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Blatant and behind-the-Scenes Violations against Egyptian Women

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The data included in this report is considered the first of its type on the subject of woman since July 3, 2013. “We Record” team does not allow any media or press agency to use any of the material published in this report without getting the prior permission from the publisher.

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1. Methodology

To prepare and publish this report, we depended on the data we have, which has been documented through our team and with the assistance of human rights activists working on the subject of women. At this step of documentation, we have targeted the period from July 2013 until July 2019. We have collected, observed and documented some incidents through our team that did its job according to some standards that included names of victims and places and evidences of violations. Then we process and analyze that data according to the objectives of publishing this report.

For the first time according to what we have observed, this report presents the total number of women who faced arbitrary arrest and detention during the aforementioned period. Despite the huge number of those women, we assure that the number is likely to increase because many evidences continue to reach us.

In this report, we aimed to view the most serious forms of violations faced by hundreds of Egyptian women. Moreover, we aimed to identify the range of each form, monitor the essence, ways of committing and categories harmed by each violation. Finally, to present these data to those concerned with the Egyptian human rights case and women issues, whether they are official international organizations or non-governmental organizations focused on human rights.

2. Guidelines

* Definitions and Elements of processing:

1- Extrajudicial Killing: is the murdering of people by state authorities or ordinary individuals who have no official capacity. It is incriminated by the constitution and the Egyptian Criminal Law stated that its punishment is execution for intentional murder, and aggravated or mitigated imprisonment for the cases other than intentional murder and malice aforethought.

2- Enforced Disappearance: occurs when state forces, forces acting in its name or with its support; grab someone and place him in a secret detention center and deny having him. This violation qualifies as a crime against humanity according to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. It is also prohibited by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Further, the Egyptian constitution defines the rules of dealing with

the detained by allowing him to call and communicate with his relatives, informing him of the reasons of detention, and presence of his lawyer. Hence, the constitution offered him protection from exposure to such crime.

3- Arbitrary Detention: occurs when security members arrest someone without committing any crime and place him in a detention center. Incidents of Arbitrary Detention usually occur based on no legal ground. It is prohibited according to the Egyptian Constitution, the UDHR, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

4- Absence of guarantees in litigation and standards of fair trials: which usually appears in the form of arbitrary procedures taken during trials. This affects those on trial by depriving them of using their rights to defense, neglecting the standards of fair trials; namely lack of jurisdiction, lack of independence and impartiality,

biasness and other procedures that violates the Egyptian Constitution and the UDHR.

5- Physical torture: occurs when some people commit physical assault against someone by beating him by hands and legs, or using tools and instruments that cause temporary pain and leave some signs on his body and psyche. It is also committed by any other tool that can cause physical pain to human body. Not to mention other forms of cruel, non-humanitarian or humiliating treatment and punishments. It is a crime that is never time-barred from prosecution according to the Egyptian Constitution. It is also prohibited by the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT).

6- Psychological torture and maltreatment: occurs when targeting someone by actions and words that causes him humiliation, contempt; mocking him, his thoughts, belief, affiliation; hurts him psychologically and causes him an inner pain as a result of watching and hearing these actions and words. It also occurs by

putting him under negative psychological pressure that results in psychological disorders. Needless to say that all forms of degrading, humiliating and non-humanitarian treatment are prohibited by the UNCAT, the Egyptian Constitution and the UDHR.

7- Arbitrary dismissal: is a procedure aimed at terminating the relation between someone and the institution to which he belongs, whether this person is a student in an educational institution or an employee in a governmental or private entity. This procedure is usually used against opinion makers who express their opinion or participate in demonstrations.

8- Asset Forfeiture and Asset Freezing: Asset Forfeiture means transferring the ownership of someone's property to the state based on a final sentence issued from a court of competent jurisdiction according to the law. While Asset Freezing

is preventing the one –Who had his assets frozen- from its disposal for a temporary period according to law. This prevention ends once the legal cause, on which the freezing decision is based, is gone. In any case, arbitrary Asset Forfeiture and Asset Freezing are prohibited by the Egyptian Law and Constitution. Nevertheless, the Egyptian authorities violate that prohibition and arbitrarily freeze and forfeit assets of political opposers and their families.

9- Travel ban: is the restriction of someone from moving or travelling outside his country. It is supposed to be imposed by a decision based on reasonable grounds and issued by the Public Prosecutor. It is also supposed to be temporary that ends once its legal cause is gone. Yet, Egyptian authorities ban hundreds of people from travelling without any legal grounds. That is imposed against political and public figures along with their relatives with illegal decisions or even with no decisions at all. Furthermore, their passports are withdrawn when they finish their travel steps in airports and land ports. It is noteworthy that the right to travel is protected by

the Egyptian Constitution, the UDHR and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

10- Injuries during governmental operations: result from security and military operations and the use of violence without following the procedures necessary for protecting civilians from the harm of operations and oppositions, and making conflicts and engagement less harmful and less painful for their parties. Random targeting of residential neighborhoods, firing and raiding civilians are considered to be prohibited according to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and the rules of engagement and use of violence defining the operations of security apparatus.

3. Six Years

Six years or more have passed since the events of July 3, 2013. Those events represented a starting point towards unimaginable violations against Egyptian women. After women and their dignity have been a red line that the authority can never openly cross, especially after the events of the 25th of January Revolution; however, since July 2013, women have been prone to blatant violations by the military and security services that crossed all red lines.

Girls and ladies of the Nile (Egyptian women), as described by Al-Sisi at the beginning of one of his speeches, are now facing enforced disappearance, physical and psychological torture, threats of rape, exposure to sexual harassment by members of the National Security and Police personnel.

Hundreds of documented incidents and others occurred on camera and were viewed on TV's and social media, have illustrated the most awful forms of humiliating women by beating, dragging, abuse, scolding and physical maltreatment. It even went worse when the Egyptian security forces assaulted some high school girl students and threatened them in May 2019 in front of the Ministry of Education while organizing a protest objecting to the new educational system by "tablet".

Processes of counting the violations against the Egyptian women revealed some numbers that reflects the truth of Egyptian authorities' view on women away from the empty media marketing and fabricating. Where the number of women killed by the hands of the police and military forces reached no less than 312 women. Those women were killed by either direct targeting by sniping, random fire during participating in demonstrations, covering political events, or just during walking in

the street; or random artillery and air raids over residential neighborhoods in North Sinai Governorate.

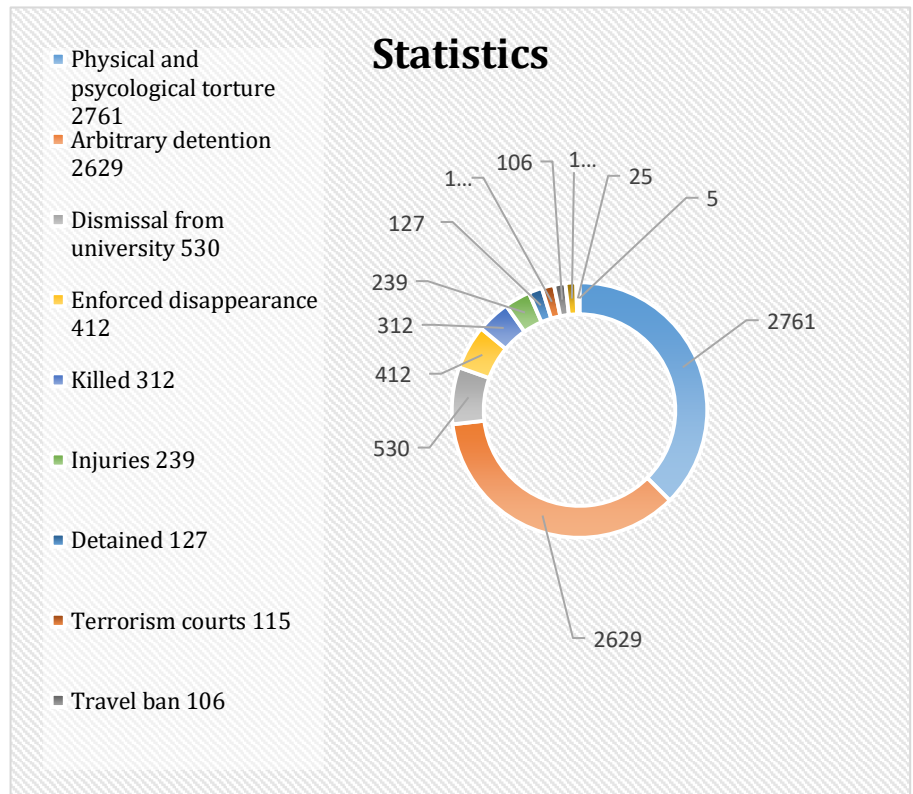
Additionally, no less than 396 women and 16 children (girls) have been forcibly disappeared according to our continuing documentation, which we did not finish until now. While at least 15 women are still forcibly disappeared until July 15, 2019. As for arbitrary detention or arrest followed by release, parole or serving the sentence; no less than 2629 women have been placed in temporary detention centers and prisons for various periods and then were released. While 127 women are still in jail.

Regarding trials, we have found that the lawsuits of no less than 25 women have been referred to the military judiciary. While the number of those who have been referred to terrorism courts “exceptional circuits” reached 115 women, of which 17 have faced final sentences.

As for physical and psychological torture and forms of cruel, non-humanitarian, degrading, humiliating treatment, no less than 2761 women have experienced such maltreatment inside various detention centers and during arrest.

Furthermore, Egyptian authorities have used arbitrary procedures against women. No less than 530 girl students have been dismissed from their universities. In addition, 5 staff members have been dismissed, some of which are Dr. Omaila Kamel, Dr. Nermin Mohamed, and Dr. Hanan Amin. Moreover, decisions of asset forfeiture have been issued against no less than 100 women, and 106 women have been banned from travelling outside Egypt.

On the other hand, there were some women's injuries that resulted from violent security actions against protests, dispersal of sit-ins and security and military operations conducted by



the police and military forces in North Sinai Governorate. The sum of those injuries was 239 women (87 of which were children). There were different and various injuries as a result of random targeting of residential neighborhoods and not implementing the minimum limit of measures necessary for protecting civilians from the harm of armed conflicts according to the International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

4. Blatant and behind-the-Scenes Violations against Egyptian Women

The numbers we have reached through what we could observe and document in the midst of security constraints on human rights teams working on the ground in Egypt are only representing the minimum limit of violations. This huge number of violations indicates that the authorities insist on moving forward towards more violations against women. The year 2017 has witnessed a noticeable decrease in the seriousness of violations against women. The number of detained women was 50 women then. That was before violation have taken an ascending curve again in 2018 and 2019 after the increase of raids of arrests and enforced disappearances against dozens of women.

Generally, the most blatant violations faced by Egyptian women since July 5, 2013 until July 15, 2019 are:

1- Extrajudicial killing: committed by the police and military forces during the operations of artillery and air raids over residential neighborhoods, random firing towards civilian citizens, dispersal of sit-ins and dispersal of protests by random fire and sniping. The sum of these operations was killing no less than 312 women.

Killings differed in many aspects as follows:

- a) **As per criminal intention:** where the intention of willful murder exists before conducting the operations. This form was clear in the massacre of Rabaa sit-in dispersal, which resulted in the kill of 21 women by sniper fire. Another form is the fall of victims unwillingly by random targeting, which is the most common form of killing of women.
- b) **As per the way of killing:** we classified killing into 5 forms, which are: killing during peaceful sit-ins, during peaceful protests, during undertaking job tasks, during walking in streets, markets and public parking; and killing by artillery, missiles or air raids over houses of citizens.

Hence, forms of killing as per its way were according to what we observed as follows:

- Killing during peaceful sit-ins by the hands of police and military forces: as happened in the massacre of Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square sit-in dispersal on August 14, 2013. It is the square that witnessed the most massive mass murder in Egypt's modern history.
- Killing of demonstrators by the hands of police forces: one of the victims of this form is the activist Shimaa al-Sabbagh who was killed on January 24, 2015 by buckshot by a central-security officer from the distance of 8 meters only. Al-Sabbagh was killed during her participation in a march in downtown on the fourth anniversary of the January 25 revolution.

- Killing during undertaking job tasks by the hands of police forces: like the murder of the journalist Habiba Ahmed Abdel-Aziz inside Rabaa Square on August 14, 2013 during conducting press coverage of the massacre. She had told her mother just a few minutes before she was killed that one of the snipers made signs of slaughter to her threatening her of murder, which exactly happened a few minutes after his threat.

Journalist Mayyada Ashraf has also been killed by a random bullet on March 28, 2014 in Ain Shams in Cairo during conducting press coverage of some demonstrations supporting Dr. Mohamed Morsi. The authorities used the incident to take revenge on the demonstrators and fabricate charges for them.

- Killing during passing near security concentrations, in the streets, markets and public parking areas by the hands of military forces: on February 26, 2015, child Ikhlas—who was then 5 years old only—was killed by a random bullet fired by the forces of Al-Masoura ambush in North Sinai Governorate.

The bullet rested in her head and killed her immediately. Likewise on July 1, 2015, child Shaimaa N. M.—who was then 15 years old—was killed by random fire by the military while she was passing one of the streets in Al-Shalaq region, Sheikh Zuweid town, North Sinai Governorate.

- Killing by artillery and air raids over residential neighborhoods: like the massacre perpetrated by the forces of a military ambush in Al-Zahir village, Sheikh Zuweid town, after firing an artillery shell at Al-Hebaidy's house without alarming the residents or even giving them the opportunity to leave the house. That operation resulted in the murder of 11 women and children. One of the photos captured for the artillery results, shows the corpse of a pregnant



woman who has been ruptured because of the artillery, while her embryo was laid killed beside her attached to her umbilical cord.

2- Enforced disappearance: Recently, raids of enforced disappearance against girls and women have once again escalated. During the period covered by the report, we recorded that no less than 396 women and 16 girls have been forcibly disappeared. It is noteworthy that the previous numbers are only a primary count because our count indicators show more numbers. Yet, we cannot add them before being fully documented.

Until July 15, 2019, at least 15 women had still been forcibly disappeared. Periods of disappearance vary from one case to another. For some women, period of disappearance was a few weeks, while for others, it exceeded one year. Some other women have been forcibly disappeared for months and their relatives still know nothing about their destiny. To name a few, on March 15, 2019, National Security forces in Alexandria have broken into the house of Manar Adel Abdel-

Hamid Abu el-Naga, 26 years old, a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Science, Tanta University. They arrested her, her husband and Al-Baraa—her child whose age has not then exceeded one year and two months—and then escorted them to an unknown destination until now. Their relatives still do not know any information about the place or reasons of their detention. They also cannot rest assured about them. All endeavors made by Manar's father and uncle—her father-in-law at the same time—to reveal the destination of the disappeared family went in vain. The first endeavor was on March 21, 2019 by sending a telegraph to the Public Prosecutor complaining from the enforced disappearance faced by Manar, her husband and their child.

3- Arbitrary detention: Arbitrary detention and arrest are considered some of the most common incidents in terms of systematicness and number of victims. "We Record" has detected that no less than 2629 women have been arbitrarily confined

and arrested and then released after that, while 127 women are still arbitrarily detained, detained pending further case proceedings or serving their sentences.

Just to name a few violations that affect more than one woman in the same family, on June 15, 2019, Egyptian security forces led by National Security officers have broken into the house of Omnia Ahmed Thabet. They arrested her after tampering with the contents of the house. She has then been escorted to an unknown destination. Omnia's detention has been simultaneous with the State Security Prosecution's decision of releasing her sister Somayya Ahmed Thabet who was detained on June 15, 2018 and kept under investigations for a whole year before a decision of her release has been issued. The family has then been shocked when Omnia was accused in the same case of her sister, Case no. 148 of the year 2017 under investigation by the Supreme State Security, on charges of joining a group established contrary to the provisions of the law and the constitution.

4- Absence of guarantees in litigation and standards of fair trials: The trials that have been taking place for those women searching for their rights were not better than the National Security centers or women prisons. That is because they faced many violations by depriving them of their simplest rights, such as investigating the case before the natural judge, independent and impartial circuit and according to legal procedures. We recorded the reference of 25 women to the military judge, while 115 women have their lawsuits investigated before terrorism courts—exceptional circuits that keep issuing cruel sentences of execution and aggravated imprisonment against dozens of women. Just to name a few, Samia Shanan, a woman who is almost 60 years old, faced an execution sentence by Giza Criminal Court (terrorism circuit 5) in January 2015, then it was mitigated to 25 years in prison by Cairo Criminal Court (terrorism circuit 11), then the Court of Cassation corroborated the sentence and made it final sentence. Hence, Shanan has been one of 17 women against which final sentences have been issued from terrorism circuits and military judiciary until July 15, 2019.

Among those who have been referred to the military judiciary is the university student Israa Khaled Mohamed Saeed, 24 years old, and a third-grade-student at the Faculty of Engineering. She has been sentenced to 18 years in prison in six cases, four of which were before the military judiciary because of her political activity and participation in Anti-regime events in Egypt. She faced false accusations that have nothing to do with reality, for example, possession of RPG, administrating social media pages that incite against the police and military, insulting military officers and their wives, burning an officer's farm in Al-Wasta city, burning electric transformers in Beni Suef Governorate, burning Beni Suef Judge Club, burning public communication cabin, and damaging railway rods. Israa was detained on January 20, 2015 from her family's house. She was then escorted to Beni Suef Security Directorate where she faced maltreatment there. Israa's case shows the range of taking revenge on a student that pays the price of using her right to express her opinion.

Further, Dr. Basma Refaat Abdel-Monem Mohamed, 37 years old, married and having two children, has been sentenced to 15 years of aggravated imprisonment issued from terrorism court. Basma had not known that her steps towards submitting a report of her husband's enforced disappearance would be the start of her way of suffering and deprivation of freedom. She has been detained, forcibly disappeared, tortured and accused in the case of assassination of the Public Prosecutor Hesham Barakat (Case no. 314 of the year 2016). She has face the most flagrant violations in all case proceedings, which did not include any of the standards of fair trials. Dr. Basma is still serving her sentence in prison.

5- Physical and psychological torture and maltreatment: Torture is considered one of the systematically conducted violations by security services. Members of the National Security are considered the most involved in practicing physical and psychological torture against women. No less than 2761 women have suffered from physical and psychological torture and forms of cruel and non-humanitarian

treatment. For instance, inside the National Security headquarters in Alexandria, lawyer Hend Mohamed Talaat Khalil, 43 years old, has faced maltreatment, beating, electric shocking and threats of rape. She has also been put in solitary confinement for two months, which resulted in the deterioration of her psychological status, screaming fits, nervous breakdown, and tearing her clothes. She has then been moved to a room with Abir Nagy, a forcibly disappeared woman then.

Hend had been forcibly disappeared for 125 days inside the National Security since she was arrested on September 24, 2018 until she appeared on January 27, 2019 inside the Supreme State Security Prosecution, which investigated her regarding the case no. 277 of the year 2019 under investigation by the Supreme State Security on charges of joining a group established contrary to the provisions of the law and the constitution.

Taqwa Abdel-Nasser Abdullah, 22 years old and a fourth-grade-student at the Faculty of Education, has been severely beaten by a National Security Officer. When he saw her inside the State Security headquarters in El-Abaseya, he rebuked the soldier assigned to watch her and literally told him: "How did you let her in with this muck?!" in reference to the niqab. Then he ordered him to remove the niqab, hijab and comforter. The soldier did exactly what the officer ordered. Then Taqwa faced physical torture and threats of rape.

Taqwa was confined inside Helwan metro station on June 9, 2019, then some National Security forces arrived to capture her and escort her to an unknown destination, which appeared after that to be the National Security headquarters in El-Abaseya, Cairo. She has been forcibly disappeared since her arrest until she appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution on June 26, 2019, where she was accused in the case no. 939 of the year 2019 under investigation by the Supreme State Security on charges of joining a group established contrary to the provisions of the law and the constitution.

6- Arbitrary dismissal: Authorities have also used arbitrary dismissal against hundreds of Egyptian girls and women based on political situations and participation in peaceful opposing demonstrations and gatherings. We have recorded the dismissal of five university staff members in addition to the dismissal of no less than 530 university girl students. Among those arbitrarily dismissed is Israa Reda, a student at Al-Azhar University who was finally dismissed on July 22, 2018. Further, on May 10, 2016, Ain Shams University issued a decision of final dismissal of Mai Mohamed and Iman Nabhan, two students at the Faculty of Science.

Likewise, Alaa Mohammed has been dismissed from Helwan University for three years among a group of girl students, based on a fire outbreak accident in building no. (12) in the university dormitory, expressing their anger because of the absence of fire extinguishers and extinguishing system in the dormitory, and putting off the fire by the resident girl students themselves.

7- Forfeiture of Assets: The Egyptian authorities have not suffice with the various violations against hundreds of Egyptian women. Yet, they reinvented a new form of assault and revenge through freezing the assets of dozens of women by arbitrary administrative decisions, and through forfeiting the assets of no less than 100 women by motives of taking revenge on them for their public activities, or imposing pressure on their relatives who are usually opposing public figures in Egypt. One of the most blatant cases was forfeiting the assets of the wife and daughters of Mohamed Khairat Al-Shater, the leader in the Muslim Brotherhood who has been detained for six years. Another example is the wife and daughters of the businessman Hassan Ezz-Eldin Malek. As for the decisions of freezing of assets, one decision has been issued against the wife and daughters of the businessman Salah Eldin Abu steit.

8- Travel ban: Egyptian authorities have sought to target dozens, yet hundreds of women by preventing them arbitrarily from travelling outside Egypt by a decision. We documented more than 106 women banned from travelling outside Egypt pursuant to a travel ban decision. The number of women banned from travelling without any decision is estimated by hundreds. That is based on a public activity they conduct, or belonging to families of public figures who are wanted based on their political situations.

Among those banned from travelling with no decision is Azza Soliman, the lawyer and human rights activist. She was stopped by the Cairo Airport Security forces on November 19, 2016 and was banned from travelling with a claim of issuing a travel ban decision two days before (on November 17, 2016).

On November 23, 2016, Aida Seif Al-Dawla was also banned from travelling to Tunisia after she was stopped by the Cairo Airport Security forces without giving any reasons.

Likewise, Sara Al-Telmesany was prevented from finishing her travel procedures from Cairo Airport to Georgia on March 30, 2017. The National Security forces in Cairo Airport did not suffice with depriving her of travelling, yet she was confined inside a security room in the airport for 24 hours.

9- Injuries: Random targeting operations conducted by military forces along with security forces, have resulted in different and various injuries for no less than 239 woman, 87 of which are children. The targeting operations that left those victims have been shortlisted into artillery and air raids launched by the military forces from fixed concentrations or moving patrols, shooting live bullets randomly on residential neighborhoods and passers-by without alarming citizens by enough time before targeting, and the operations of targeting demonstrations by live bullets and buckshot, which are conducted by security forces.

For instance, on November 21, 2014 in Alexandria, Asmaa Gamal, 19 years old then and a first-grade-student at the Social Service Institute, was hit by a shot that resulted in permanent disability.

On December 7, 2014, Aya Ibrahim Al-Bastawisy, a student at the Faculty of Education, Mansoura University, participated with her mates in a demonstration in the campus surroundings. They started from El-Galaa Street, yet after ten minutes of launching the march, security forces faced them in the Public Hospital Street and fired live bullets, buckshot and gas bombs without any following of the rules of graduation when using violence with demonstrations. Aya had a shot in her back, which resulted in pulmonary hemorrhage and a broken rib in addition to a buckshot that rested in her liver.

5. Conclusion

We would like to thank all activists in Egypt who have cooperated with us for the sake of preparing this report with such quantity and quality of facts. We would like to thank those who did not step back because of the practices of suppression and insisted on documenting all crimes committed against women to let these documentations be the evidence that traces and convicts those who committed such crimes on the beginning of judicial procedures against all those responsible for those violations against women in Egypt.

We assure that there is no escape from implementing the law properly, stopping all practices of suppression aiming to deprive Egyptian women of their rights or punish them for using or attempting to use their rights to demonstrate and express their opinion. These rights have been protected by the Egyptian Constitution not to mention the international conventions and the African Charter on Human and

Peoples' Rights, taking into consideration that Egypt is one of the states of the African Union and a party of the Charter.

We necessarily demand the Egyptian authorities to stop immediately all forms of violations faced by hundreds of women inside the state institution concerned with criminal justice, stop referring them to military judiciary and exceptional circuits, and letting them appear before the natural judge within procedures and guarantees of fair trials.

We necessarily demand to open transparent, impartial investigations into all incidents mentioned in the report. We approve our full readiness to provide every possible assistance to the investigating authorities, namely all documented information related to the incidents mentioned in the report as a contribution to achieving justice and putting on trial all human right violators who crossed all red lines against Egyptian women in a blatant violation of the provisions of law.

We also solicit the United Nations Human Rights Council for taking more influencing and effective situations to snatch victory for the oppressed of the Egyptian women and to stop the violations they face, which left some psychological and physical marks that would never disappear or be forgotten throughout their lives.

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