

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL JOINT LETTER

# JOINT NGO LETTER ON THE EU'S MACRO-FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO EGYPT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

We, the undersigned Egyptian, regional and international human rights organisations, urge the European Commission and member states to uphold international and EU law to ensure that macro-financial assistance to Egypt granted under EU regulations secures **concrete, measurable, structural and timebound human rights progress and reforms** in the country.

Since the 2013 military ousting of former president Mohamed Morsi, Egypt has been ruled with an iron fist. Authorities have brutally and systematically silenced peaceful dissent, nearly wiped-out independent media and civil society, repressed political opposition, adopted and enacted repressive legislation, jailed tens of thousands of actual or perceived critics and severely undermined the independence of the judiciary and of the legal profession.

With very little civic, judicial, or parliamentary scrutiny, the authorities have faced virtually no accountability for their repressive policies and actions. In turn, this has contributed to the government's failure to respect, protect and fulfil people's social and economic rights, leading to setbacks for those most affected by the recurring economic crises in the country. From February 2024 onwards, Egypt's donors including the United Arab Emirates, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, [the United Kingdom](#) and the European Union provided or pledged [around 57 billion USD](#) in grants and loans. As part of this process, donors should ensure that the Egyptian authorities pursue and effectively implement reforms that improve respect for human rights alongside greater transparency and accountability.

Donors must also ensure that economic and fiscal measures implemented as part of these programs do not contribute to the further erosion of people's economic and social rights, especially in light of the continuing rise in poverty rates since the adoption of the first IMF program in 2016, as well as the Egyptian government's inadequate spending levels on social protection, health and education. Any agreed macroeconomic reforms must reflect and uphold the legal obligations of all parties with regard to economic and social rights, notably in the areas of labour rights and environmental justice, and corporate accountability.

We believe that structural reforms to strengthen rule of law, guarantee fair trials, open civic space, uphold the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association and media freedom, and release all those arbitrarily detained, are crucial. Not only would they comply with Egypt's constitution and international human rights obligations, but they would also address some of the **root causes of Egypt's financial and economic instability. This instability has severely impacted the economic and social rights of millions of people in Egypt, who will ultimately carry the burden of repaying Egypt's debts, particularly those in vulnerable and marginalised situations.**

We note that EU [regulations](#) require that recipients of macro-financial assistance "*adhere to the respect of human rights and effective democratic mechanisms, including a multi-party parliamentary system and the rule of law,*" while the European Council stipulated that a [precondition](#) for granting the Union's macro-financial assistance is that "***Egypt continues to make concrete and credible steps towards respecting effective democratic***

***mechanisms, including a multi-party parliamentary system, and the rule of law, and guaranteeing respect for human rights.***" However, what those “*concrete and credible steps*” should be is not defined in the Commission’s proposal.

As the Commission and Egyptian authorities negotiate Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) to regulate the disbursement of EU funds to Egypt up to 2027, we urge the European Commission, Council and Parliament to ensure that:

- 1) The MoUs lay out a **roadmap for structural reforms**, with public, clear, specific and timebound indicators, targets and benchmarks for Egypt to meet its **human rights obligations**.
- 2) Egyptian authorities immediately and unconditionally release all those **detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their human rights including the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly**.
- 3) Egyptian authorities **open civic and political space**, by respecting the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, including before, during and after the 2025 parliamentary elections.

If these steps are met the EU’s macro-financial assistance will contribute to concrete and lasting progress on human rights and the rule of law in Egypt, which is indispensable to ensure transparency and accountability, end impunity and help prevent the recurrence of economic crises in the country. Failing to set human rights benchmarks would instead be a blank check for further abuses and repression in Egypt.

## **Signatories**

Amnesty International

Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE)

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Committee for Justice

Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF)

Egyptian Front for Human Rights (EFHR)

Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)

Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)

EgyptWide for Human Rights

EuroMed Rights

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Human Rights Watch

Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)

Minority Rights Group

Refugees Platform In Egypt (RPE)

Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)