the absence of targeted laws against domestic violence, continue to undermine efforts to protect women and girls.

Proposed New Recommendation for 2025:

Recommendation 1: Egypt should enact comprehensive legislation to criminalize all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, and ensure that law enforcement agencies are adequately trained to handle cases of sexual violence and harassment. The government should also reform personal status laws to eliminate discriminatory provisions against women.

Proposed Questions in Advance for 2025 UPR:

- What steps has Egypt taken to pass comprehensive laws against domestic violence and sexual harassment?
- How does Egypt ensure that law enforcement and judicial authorities are trained to effectively handle cases of gender-based violence?

2. Recommendation in 2019 UPR: Allow human rights defenders (HRDs) and all other civil society actors to exercise freedom of expression and their professions without fear of being persecuted, intimidated, or detained.

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Egypt's Response Since 2019:

Egypt's National Report asserts that the constitution guarantees freedom of expression and association. However, independent reports indicate that HRDs, activists, and other civil society actors continue to face persecution, including travel bans, asset freezes, and arbitrary detention. Laws like Law No. 149 of 2019, which governs NGO activities, impose stringent restrictions on civil society, making it difficult for HRDs to operate freely. Reports of harassment and prosecution of HRDs and journalists have persisted, limiting the space for civil society in Egypt.

Proposed New Recommendation for 2025:

Recommendation 2: Egypt should revise restrictive laws affecting civil society, such as Law No. 149, to ensure HRDs and civil society actors can operate freely without fear of persecution. The government should remove all arbitrary travel bans, asset freezes, and other restrictions on HRDs and ensure freedom of expression and association in practice.

Proposed Questions in Advance for 2025 UPR:

- What measures has Egypt taken to ensure that HRDs and other civil society actors can exercise freedom of expression without fear of persecution?
- How does Egypt plan to address reports of arbitrary travel bans, asset freezes, and harassment faced by HRDs and activists?

Conclusion

Finland's 2019 recommendations to Egypt highlighted the need for stronger protections for women against violence and discrimination, as well as a more enabling environment for civil society. While Egypt's National Report mentions ongoing efforts, significant gaps persist in the protection of women's rights and the freedoms of HRDs. The proposed recommendations for 2025 focus on meaningful legal reforms and protections to align Egypt's practices with international human rights standards.

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