

[Egypt: Cease harassment of Cairo Institute and other human rights NGOs](#)

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(Geneva) - The Government of Egypt should immediately cease and desist from harassing the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and other independent non-governmental organisations in the country, the International Service for Human Rights said today.

The call came as employees of the Government's Ministry of Social Solidarity attended the offices of the Cairo Institute in Egypt and demanded that staff provide documentation as to its funding sources, membership and activities, in accordance with [Egypt's notorious NGO Law 84/2002](#). Law 84 provides for extensive governmental interference in the work of NGOs, limits access to foreign funds, restricts various forms of human rights advocacy, and provides harsh criminal penalties for non-compliance. Cairo Institute is one of the country's and region's most well-established, credible and respected human rights organisations.

Meanwhile, on the following day, Egypt's foreign ministry issued an [extraordinary statement](#) accusing leading international human rights NGO, Human Rights Watch, of 'promoting', 'supporting' and 'endorsing' terrorism and terrorist operations.

'Egyptian authorities must end their harassment and persecution of the Cairo Institute and other independent human rights organisations, the work of whom is vital to human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the country,' said ISHR Director Phil Lynch.

'NGOs like the Cairo Institute make an invaluable contribution to accountable government, inclusive development and national security. They should be respected and protected, not subject to persecution and harassment,' Mr Lynch said.

In a [statement](#) the Cairo Institute linked the investigation to their work at the national, regional and international levels to combat restrictions on exercise of the fundamental rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly and peaceful protest. They also expressed alarm that the Egyptian Government appears to be further escalating its efforts to close down independent civil society, with a number of other NGOs also being raided or investigated, including the Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights and the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre.

'With the UN Human Rights Council commencing in Geneva next week, it is incumbent on States from all regions that profess support for independent civil society and basic democratic freedoms to speak out firmly in support and solidarity with the Cairo Institute and independent civil society in Egypt,' Mr Lynch said.

'The time has come for States to set aside their perceived interest in appeasing an influential regional actor and hold Egypt to account for its obligations under the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. A strong civil society is an essential precondition to Egypt being a reliable and stable partner in the region,' Mr Lynch said.

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