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SITUATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN EGYPT

Legal and political challenges of human rights NGOs
before and after the 2011 revolution

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Abstract

In the context of global concern for diminishing civil society space, this study examines the situation of civil society in Egypt which has witnessed political instability since the ouster of Hosni Mubarak. The aim of this research is to assess the legal and political challenges of human rights NGOs before and after the 2011 revolution. Instead of providing an exhaustive retrospect on Mubarak's thirty-year presidency, the main objective of the research is to clarify the current and future situation of human rights NGOs in Egypt. The interdisciplinary methodology includes the legal analysis of the association Law 84 of 2002 and other related laws, practical examples, and interviews with human rights NGO professionals in Cairo.

The thesis concludes that the legal challenges for human rights NGOs have stayed rather consistent since Mubarak's presidency until today as the Law 84 of 2002 on associations has remained unamended. In addition, the human rights NGOs have continued to encounter similar interferences particularly by the national security forces before and after the 2011 revolution. However, in the post-Mubarak period, the political rhetoric and interventions against human rights NGOs has strengthened, thus, the organisations and their employees are threatened to be stigmatised as terrorists or foreign agents. Furthermore, other laws in the post-Mubarak era such as the new Protest Law have increasingly restricted the freedom of civil society. Moreover, Egypt's future under the new President el-Sisi does not seem to bring legal or political reforms for more allowing civil society environment.

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