

## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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August 23, 2022

**Dr. Nivine El-Qabbage**

Minister of Social Solidarity

19 al-Maraghy St., Giza, Egypt

CC: Mr. Diaa Rashwan

Director of the State Information Service

CC: Dr. Moushira Khattab

President of the National Council for Human Rights

**RE: Restrictions on Environmental Groups and other NGOs**

Your Excellency,

We write to you on behalf of Human Rights Watch to kindly request information about the situation for environmental groups and other NGOs in Egypt and Egypt's regulatory framework since 2014. As an international, independent, non-governmental organization concerned with human rights issues in over 90 countries around the world, we regularly reach out to governmental authorities to discuss human rights issues of mutual concern.

Human Rights Watch staff have reviewed the 2019 NGO law and other relevant laws and interviewed, over the past several years, several dozen human rights, environmental, and democracy activists. We would appreciate your response to the following questions to clarify the point of view of relevant officials and accurately report government actions in our upcoming reporting.

- 1- For the following questions "environmental NGOs" mean groups that work solely or mostly on environmental and/or

climate change issues. How many environmental NGOs were legally registered and operating in Egypt before the 2011 nationwide uprising? How did the number change between the 2011 uprising and 2014? How did the number change from 2014 onwards? If possible, please provide numbers disaggregated for local and international groups.

- 2- How many existing environmental NGOs applied for re-registration under the 2019 NGO law? How many new environmental NGOs applied to register under the same law? How many NGOs in both categories were subsequently approved to register and operate legally in Egypt?
- 3- For all categories of NGOs, how many requests were filed by NGOs to receive foreign funding since 2014? Of these, how many requests were approved and how many were rejected? To how many did the government not respond? If possible, please provide a breakdown by the nature of work, particularly NGOs actively working in the areas of human rights and environment.
- 4- Is the government or the parliament revising the 2019 NGO law? If so, could you please share any draft of proposed changes or amendments?
- 5- Is the government or the parliament reviewing the 2014 penal code amendment (Law 128 of 2014) punishing by death or life in prison those who receive foreign funds in certain circumstances deemed to undermine stability or security? If so, please share a draft of the proposed revision.
- 6- How many individuals and NGOs remain under investigation in Case 173 of 2011? How many remain under travel bans or have their assets frozen?
- 7- How many individuals and NGOs working on environmental and/or climate issues were arrested, summoned by security, charged and/or placed under travel bans for violating local laws since 2014? For each case, please specify which laws were allegedly violated.
- 8- What kind of permit or permits are required for NGOs, activists, advocates, or academics to carry out field work/research related to air, soil or water pollution, climate change, or other environmental studies? Please describe

the process and criteria to obtain such permits and the laws governing the process. In particular, please describe what permits are legally required for:

- a) Interviewing members of the communities impacted by climate change and environmental pollution;
- b) Collecting and analyzing environmental samples;
- c) Publishing the results of independent studies.

Please feel free to share any other information you feel would be useful.

Your response is highly appreciated and information you provide will be reflected in our upcoming reporting if received by September 6 to the following address [mena@hrw.org](mailto:mena@hrw.org) and [Egypt@Hrw.org](mailto:Egypt@Hrw.org) . Later responses will be reflected on our website.

Sincerely,



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