Egypt | Rights organizations condemn violations in Badr 3 as multiple prisoners attempt suicide amid surge of restrictions, harassment, and medical neglect

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The undersigned organizations are alarmed by the escalating human rights violations inside the Badr Correction and Rehabilitation Complex, particularly in Badr 3 prison, where conditions are rapidly deteriorating and prisoners are deprived of their most basic rights. Occurring amid a near total absence of transparency and accountability, these ongoing abuses clearly violate the Egyptian Constitution, Regulation of Prisons Law No. 396 of 1956, and Internal Prison Regulations Law No. 79 of 1961 and its amendments. The violations also explicitly breach the international human rights standards to which Egypt has pledged adherence.

Since the opening of Badr 3, persons detained at the site have endured an increasing barrage of abuse and neglect. Prisoners face collective restrictions on visits, with the prison authorities either instituting a complete ban or severe restrictions on visitation. Visits typically occur through glass barriers preventing any physical contact between detained persons and their family members. Prison officials also harass family members visiting their loved ones, and routinely deny the entry of basic supplies they bring, such as food and clothing. The prison administration also denies detained individuals exercise, with only one weekly exception, in violation of prison laws and regulations. The prison administration also continually and deliberately denies detained persons required medical care; treatment is often limited to painkillers, at most.

One of the most recent cases of medical neglect is that of prisoner Mohamed Helal, who died on April 8 in a hospital after his condition deteriorated. The circumstances surrounding his death indicated that torture was possible, angering prisoners who protested by covering the cameras inside their cells, burning blankets, and banging on doors. These acts of protest, a last resort for detainees, have been met with punitive responses from the administration, such as collectively denying prisoners exercise and visitation. In addition, prison officials assaulted detained persons, including through the use of water cannons inside cells.

With no other recourse to their despair and dire conditions, multiple prisoners inside Badr 3 have attempted suicide. In one case, a detained man was denied family visits for a prolonged period; when the prison authorities finally allowed him a visit, they denied him the food and personal items his family had brought. The man was punished by being placed in solitary confinement following an argument with a National Security officer, during which the officer allegedly said ‘It would be better if you kill yourself,’ in response to the man expressing suicidal thoughts. The man then attempted to

hang himself; he was rescued and hospitalized.

A spate of suicide attempts through various means occurred in the following days across several sections of the Badr prison complex. Without hope for any improvement in their conditions or for their basic human rights to be respected, prisoners have resorted to hanging or cutting themselves, setting fires inside their cells, or overdosing on medication. A number of prisoners have launched a partial hunger strike in protest of the harsh conditions; their demands center upon the implementation of prison regulations and laws, which would ensure that their rights (including exercise, visitation, and communication with the outside world through letters and phone calls) are upheld in line with both Egyptian and international law.

The undersigned organizations express our full solidarity with the prisoners deprived of their fundamental rights through violations and severe detention conditions. We hold the Ministry of Interior and the administration of the Badr Correction and Rehabilitation Complex fully responsible for the safety of all prisoners.

We, the signatories, call for:

- Immediate cessation of violations and restrictions; respect for detainees' fundamental rights.
- Effective enforcement of the Prison Regulation Code, particularly regarding exercise, nutrition, medical and psychological care, and visitation rights.
- Urgent and transparent investigations into all reported incidents, especially suicide attempts, and those culpable for violations held to account.
- Effective oversight of detention facilities and allowing independent human rights organizations to visit prisons and monitor conditions.
- Amendment of the internal prison regulations to explicitly outline items prohibited from entry to detention sites in order to prevent prison administrators from arbitrarily rejecting items to further punish prisoners and their families.
- Enforcement of Article 60 of Internal Prison Regulations Law No. 79 of 1961, which stipulates the right of pretrial detainees to four visits per month and convicted prisoners to two visits per month.
- An end to the use of solitary confinement as a punitive measure against prisoners, which violates prison regulations.

We, the undersigned rights organizations, are sounding the alarm over the systematic repression, abuse, and neglect in Egypt's prisons and detention sites. Violations against detainees are being perpetrated at an intensifying rate in an environment of impunity, posing a direct threat to life and human dignity. We urge the international community, particularly the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, to apply immediate pressure on the Egyptian government to put an end to these violations and ensure all prisoners' rights to dignity, justice, and freedom from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Signatory Organizations:

1. Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms
2. El Nadeem Center
3. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
4. Sinai Foundation for Human Rights
5. Refugees Platform in Egypt
6. Egyptian Front for Human Rights
7. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
8. The Egyptian Human Rights Forum
9. Law and Democracy Support Center
10. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
11. Redword for Human Rights and Freedom of Expression
12. Committee for Justice (CFJ)
13. Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)
14. Egypt Wide

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