

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

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1. Recommendation in 2019 UPR: Review personal status legislation and the Penal Code to modify or delete articles that discriminate against women, including by lifting the reservation on Article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Egypt's Response Since 2019:

Egypt's National Report mentions its commitment to women's rights and highlights efforts such as the National Strategy for Women's Empowerment 2030. However, no substantial revisions have been made to personal status laws or the Penal Code to address discriminatory provisions. Egypt's reservation on Article 16 of CEDAW, which relates to equality in marriage and family relations, remains in place, limiting full legal protections for women. Personal status laws still include discriminatory provisions concerning marriage, divorce, and child custody, and no steps have been taken to amend these laws.

Proposed New Recommendation for 2025:

Recommendation 1: Egypt should revise its personal status legislation and the Penal Code to eliminate discriminatory provisions against women. The government should also lift its reservation on Article 16 of CEDAW to ensure full equality in family relations and align with international standards on women's rights.

Proposed Questions in Advance for 2025 UPR:

- What steps has Egypt taken to review and amend discriminatory articles in its personal status laws and Penal Code?
- Is there a timeline for lifting Egypt's reservation on Article 16 of CEDAW, ensuring equality for women in family relations?

2. Recommendation in 2019 UPR: Stop unduly restricting space for civil society, including through asset freezes, travel bans, long periods of pretrial detention, and a growing number of arrests.

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Egypt's Response Since 2019:

Egypt's National Report states that Law No. 149 of 2019, regulating the operation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), aligns with international standards and supports civil society. However, independent reports indicate that this law imposes strict controls over civil society, including significant restrictions on funding and activities. HRDs and activists continue to face asset freezes, travel bans, and extended pretrial detention under charges often linked to counterterrorism. The operational environment for civil society remains highly restricted, limiting the ability of organizations to operate freely.

Proposed New Recommendation for 2025:

Recommendation 2: Egypt should amend Law No. 149 of 2019 to remove restrictive provisions on civil society and end arbitrary asset freezes, travel bans, and prolonged pretrial detention for activists and HRDs. The government should ensure that civil society can operate without fear of undue interference.

Proposed Questions in Advance for 2025 UPR:

- What measures has Egypt taken to ensure that Law No. 149 does not unduly restrict civil society?
- How does Egypt address ongoing reports of asset freezes, travel bans, and extended pretrial detention affecting civil society actors?

3. Recommendation in 2019 UPR: Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT).**Egypt's Response Since 2019:**

Egypt has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. The National Report states that Egypt has taken measures to prevent torture, including training for law enforcement personnel and the establishment of oversight mechanisms. However, torture and ill-treatment continue to be reported in detention facilities, and there is limited transparency and accountability for such abuses. Ratifying OPCAT would require Egypt to establish a national preventive mechanism for independent monitoring of detention conditions.

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Proposed New Recommendation for 2025:

Recommendation 3: Egypt should ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and establish a national preventive mechanism to allow for independent monitoring of detention facilities and to prevent torture and ill-treatment.

Proposed Questions in Advance for 2025 UPR:

- What progress has Egypt made toward ratifying OPCAT, and are there any initiatives to allow for independent monitoring of detention conditions?
- What steps has Egypt taken to enhance accountability and transparency regarding allegations of torture in detention facilities?

Conclusion

Sweden's 2019 recommendations to Egypt centered on advancing gender equality, protecting civil society, and preventing torture. While Egypt's National Report outlines some initiatives, critical gaps persist, particularly in revising discriminatory laws against women, protecting civil society from restrictions, and ratifying OPCAT. The proposed recommendations for 2025 emphasize legal reforms and protections aligned with international human rights standards.

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