

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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HRW.org

October 27, 2022

To Minister of Interior General Mahmoud Tawfiq

CC: Assistant Interior Minister for Human Rights: Dr. General
Omar al-Sioufi

Head of the General Directorate for Human Rights, General Manal
Atef

Your Excellency,

We write to you to seek your comment on the issue of sexual assault in Egypt in general and specifically assaults against women and girls who are refugees or asylum seekers. Human Rights Watch is an independent nongovernmental organization that monitors and reports on human rights in more than 90 countries worldwide. We appreciate your engagement with our organization on human rights issues in the country.

Human Rights Watch will soon publish research we recently conducted on sexual violence against the refugee community in Egypt and difficulties faced by survivors in accessing justice. Our research with survivors demonstrates that serious challenges exist when they want to file a police report or to communicate to the authorities the violence against them. Reports by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) published in 2022 and 2020 also indicate that sexual and gender-based violence has been a pervasive problem for Egypt's refugee communities.

We would like to reflect your government's views and incorporate official government data in our upcoming report, and therefore we request your response to few questions:

1. How many rape or other sexual assault cases were reported to Egyptian police in the years 2021-2022? Is there a breakdown by

gender of the survivor and by location (governorate)? In how many of these reports were the survivors refugees or asylum seekers?

2. How many rape or other sexual assault cases did the police refer to public prosecutors in the years 2021-2022? In how many of these cases were the survivors refugees or asylum seekers?
3. What are the legal requirements for police to register a rape or other sexual assault complaint in police stations in Egypt?
4. What are the legal requirements on police to investigate and refer for prosecution a rape or other sexual assault complaint? For instance, any specific information or evidence police officers require before they will proceed to investigate a case or refer it for prosecution?
5. What are the legal requirements or regulations for police regarding how to treat complaints made by individuals known or presumed to be foreign nationals, including refugees or asylum seekers, who report that they were victims of a crime? Are the police required to check their legal immigration status (e.g., whether they hold a valid residency permit and/or UNHCR refugee or asylum seeker card)? Are there any protection mechanisms or legal firewalls/barriers in place to ensure that undocumented persons who are victims of a crime can file complaints without fear of penalty or repercussions due to their immigration status?
6. What kind of translation and interpretation services are available for foreign nationals in police stations?
7. To what extent are female police staff available in police stations to deal with rape or sexual assault reports?
8. What kind of trainings are police officers required to undertake to work on rape or other sexual assault cases? Are there any guidelines or protocols for the police on a gender-responsive approach towards survivors of sexual violence?
9. Do the police have a process to refer sexual assault survivors to services providing legal aid, medical care, counselling, and shelter, where relevant?
10. Are safe rooms provided for confidential interviews with sexual assault survivors?

We would appreciate the response of the Minister to this letter at your earliest opportunity. In order for elements of your responses to be reflected in the report we are preparing, we request that we receive the response by November 10, 2022. Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Adam Coogle
Deputy Director
Middle East and North Africa
Human Rights Watch