<u>Brief on new NGO law no. 149/2019 passed in July 2019</u>

For **NGOs to be able to register** (art.3), **they are required to respect "national security" and "public morality"; vague terms that target independent human rights organisations including those working on LGBTI issues.** If there is no objection by the authorities within 60 days, the registration is accepted. Only then, would NGOs be able to open a bank account.

NGOs need to get yearly approval for all their activities. The only allowed activities are those that meet "the State's development plans and the needs of the society" (art.14). Prohibited activities include "against national security and public morality" (art. 15.d); "conducting surveys or publishing their results without the government's Statistic Authority's approval" (art.15.k)"; "entering into agreements with any foreign entity without government approval" (art.15.l).

NGOs need the minister's approval to "join, affiliate, participate, cooperate and engage with foreign organisations in activities" (art.19). These activities could be interpreted as for example: **engage with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms such as the UPR and Special Procedures, treaty bodies, as well as with donors, international civil society organisations,…etc.**

NGOs can only expend foreign funds after the government does not object within 60 days of receiving the funds (art.27). Foreign organisations registered under this law can make local transfers to other organisations in the country without prior approval (art.24).

For NGOs who violated the foreign funding provisions "the minister can suspend their activities for maximum a year and request **dissolution of the organisation**" (art.29). NGO workers who violate this can face penalties up to 1 million Egyptian pounds.

Egyptian human rights defenders are currently facing up to 25 years imprisonment "the NGO Foreign Funding case no.173/2011"; made possible by **the amendment passed in 2014 to Article 78 of the Penal Code on foreign funding.**