



Home Office

Country Information and Guidance

Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood

Version 2.0

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Preface

This document provides country of origin information (COI) and guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the guidance contained with this document; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country Information

The COI within this document has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the [European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), dated July 2012.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve the guidance and information we provide. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this document, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. IAGCI may be contacted at:

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration,
5th Floor, Globe House, 89 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1PN.

Email: chiefinspectorukba@icinspector.gsi.gov.uk

Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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Guidance

Updated: 1 August 2016

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of Claim

- 1.1.1 A fear of persecution or serious harm by the state because of the person's actual or perceived involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB).

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2. Consideration of Issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For guidance on assessing credibility, see sections 4 and 5 of the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 The MB are reported to have released a statement in January 2015 calling on followers to embrace "jihad" and "martyrdom" to fight the current regime.
- 2.2.2 Depending on the nature of the person's involvement, decision makers must consider whether one of the exclusion clauses is applicable.
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses, discretionary leave and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#), the [Asylum Instruction on Discretionary Leave](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.2 Assessment of risk

- 2.2.1 MB leaders and supporters have faced a prolonged crackdown by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's regime following the ousting of President Mohamed Morsi in July 2013 and the MB's designation on 25 December 2013 as a terrorist organisation (see [Treatment of Muslim Brotherhood](#) in the country information).
- 2.2.2 Journalists affiliated with, or perceived to be sympathetic to, the MB have also been targeted. The government has also closed hundreds of NGOs with alleged links with the MB (see [Muslim Brotherhood and affiliated groups banned](#)).

- 2.2.3 Many hundreds of MB members have been killed or injured during protests, while thousands have also reportedly been detained, some in unofficial places of detention. There are also reports of MB supporters dying in police detention, instances of persons tortured to death and other allegations of killings in prisons and detention centres. Death sentences have been handed down to senior leaders in the MB for charges that include violence, espionage and jailbreak (see [Arrests and trials](#)).
- 2.2.4 Under the Penal Code, the government is able to detain anyone suspected of membership of the MB. However, in practice, arrests and detentions have primarily been of high- and mid-level leaders and those taking part in protests against the government which became violent.
- 2.2.5 The Egyptian authorities is unlikely to have the capacity, capability or interest in seeking to persecute everyone associated with the MB given the sheer scale of the number of members and supporters. The evidence does not suggest that merely being a member of, or, in particular, a supporter of the MB will put a person at risk of persecution.
- 2.2.6 Whether or not a person is at risk of ill-treatment on the basis of their political opinion because of their involvement with, or perceived support for, the MB will depend upon the personal circumstances, profile, activities and history of the person concerned.
- 2.2.7 For guidance on protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.3 Protection

- 2.3.1 As the person's fear is of ill treatment/persecution at the hands of the state, they will not be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.
- 2.3.2 For guidance on protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Internal relocation

- 2.4.1 As the person's fear is of ill treatment/persecution at the hands of the state, they will not be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.4.2 For further guidance on internal relocation, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Certification

- 2.5.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.5.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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3. Policy summary

- 3.1.1 The MB has been designated a terrorist organisation in Egypt and members may be prosecuted under the Penal Code.
- 3.1.2 Many senior and mid-level leaders of the MB have been arrested, face prolonged detention while some have been handed death sentences. Thousands of members and supporters have also been arrested, particularly during demonstrations by the state security forces. Some members and supporters have been killed and injured during the same protests.
- 3.1.3 Those with a high profile in the MB or who have been politically active, particularly in demonstrations, may be able to show that they are at risk of persecution, including of being held in detention, where they may be at risk of ill-treatment, trial also without due process and disproportionate punishment.
- 3.1.4 Additionally, high profile supporters or those perceived to support the MB, such as journalists, may also be similarly at risk of persecution. In such cases, a grant of asylum will be appropriate.
- 3.1.5 However, although membership of the MB is proscribed, low-level, non-political or inactive members and supporters are not generally being targeted and it is unlikely that they will be able to demonstrate a real risk of persecution. Each case will need to be considered on its facts.

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4. Background

4.1.1 The BBC in its news profile of December 2013 stated:

‘The MB (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun in Arabic) is Egypt’s oldest and largest Islamist organisation, meaning its ideology is based on the teachings of the Koran. Founded by Hassan al-Banna, the MB has influenced Islamist movements around the world with its model of political activism combined with Islamic charity work.’

‘The movement initially aimed simply to spread Islamic morals and good works, but soon became involved in politics, particularly the fight to rid Egypt of British colonial control and remove all Western influence.’

‘While the Ikhwan say that they support democratic principles, one of the group’s stated aims is to create a state ruled by Islamic law, or Sharia. Its most famous slogan, used worldwide, is "Islam is the solution."¹

4.1.2 The Council for Foreign Relations noted in January 2014: ‘The MB... has spawned Sunni Islamist groups throughout the Arab world. Banned from politics for its early aim of overthrowing the Egyptian government, the Brotherhood renounced violence in the 1970s and earned popular support by providing social services such as pharmacies, hospitals and schools.’²

4.1.3 The MB stated in 2013 that its members number over a million. The majority rank-and-file are said to be lower-middle-class, but leaders are often doctors and businessmen. Each pays a portion of their income to help fund the movement.³

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4.2 Muslim Brotherhood rise and fall: 2011 and 2014

4.2.1 The Council on Foreign Relations backgrounder, January 2014, explained:

‘The Brotherhood emerged as a dominant political force in Egypt following Mubarak’s removal from office amid mass protests in February 2011 in part because its organisational capacity was unmatched, but the group’s electoral victories were tarnished by power struggles with the judiciary and the military. Battles over the drafting of a new constitution were a particular flash point.’

‘In winter 2011–2012 parliamentary elections, the Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) won nearly half the seats in the lower house

¹ BBC News Profile, ‘Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood’ 25 December 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12313405>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

² Council on Foreign Affairs - CFA Backgrounder, ‘Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood’ January 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/egypt/egypts-muslim-brotherhood/p23991>, Date accessed: on 23 May 2016

³ The Guardian, ‘Who are the Muslim Brotherhood?’ 2 April 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/02/who-are-the-muslim-brotherhood>, Date accessed: 31 March 2014

(People's Assembly), and Islamists took 84 percent of the seats in the upper house (Shura Council). Pushing back against the Brotherhood's increasing power, in June 2012 the Mubarak-appointed Supreme Constitutional Court dissolved the People's Assembly and revoked a law that would have barred former regime officials from holding office, allowing Mubarak-era prime minister Ahmed Shafiq to vie for the presidency. Following a first round of voting in May, MB candidate Morsi won a narrow majority (51.7 percent) in a June runoff against Shafiq.'

'After his election, Morsi ordered the military, which had been acting as an interim government, to its barracks, a move welcomed by much of the officer corps, which was conscious of growing public resentment during its nearly one-and-a-half years at Egypt's helm.'

'With the lower house of parliament dissolved, Morsi had both executive and legislative control of the government. In late November 2012, Morsi declared himself, the Shura Council (previously a consultative body without legislative authority), and the constituent assembly immune from judicial review. The move provoked an immediate backlash, including public demonstrations against what opponents called a power grab. Though Morsi argued that the judiciary and much of the bureaucracy was dominated by feloul, or remnants of the Mubarak regime eager to impede the revolution's goals, intense popular opposition led him to annul the decree a month later.'

'... Though the 2012 constitution was approved with a 64 percent majority in a nationwide referendum, just a third of the electorate voted in the December referendum. Opponents were concerned about the role of Islam as the basis of law, feared insufficient protections for women's rights and freedoms of speech and worship, and distrusted the broad power accorded to the presidency.'

'The conflict between Morsi and the judiciary continued in March 2013 when the Supreme Administrative Court overturned a presidential decree calling for April parliamentary elections, questioning the constitutionality of election law provisions. The secular opposition had previously called for a boycott of the vote.'

'Many analysts criticize Morsi's tactics as heavy-handed. Middle East expert Robin Wright referred to his style of governing as "majoritarianism," meaning "autocratic rule by the largest party." Opposition to Morsi's rule came to a head in June 2013 with his appointment of seventeen Brotherhood-affiliated provincial governors, including a member of the former militant group Gamaa Islamiya as governor of Luxor, where the group massacred dozens of tourists in 1997.'

'Following a new round of mass protests, the army, now led by General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, ousted Morsi on July 3, 2013, and suspended the new constitution. A fifty-member committee that convened to amend the constitution included just two Islamists, neither of whom represented the

Brotherhood. Egyptians voted on the new constitution January 14 and 15, 2014.⁴

4.2.2 The same source noted

'...Morsi's tenure was marked by widespread frustration with economic mismanagement and poor governance, and his administration was ousted by the military in July 2013. A violent crackdown followed in which Morsi, much of the Brotherhood's leadership, and thousands of its supporters were arrested, and more than one thousand supporters were killed, according to rights groups. The military-backed government banned the Brotherhood once again at the end of 2013, excluding it from mainstream political channels.'⁵

4.2.3 The Washington Institute in their Article entitled Egypt Two Years After Morsi – 20 May 2015 observed that:

'Yet the manner in which Morsi was removed from power had significant consequences for Egypt's democratic prospects. By toppling Morsi, the Egyptian military locked itself in a kill-or-be-killed struggle with the Brotherhood. The Generals and their supporters believe that they must destroy the Brotherhood, or risk the Brotherhood remobilizing, returning to power, and seeking vengeance for Morsi's overthrow.'⁶

'By the same token, the Brotherhood seeks to destroy the current government. In this vein, Brotherhood leaders openly call for Sisi's death, and the Brotherhood released a statement in January 2015 calling on its followers to embrace "jihad" and "martyrdom" in fighting the current regime. So after removing Morsi, Egypt's military-backed government launched a brutal crackdown on the Brotherhood, repressing its protests with deadly force while decapitating the Brotherhood's hierarchical command-chain through a massive arrest campaign.'⁷

4.2.4 [A research briefing produced the House of Commons Library](#) released in February 2016 provides a useful overview of events between 2011 and 2014, and political events subsequent to this leading to the election of the current Parliament and President Al Sisi.

4.2.5 According to an Amnesty International press release: 'The Egyptian authorities have once again demonstrated the terrible state of the country's justice system, by sentencing Egypt's former President Mohamed Morsi and senior MB members to death for orchestrating mass prison-breaks during

⁴ Council on Foreign Affairs – CFA Backgrounder, 'Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood' January 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/egypt/egypts-muslim-brotherhood/p23991>, Date accessed: 23 May 2016

⁵ Council on Foreign Affairs – CFA Backgrounder, 'Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood' January 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/egypt/egypts-muslim-brotherhood/p23991>, Date accessed: 23 May 2016

⁶ The Washington Institute Policy Analysis, 'Egypt Two Years After Morsi' 20 May 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/egypt-two-years-after-morsi>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

⁷ The Washington Institute Policy Analysis, 'Egypt Two Years After Morsi' 20 May 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/egypt-two-years-after-morsi>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

the "25 January Revolution," aided by extremist groups, Hamas and Hizbullah.⁸

4.2.6 The same source stated that:-

'The Egyptian authorities should throw out all evidence in all cases used from interrogations during the period when Morsi and his aides were held under enforced disappearance following their removal from power on 3 July 2013. Mohamed Morsi should not have been in prison in 2011 as he was held in administrative detention, under emergency powers and without a judicial detention order. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime, the guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the offender or the method used by the state to carry out the execution.'⁹

4.2.7 The Washington Institute in their Article – Egypt Two Years After Morsi noted that:

'On the 30 June 2013, unprecedented millions of protestors descended on the central squares across Egypt to demand President Mohamed Morsi's ouster. While Morsi, a MB leader, had narrowly won the June 2012 presidential elections, he rapidly lost support. Morsi's assertion of total executive power through a November 2012 constitutional declaration alienated a substantial cross section of the Egyptian public, setting off frequent -- and often violent -- demonstrations that continued for months.'

'Meanwhile, as the economy plummeted and the tide of popular opinion shifted further against Morsi, Egypt's state institutions mutinied, bureaucracies became unresponsive to Brotherhood ministers, police refused to guard Brotherhood properties and in some cases uniformed officers even stood alongside anti-Morsi protestors in the streets. As a result, the Egyptian state was on the brink of collapse. By the time the massive 30 June 2013 demonstrations began, Morsi controlled practically nothing on the ground and he was reduced to being a President in name only.'

'The MB, however, utterly misinterpreted the depth of this crisis and refused to negotiate a political solution, such as early elections or a referendum on Morsi's presidency. Instead, it mobilized thousands of its cadres to defend Morsi's "legitimacy", and indicated that it would use violence if necessary. Clashes between Muslim Brothers and their opponents erupted throughout the country, in which dozens were killed. This is the context in which Egypt's military, led by then Defence Minister Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, removed Morsi from power on 3 July 2013. Egypt was on the verge of severe civil strife, if not civil war and many Egyptians feared that their country was headed the way of Syria or Libya. Indeed, from the perspective of the Generals and

⁸ Amnesty International – Egypt, 'Confirmation of Morsi Death Sentence Condemned' 16 June 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/egypt-confirmation-morsi-death-sentence-condemned>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

⁹ Amnesty International – Egypt, 'Confirmation of Morsi Death Sentence Another Symptom of a Broken Justice System' June 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/06/egypt-confirmation-of-morsi-death-sentence-another-symptom-of-a-broken-justice-system/>. Date accessed: 16 May 2016

many Egyptians, Sisi's decision to oust Morsi saved Egypt from outright chaos.¹⁰

4.2.8 According to BBC News: 'Mohammed Morsi was Egypt's first democratically elected president, but was ousted by the military after only one year in power. The military's move followed days of mass anti-government protests and Morsi's rejection of an ultimatum from the Generals to resolve Egypt's worst political crisis since Hosni Mubarak was deposed in 2011.'¹¹

4.2.9 The Guardian newspaper in their 17 December 2015 report: 'Muslim Brotherhood Are Possible Extremists – David Cameron Says' stated that:

'David Cameron has described members of the MB as possible extremists but stopped short of banning the group after a long-delayed official inquiry into its activities in Britain. The Prime Minister said the review found the Islamist organisation, of which the ousted Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi is a senior member, had significant influence in groups claiming to speak for British Muslims. The MB, which is opposed by some Gulf states, characterized the UK as fundamentally hostile to Muslim faith and identity and had expressed support for terrorist attacks by the Palestinian Islamist Group Hamas.'¹²

'David Cameron said in a written ministerial statement to Members of Parliament that the main findings of the review support the conclusion that membership of, association with, or influence by the MB should be considered as a possible indicator of extremism and parts of the MB have a highly ambiguous relationship with violent extremism.'¹³

'The Prime Minister's statement went far further than expected and the Report ends by claiming that "aspects of MB ... are contrary to our values and have been contrary to our national interests and our national security." The review was undertaken by the former British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Sir John Jenkins and Charles Farr, the Director General of the Office for Security and Counterterrorism in the Home Office.'¹⁴

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¹⁰ The Washington Institute Policy Analysis, 'Egypt Two Years After Morsi' 20 May 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/egypt-two-years-after-morsi>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

¹¹ BBC News Profile, 'Egypt's Mohammed Morsi' 21 April 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18371427>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

¹² The Guardian, 'Muslim Brotherhood Are Possible Extremists, David Cameron Says' 17 December 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/17/uk-will-not-ban-muslim-brotherhood-david-cameron-says>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

¹³ The Guardian, 'Muslim Brotherhood Are Possible Extremists, David Cameron Says' 17 December 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/17/uk-will-not-ban-muslim-brotherhood-david-cameron-says>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

¹⁴ The Guardian, 'Muslim Brotherhood Are Possible Extremists, David Cameron Says' 17 December 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/17/uk-will-not-ban-muslim-brotherhood-david-cameron-says>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

5. Treatment of Muslim Brotherhood

5.1 Muslim Brotherhood and affiliated groups banned

5.1.1 According to Amnesty International in their Report 2015-2016:

'By the end of 2015, the government said it had closed more than 480 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) because of their alleged links to the MB group and on 21 October 2015, security forces raided the Mada Foundation for Media Development, a Cairo-based journalism NGO. They detained all those present and questioned them for several hours before releasing all but the organisation's director, whom they held without charge on suspicion of "international bribery – receiving foreign funding" and belonging to the MB'.¹⁵

5.1.2 According to an Article by Carnegie Middle East Centre – The Struggle for the Leadership of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood – July 2015:

'The MB incurred significant losses during its confrontation with the state. In addition to the security clashes in the squares that resulted in thousands of deaths and arrests, the interim government froze the assets of 1,055 charitable religious organisations in December 2013, accusing them of belonging to the Brotherhood or being affiliated to it. This move has weakened the organisation's social and religious activities and the government also declared the Brotherhood a terrorist organisation. The Supreme Administrative Court then dissolved the FJP, the political arm of the group, and confiscated its assets in August 2014'.¹⁶

5.1.3 The article further noted that:

'The escalation of the security confrontation and the arrest of the Brotherhood's leaders dealt a strong blow to the organisation, which was unstable for several months before returning with a new structure and working plan. At the organisational level, the Brotherhood began to develop structures to adapt to changes on the ground, namely the need to work underground and the increased confrontations between its members and the security forces'.¹⁷

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5.2 Arrests and trials

5.2.1 The United States Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2014 Egypt reported that:-

¹⁵ Amnesty International, 'Annual Report Egypt 2015/2016'

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/egypt/report-egypt/>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

¹⁶ Carnegie Middle East Centre, 'The Struggle for the Leadership of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood' July 2015, <http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/07/14/struggle-for-leadership-of-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood/idbr>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

¹⁷ Carnegie Middle East Centre, 'The Struggle for the Leadership of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood' July 2015, <http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/07/14/struggle-for-leadership-of-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood/idbr>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

'The MB, the MB-affiliated FJP, and NGOs affiliated with the MB were outlawed in 2014. The Egyptian Government designated the MB as a terrorist organisation in December 2013 and the High Administrative Court dissolved the FJP on 9 August 2014. On 30 October 2014, the government also declared illegal the National Alliance to Support Legitimacy, which is an informal political advocacy coalition led primarily by MB supporters. These designations have enabled widespread crackdown on MB and its affiliated organisations, including mass arrests by the government and often severe sentences from the judiciary in mass trials.'¹⁸

5.2.2 BBC News in their Article, What's Become of Egypt's Morsi – 16 June 2015 stated that:-

'In May 2015, Morsi and more than 100 other people was sentenced to death after being convicted of colluding with foreign militants - from the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas and Lebanon's Shia Islamist Hezbollah movement - to organise a mass prison break during the uprising against Hosni Mubarak. Morsi was being held at Wadi Natroun prison in January 2011 when armed men overcame the guards, freeing thousands of inmates. He and his co-defendants, including senior Brotherhood officials, were also found guilty of the murder and kidnapping of guards, damaging and setting fire to prison buildings and looting the prison's weapons depot. In June 2015, a Court upheld the death sentence against Morsi and 98 others after consulting Egypt's Grand Mufti.'

5.2.3 The same source continued that: 'Morsi was also given a life sentence in May 2015 after being convicted of conspiring to commit terrorist acts with foreign organisations to undermine national security. Sixteen co-defendants, including 3 Brotherhood leaders, were sentenced to death after also being found guilty of leaking state secrets to a foreign state.'¹⁹

5.2.4 Amnesty International reported that:

'Security forces arrested 11,877 members of "terrorist groups" between January and the end of September 2015, according to the Assistant Minister for Public Security at the Ministry of the Interior. The crackdown was thought to include members and perceived supporters of the MB and other government critics. The authorities had previously stated that they had arrested at least 22,000 people on such grounds in 2014.'²⁰

5.2.5 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in their Article, Egypt Sentences MB Leader To Death – 11 April 2015 has stated that:

'An Egyptian Court has sentenced Muhammad Badie, a leader of the outlawed MB and 13 other senior members of the group to death for inciting

¹⁸ U.S State Department, 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2014 Egypt' April 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239407.htm>, Date accessed: 23 May 2016

¹⁹ BBC News, 'What's Become of Egypt's Morsi' 16 June 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24772806>, Date accessed: 16 May 2015

²⁰ Amnesty International, 'Annual Report Egypt 2015/2016' February 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/egypt/report-egypt/>, Date accessed: 23 May 2016

chaos and violence. A Judge made the announcement during a televised Court session on 11 April 2015. The Court also sentenced U.S Egyptian citizen, Muhammad Soltan, to life in jail for supporting the group and transmitting false news. The sentences can be appealed before Egypt's highest Civilian Court in a process that could take years to reach a final verdict. The men were among thousands detained after the ousting of Islamist President Muhammad Morsi in 2013.²¹ President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi describes the Brotherhood as a major security threat. However, the Brotherhood says it is committed to peaceful activism and has nothing to do with recent Islamist militant violence in Egypt.²²

5.2.6 According to Amnesty International in their Report 2015-2016:

'On 23 September 2015, President al-Sisi pardoned 100 men and women, including journalists and scores of activists imprisoned for participating in protests but the pardon did not extend to imprisoned leaders of Egypt's youth movement or MB leaders.'

'Amnesty International has commented that in 2015/2016 'at least 3,000 civilians stood trial before unfair military courts on "terrorism" and other charges alleging political violence. Many, including leaders of the MB, were tried in mass trials of civilians which Amnesty International say is fundamentally unfair.'²³

5.2.7 A House of Commons Library research briefing of February 2016, based on a range of sources, summarised:

'The Sisi government, supported by the anti-MB Gulf States of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, has conducted a vigorous crackdown on supporters of the MB. The MB was declared a terrorist organisation in December 2013 and its assets were confiscated, while its political wing, the FJP, was later dissolved. Human Rights Watch reported that probably as many as a thousand of its supporters were killed during demonstrations after the toppling of President Morsi.

'Over 40,000 people were detained or indicted in less than a year after the coup and reports of torture and disappearances at the hands of the police and other security forces were widespread... The government has made it much more difficult to hold demonstrations and easier for the police to ban them. Many of the arrests are for violations of the new framework, in place since November 2013.

²¹ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 'Egypt Sentences Muslim Brotherhood Leader To Death' 11 April 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=5565b9ea15&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=EGY>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

²² Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 'Egypt Sentences Muslim Brotherhood Leader To Death' 11 April 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=5565b9ea15&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=EGY>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

²³ Amnesty International, 'Annual Report Egypt 2015/2016' February 2016 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/egypt/report-egypt/> Date accessed: 16 May 2016

'In June 2014 three Al-Jazeera journalists were given jail sentences on terrorism-related charges. Al-Jazeera is regarded as being close to the MB. By summer 2014, the human rights group Amnesty International described the decline in the protection of human rights as 'catastrophic'.

'Thousands of MB leaders and supporters have been imprisoned – the group said in 2015 that 29,000 of its sympathisers were in custody.'²⁴

5.2.8 The U.S Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 has stated that:-

'The government used force, and at times used excessive force, to disperse both peaceful and non-peaceful demonstrations. According to local media reports, on 23 January 2015, security forces shot and killed 17-year-old Sondos Reda Abu Bakr during clashes with MB affiliated protesters in Alexandria. According to the Ministry of Health, fighting between police and protesters killed 23 persons, including 17 protesters, three "militants," and three police officers during the fourth anniversary of the January 25 Revolution.'²⁵

'There were instances of persons tortured to death and other allegations of killings in prisons and detention centres. There were reports of suspects killed in unclear circumstances during or after arrest. On 7 September 2015, authorities arrested Mogahed Hassan Zaki, a 30-year-old doctor and member of the outlawed MB-affiliated FJP, in Cairo, according to MB-affiliated media interviews with his family. Two days later the Morgue at a nearby hospital reported Zaki dead as the result of gunshot wounds in the chest and back. The Ministry of Interior claimed police killed Zaki in an exchange of gunfire during an attempted arrest. The Ministry of Interior alleged Zaki was previously involved in killing a police officer in Beni Suef.'²⁶

5.2.9 According to a Article by the Daily News - 46 alleged MB members arrested – 21 September 2015:

'The Ministry of Interior announced that it had arrested 46 alleged MB members accused of organising demonstrations and inciting violence across Egypt. The Ministry said that those arrested had targeted policemen and army officers and that all of them will be referred to prosecution. A representative from the Ministry said that the arrests took place as police forces are intensifying its operations to "provide security and eradicate terrorism."'

'The arrests come as part of a continued crackdown by Egyptian authorities on the now outlawed MB. The government blames the Brotherhood for much

²⁴ UK Parliament, 'House of Commons Research Briefing: Egypt under Sisi' (Section 2), February 2016, <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07146/SN07146.pdf>, Date accessed: 23 May 2016

²⁵ U.S Department of State, 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2015' (Section 1a), April 2016, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253133.pdf>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

²⁶ U.S Department of State, 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015' (Section 1a), April 2016, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253133.pdf>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

of the violence in the country, while the organisation insists it is non-violent and is committed to peaceful forms of resistance.²⁷

5.2.10 Human Rights Watch (HRW) in their Article – Police Account of Deadly Raid in Question, dated July 2015, commented that:

‘The fatal shooting by Egyptian security forces of nine MB members in July 2015 may have been unlawful killings and could qualify as extrajudicial executions. HRW has said that “Independent Prosecutors should investigate the killings and hold accountable any members of the security forces found to have committed any unlawful killings or to have been otherwise responsible for them.” ‘

‘Egypt’s Ministry of Interior apparently said that it had arrested the nine men in a raid before later claiming that security forces killed them in a shootout after the men opened fire on police with automatic weapons from behind a closed door in a Cairo apartment. HRW spoke to 11 relatives and other witnesses with knowledge of the incident who said that security forces had arrested the men, fingerprinted them and tortured them before killing them. The Supreme State Security Prosecution, which is charged with handling cases involving terrorism and national security, reportedly authorised the raid on the apartment and is also investigating the deaths.

‘HRW has documented the security forces’ role in forcible disappearances that ended in death but has not previously documented an incident where security forces appear to have deliberately targeted a group of Brotherhood members with lethal violence outside the context of a protest. Independent Prosecutors under the Prosecutor General should investigate the killings, not Prosecutors from the Agency that authorized the fatal raid, HRW said.’²⁸

5.2.11 HRW has stated in their report, 7400 Civilians tried in Military Courts, published in April 2016 that:

‘Military courts have tried at least 7,420 Egyptian civilians since October 2014, when President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi decreed a major new law that expanded military court jurisdiction. A list of civilians tried in military courts, provided by the Egyptian Co-ordination for Rights and Freedom, an independent legal and human rights group, documents for the first time the extent to which al-Sisi’s administration has used the military justice system to expedite its harsh crackdown on opponents. Most defendants were sentenced after mass trials that violate fundamental due process rights, and some courts relied on confessions extracted under torture said the relatives of the defendants.’²⁹

²⁷ Daily News, ‘46 alleged Muslim Brotherhood members arrested’ 21 September 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/09/21/46-alleged-muslim-brotherhood-members-arrested/>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

²⁸ Human Rights Watch, ‘Egypt: Condemn Justice Minister’s Hate Speech’ 8 February 2016, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=56ba05cf4&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=Egypt>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

²⁹ Human Rights Watch, ‘7,400 Civilians Tried in Military Courts’ 13 April 2016,

(...)

'The use of military courts to try civilians violates international law, including the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which Egypt ratified in 1984. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has stated that civilians should never face military trial.'³⁰

5.2.12 Freedom House reported in its Freedom in the World report 2016 that:

'The government systematically persecutes opposition parties and political movements, disrupting their operations and constraining their ability to organise. Large numbers of Muslim Brotherhood members and supporters, including nearly all of the organisation's senior leadership and Morsi himself, were arrested following the coup, and arrests continued through 2015. Civil society organisations estimate that as many as 40,000 people were being detained for political reasons as of 2015, most of them for real or suspected links to the Muslim Brotherhood. Authorities declared the Brotherhood a terrorist organisation in December 2013, which allowed them to charge anyone participating in a pro-Morsi demonstration with terrorism and laid the foundation for the complete political isolation of the Islamist opposition.'³¹

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6. Journalists/media

6.1.1 According to the US Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights 2015:

'Individuals faced societal and official harassment for speech viewed as sympathetic to the MB, such as using a hand gesture showing four fingers, a reference to the 2013 security operation to disperse the sit-in at Rabaa al-Adawiya Square.'³²

'Despite the claims of President Sisi that Egypt is witnessing an unprecedented climate of free speech, the current regime has become more repressive than its predecessors whereas it does not tolerate any form of dissent or challenge of the official narrative. According to the Huffington Post, at least 23 journalists are currently imprisoned making Egypt now the second worst country jailer of journalists worldwide.'³³

6.1.2 According to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2016:-

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/13/egypt-7400-civilians-tried-military-courts>, Date accessed: 27 June 2016

³⁰ Human Rights Watch, '7,400 Civilians Tried in Military Courts' 13 April 2016,

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/13/egypt-7400-civilians-tried-military-courts>, Date accessed: 27 June 2016

³¹ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2016 Egypt' (Political Pluralism and Participation), June 2016, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/egypt>, Date accessed: 27 July 2016

³² U.S Department of State, 'Country Reports on Human Rights for 2015' (Section 2a), <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253133.pdf>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

³³ Huffington Post, 'Egypt: President Sisi in a Crusader Fight With A Generation' 25 January 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/karim-lahidji/egypt-president-alsisi-in_b_9067012.html Date accessed: 16 May 2016

'During the past year, the government's efforts to combat extremism and terrorism had a chilling impact on human rights and civil society activities in Egypt. Despite some political prisoners and other dissidents being released from prison in 2015, the government continues to crack down on all forms of dissent. Sympathizers and members of the MB, journalists, secular and liberal activists, and opposition figures have been harassed, jailed, and given harsh prison terms, including death sentences for Brotherhood members and other Islamists, sometimes on legitimate, but also on unfounded, security charges.'³⁴

6.1.3 The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that:

'In July 2015 Egyptian authorities arrested the head of a journalist syndicate and accused him of belonging to the MB. The CPJ condemned the arrest and called on the Egyptian Government to release Aboubakr Khallaf immediately. Khallaf was the founder and head of the independent Electronic Media Syndicate (EMS), which trains and supports journalists who work online in Egypt. The syndicate operates independently from the state-recognized Egyptian Journalist Syndicate.'³⁵

6.1.4 'Khallaf was arrested and accused of belonging to the MB according to the news website Dot Msr. The local press freedom group Journalists Against Torture and the local Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE) said Khallaf was also accused of "taking pictures and displaying artistic works without a licence," among other allegations. A 1998 executive order states that individuals conducting audio and audiovisual work must have a licence from the Ministry of Culture. According to AFTE, the accusation is in connection with Khallaf photographing the funeral of Hisham Barakat, Egypt's Prosecutor General who was assassinated in June 2015.'³⁶

6.1.5 According to an Article by the CPJ - Egypt Sentences Journalists to Prison for 'Publishing False News' January 2016 :

'Police arrested Adly, Mokhtar, and Ashraf on 1 July 2015, outside of Cairo's Zeinhom Morgue, where they were reporting on the deaths of nine MB members killed by security forces that day. The journalists were held for two months on charges of belonging to the banned MB group and spreading false news, then each released on 10,000 Egyptian pounds' (US\$1,277) bail

³⁴ United States Commission On International Religious Freedom, 'Annual Report 2016 Egypt' 2 May 2016, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=57307cf015&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=EGY&searchin=title&sort=date>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

³⁵ Committee to Protect Journalists, 'Egypt Arrests Press Advocate, Accuses Him of Belonging to Banned Group' 24 July 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=55d6eba24&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=EGY>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

³⁶ Committee to Protect Journalists, 'Egypt Arrests Press Advocate, Accuses Him of Belonging to Banned Group' 24 July 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=55d6eba24&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=EGY>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

on 31 August 2015. According to reports, the three journalists are not in police custody and will appeal the verdict.³⁷

6.1.6 HRW has stated that:

'Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi should condemn recent televised remarks by his Justice Minister that appeared to advocate the mass killing of MB supporters, HRW said in a letter to the President. In a 28 January 2016 interview with a satellite television news show, Justice Minister Ahmed al-Zind said that he would not be satisfied until 10,000 MB members were killed for every slain member of the armed forces.'

The same source continued that:

'President al-Sisi should clarify that his government will ensure the prosecution of anyone who commits, orders or assists in murder or other crimes against Brotherhood supporters or any other group because of their political or ideological affiliation. The Egyptian Government should forcefully dissuade others from engaging in hate speech.'³⁸

6.1.7 According to an Article by the CPJ - Egypt Arrests Press Advocate, Accuses Him of Belonging to Banned Group – 24 July 2015:

'In July 2015, authorities arrested Yahya Khalaf, the director of Yaqeen news network, and raided the outlet's offices after the government-aligned Egyptian news website Al-Watan reported that the network had employed members of the MB. Khalaf remains in custody. On 16 July 2015, the Egyptian Ministry of Interior released a statement on its Facebook page saying the raid on Yaqeen's offices was part of a crackdown on the banned MB group. Shortly afterwards, the network announced on its Facebook page that it was shutting down.'³⁹

6.1.8 CPJ also stated in their Article – 2015 Prison Census that:

'Albarbary, the Administrative Manager of Misr 25, a TV channel affiliated with the MB, was arrested in Beirut, where he had gone to re-open and manage another satellite station, Ahrar 25, on behalf of the MB. Albarbary was arrested near Rafik Hariri airport while he was waiting for the arrival of Mokhtar al-Ashry, head of the Legal Department of the MB. Al-Ashry was detained first and, when Albarbary inquired about him with airport authorities, he was also arrested. Both were detained for five days by Lebanon's National Security, after a request by the Egyptian Government, then were

³⁷ Committee to Protect Journalists, 'Egypt Sentences Journalists to Prison for Publishing False News' 13 January 2016, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=56c1eb6c15&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=EGY>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

³⁸ Human Rights Watch, 'Egypt: Condemn Justice Minister's Hate Speech' 8 February 2016, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=56ba05cf4&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=EGY>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

³⁹ Committee to Protect Journalists, 'Egypt Arrests Press Advocate, Accuses Him of Belonging to Banned Group' 24 July 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=55d6eba24&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=EGY>, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

deported to Cairo with Egyptian security agents. Lebanese authorities said Albarbary had been extradited based on a bilateral extradition treaty between the countries. Ahrar TV staff members fled Lebanon after Albarbary was arrested.⁴⁰

6.1.9 'Al-Ashry was charged with using a false passport and with "publishing false news" in order to support the Brotherhood's alleged Operations Room during the dispersal of the August 2013 sit-in at Rabaa Al-Adawiya in Cairo, where Egyptians had gathered to protest the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi. The dispersal left hundreds dead. He was also charged with "spreading chaos" and "forming an Operations Room to direct the MB to defy the government" during the dispersal.'⁴¹

6.1.10 'Albarbary was tried along with 50 other defendants, including prominent leaders of the MB, who faced similar charges. Albarbary's lawyer, Mahmoud Amer, told CPJ that Albarbary was added to the Rabaa Operations Room case after it was referred to Court in March 2014. 'On 11 April 2015, a Cairo criminal Court sentenced Albarbary to life in prison.'⁴²

6.1.11 In their 2016 Report Freedom of the Press noted that:

'President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's efforts to silence dissent and shutter outlets affiliated with the MB have produced a media environment in which most public and private outlets are firmly supportive of the regime. In 2015, authorities continued to employ a variety of tools against journalists and media outlets that strayed from officially sanctioned narratives, including legal prosecution, gag orders, and the outright halting of operations. Dozens of journalists were physically assaulted during 2015 by both security agents and civilians.'

'In January 2015, an appeals court granted a retrial to three employees of Qatar's Al-Jazeera television network who were detained in late 2013 and subsequently sentenced to lengthy prison terms for supposedly spreading false news and aiding the MB. One of the reporters, Peter Greste, an Australian citizen, was deported in February 2015. The others – Mohamed Fadel Fahmy, an Egyptian-born Canadian citizen, and Baher Mohamed, an Egyptian national – were released on bail later that month but convicted again at their re-trial in August 2015, along with Greste in absentia. In September 2015, Fahmy and Mohamed were released under a presidential pardon.

⁴⁰ Committee to Protect Journalists, '2015 Prison Census – Egypt' 14 December 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=56701f8d2b&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=E> GY, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

⁴¹ Committee to Protect Journalists, '2015 Prison Census – Egypt' 14 December 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=56701f8d2b&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=E> GY, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

⁴² Committee to Protect Journalists, '2015 Prison Census – Egypt' 14 December 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=56701f8d2b&skip=0&query=muslim%20brotherhood&coi=E> GY, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

'Following the 2013 coup that brought al-Sisi to power, the authorities began to purge the media of any support for the MB. Any strong criticism of al-Sisi was also sidelined or suppressed. This process continued in 2015, with public and private outlets broadly embracing pro-Sisi and anti-MB narratives and expressing strong support for the security forces. Al-Sisi himself frequently convenes private meetings with prominent newspaper editors and television presenters, during which he has discouraged critical reporting and called on journalists to produce material aimed at inspiring national unity.'

'There are virtually no private stations based in Egypt that oppose the government. The MB and other Islamist opposition elements have moved their affiliated media operations abroad, primarily to Turkey, where they established satellite television and online outlets.'⁴³

6.1.12 In May 2014, Reporters Without Borders noted that:

'The number of arrests of journalists during the past 11 months is particularly disturbing. According to the tally kept by the CPJ, more than 65 journalists were arrested for varying periods of time between 3 July [2013] and 30 April [2014]. The authorities systematically target media and journalists affiliated (or regarded as sympathetic) to the MB which has been banned again. This witch-hunt against suspected Brotherhood supporters, which affects Turkish, Palestinian and Syrian journalists as well as Egyptian ones, violates the new constitution. Trumped-up charges are used to keep journalists in detention.'⁴⁴

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⁴³ Freedom House, 'Freedom of the Press 2016 – Egypt, 26 April 2016, http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=57220da415&skip=0&query=muslim_brotherhood&coi=EGY, Date accessed: 16 May 2016

⁴⁴ Reporters Without Borders, 'Major decline in freedom of information since army takeover' 21 May 2014, <http://en.rsf.org/egypt-major-decline-in-freedom-of-21-05-2014,46317.html>, Date accessed: 27 June 2016

Version Control and Contacts

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email [the Guidance, Rules and Forms Team](#).

Clearance

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

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- valid from **2 August 2016**

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Updated country information.

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