



Home Office
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COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS

EGYPT

4 APRIL 2007

RDS-IND
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION SERVICE

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1. Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information (COI) Key Documents has been produced by Research, Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. It provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The COI Key Documents includes information available up to 28 March 2007.
- ii The COI Key Documents is an indexed list of key reports, papers and articles produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. It does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy.
- iii For Home Office users, the COI Key Documents provides direct electronic access to each source referred to in the document, via a link on the source numbers in the index and list of sources. For the benefit of external users, the relevant web link has also been included, together with the date that the link was accessed.
- iv As noted above, the documents identified concentrate mainly on human rights issues. By way of introduction, brief background information on Egypt is also provided. Please note, this background material is not intended to provide a summary of the material contained in the key documents listed.
- v This COI Key Documents and the documents listed are publicly disclosable.
- vi Any comments regarding this COI Key Documents or suggestions for additional documents are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

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by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

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2. Background information on Egypt

Full Country Name: The Arab Republic of Egypt

Area: 997,739 Sq. Km

Population: 70.5 million (2004)

Capital City: Cairo (population - 16.7million)

People: Eastern Hamitic (Egyptians, Bedouins, and Berbers) (99%); Greek, Nubian, Armenian, other European (primarily Italian and French) (1%)

Languages: Arabic (official), English and French widely understood

Religion(s): Muslim (mostly Sunni) (90%), Coptic Christian (9%) and other (1%)

Currency: 1 Egyptian Pound = 100 piasters

Major political parties: National Democratic Party (ruling party), Wafd Party, Tagammu and Party

Government: Republic

Head of State: President Mohammed Hosni MUBARAK (since October 1981)

Prime Minister/Premier: Dr Ahmed Nazif (since July 2004)

Foreign Minister: Mr Ahmed Aboul Gheit (since July 2004)

(Information extracted from the FCO Country Profile, 9 February 2007) [2]

GEOGRAPHY

“Egypt is the centre of the Arab world, geographically, culturally and intellectually. It sits on the Mediterranean coast of North Africa, with Libya to the west, Sudan to the south and Israel and the Red Sea to the East. Egypt forms the only land bridge between Africa and the remainder of the Eastern Hemisphere and controls the Suez Canal, the shortest sea link between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. The climate is mainly dry but along the Mediterranean coast there are winter rains. Temperatures are comfortable in the winter but summer temperatures are very high. Gebel Katarina at 2642m is Egypt's highest point. (FCO Country Profile, 9 February 2007) [2]

RECENT HISTORY

“An Anglo-Egyptian treaty of alliance was signed in 1936. It recognised Egypt's full independence and introduced a phased withdrawal of British forces. Despite this, and the installation of an Egyptian royal family descending from the sultans, the British military presence and influence remained, the final British troops leaving the Suez Canal zone in 1956. Nationalism and defeat in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war discredited the monarchy, and on 23 July 1952 the Free Officers seized power in a coup d'etat. The King abdicated. The following year, General Muhammad Neguib was proclaimed President of the new republic.” (FCO Country Profile, 9 February 2007) [2]

“In 1954, Neguib was replaced as president by Gamal Abd Al-Nasser. A popular vote affirmed this in 1956. Under his presidency, Egypt recognised Sudanese independence; Israel, Britain and France launched a tripartite attack (the Suez War); Egypt and Syria enjoyed a short-lived union, the United Arab Republic (1958-61); and following the June 1967 War, the Sinai Peninsula was occupied by Israel. Yet Nasser was the object of popular adulation across the entire Arab world, and his death in 1970 sent shockwaves far beyond Egypt's borders.” (FCO Country Profile, 9 February 2007) [2]

“Nasser's successor, Anwar Al-Sadat presided over the expulsion of Soviet military advisers (1972); the October 1973 War, which represented a partial triumph for Egypt; improved relations with the USA; economic infitah (opening up); and peace with Israel following US-brokered talks at Camp David. The latter prompted Egypt's expulsion from the Arab League and complicated Sadat's already ambivalent relations with domestic

opponents: on 6 October 1981, militant Islamists assassinated him at a military parade.” (FCO Country Profile, 9 February 2007) [2]

“Following the assassination of Sadat, Vice-President Hosni Mubarak was appointed president, a post he occupies to this day. Mubarak oversaw the return of Egypt to the Arab League in 1991, following over a decade of isolation. During this time, Egypt had joined the international coalition, which drove Iraqi occupation forces out of Kuwait, and since then, Mubarak's Egypt has played a pivotal role in the Middle East Peace Process.” (FCO Country Profile, 9 February 2007) [2]

RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

President Hosni Mubarak “... gained a fifth consecutive term in presidential elections in September 2005. The poll was the the *[sic]* first under a new system which allows multiple candidates to stand. In previous elections Egyptians voted yes or no for a single candidate appointed by parliament. However, the only opposition organisation which has broad public support, the Muslim Brotherhood, is banned from open political activity and could not field a candidate.” (BBC Country Profile, 28 March 2007) [28a] In November 2006, “President Mubarak promises democratic and constitutional reform in an address to parliament. Opponents are sceptical.” (BBC Timeline, 28 March 2007) [28b] The same month sees an “Upsurge in arrests of Muslim Brotherhood members.” (BBC Timeline, 28 March 2007) [28b] In March 2007, a “Referendum on constitutional amendments. The authorities say 76% of voters approve changes, opposition groups say the poll was rigged.” (BBC Timeline, 28 March 2007) [28b]

ECONOMY

“A dynamic business sector provides prosperity and opportunities for a small part of the population. But the majority of people depend on traditional agriculture, on poorly paid Government employment, or on scratching a living in the large informal economy. With the population still growing at close to 2% a year, economic growth in recent years has been well below the long-term target of circa 7% per annum and sufficient to provide only a slow improvement in average incomes: there is still a lot of unemployment and poverty, especially in Upper Egypt. Subsidies on basic foods provide a socially important safety net.” (FCO Country Profile, 9 February 2007) [2]

“Ahmed Nazif's government is considered liberal and business orientated, and the new economic team of Youssef Boutros Ghali at Finance, Rashid Mohamed Rashid at Foreign Trade and Industry and Mahmoud Mohieddin at Investment are widely seen as the most reformist and competent yet. ... But in a sign that economic policy will continue to be constrained by social issues, another of the Government's priorities is preserving the social safety net. Public sector reform and the reduction of subsidies are proving difficult nettles to grasp.” (FCO Country Profile, 9 February 2007) [2]

GDP: \$82bn (2003)

GDP per head: \$1220 (2003)

Annual growth (real GDP, 1999-2004): 3.9%

Inflation (consumer price index, Q4 2004/Q4 2003): 11.9%

Major Industries: Agriculture, Manufacturing, Services

Major trading partners 2002: Exports - US (18%), Italy (14%), UK (8%). Imports - US (16%), Germany (8%), Italy (6%), France (6%), China (5%)

(Original sources: World Bank, IMF (IFS, DOTS))

(Information extracted from the FCO Country Profile, 9 February 2007) [4a]

Exchange Rate: British £1 = 11.34 Egyptian Pound, US \$1 = 5.76 Egyptian Pound, as of 23 March 2007. (Oanda.com FXConverter, 23 March 2007) [27a-27b]

HUMAN RIGHTS

“Egypt’s witnessed its [*sic*] most transparent and competitive presidential and legislative elections in more than half a century and an increasingly unbridled public debate on the country’s political future in 2005. Limited reforms promulgated by the government of President Hosni Mubarak did not allow for sweeping political change, however, while the arrest and prosecution of Egypt’s leading secular liberal opposition leader was a stark reminder that the government has not forsworn arbitrary and ruthless suppression of dissent.” (FH Freedom in the World 2006) [13a]

“Hundreds of members of the banned Muslim Brothers organization were arrested [during 2005]; scores of them remained held awaiting trial at the end of the year [2005]. Thousands of suspected supporters of banned Islamist groups, including possible prisoners of conscience, remained in detention without charge or trial; some had been held for years.” (AI Annual Report 2006) [11a] “In November 2005 the government responded to the Muslim Brotherhood’s strong showing in the first round of national elections with extensive irregularities and violence by police and ruling party vigilantes in the subsequent two rounds. It renewed its crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood in March 2006, arresting at least 792 members of the banned organization over the following six months.” (HRW World Report 2007) [12] “Peaceful demonstrations calling for political reform were violently dispersed [during 2005]. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continued to operate under a restrictive law introduced in 2002.” (AI Annual Report 2006) [11a]

“Ninety people were killed and more than 100 injured in bomb attacks in Cairo in April [2005] and Sharm el-Sheikh in July [2005]. Scores of people were arrested in connection with the attacks and at least 14 people, including several police officers, were killed in shoot-outs between police and alleged suspects.” (AI Annual Report 2006) [11a] “After the first attack, in which car bombers struck the resort town of Taba in October 2004, authorities carried out mass arbitrary arrests, detaining 3,000 people for questioning; more than 100 of them remained in detention without charge at this writing. A devastating series of bombings in Sharm al-Shaikh in July 2005 was followed by another spate of mass arrests.” (HRW World Report 2007) [12]

“In April 2006, the government renewed emergency rule for an additional two years, providing a continued basis for arbitrary detention and trials before military and state security courts. Torture at the hands of security forces remains a serious problem.” (HRW World Report 2007) [12] “Deaths in custody were reported. In the majority of torture cases, the perpetrators were not brought to justice. At least two people were sentenced to death; no executions were known to have taken place.” (AI Annual Report 2006) [11a]

“The government’s respect for human rights remained poor [in 2006], and serious abuses continued in many areas. These included limitations on the right of citizens to change their government; a state of emergency, in place almost continuously since 1967; torture and abuse of prisoners and detainees; poor conditions in prisons and detention centers; impunity; arbitrary arrest and detention, including prolonged pretrial detention; executive branch limits on an independent judiciary; denial of fair public trial and lack of due process; political prisoners and detainees; restrictions on civil liberties – freedoms of speech and press, including internet freedom; assembly and association; some restrictions on religious freedom; corruption and lack of transparency; some restrictions on NGOs; and discrimination and violence against women, including female genital mutilation.” (USSD Report on Human Rights Practices 2006) [6b]

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3. Index to key source documents

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KEY FACTS AND GEOGRAPHY	[1]	Europa World Online, Country Statistics (accessed on 8 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/ (<i>Subscription</i>)
	[1]	Europa World Online, Location, Climate, Language, Religion, Flag, Capital (accessed on 8 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/ (<i>Subscription</i>)
	[2]	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile: Egypt, last reviewed 9 February 2007 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1018535850786
	[3]	United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World fact book: Egypt, last updated 15 March 2007 https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/eg.html
	[6a]	United States Department of State (USSD) Background Note: Egypt, August 2006 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm
	[6b]	USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Egypt, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78851.htm
	[28a]	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Country Profile: Egypt updated 22 January 2007 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/737642.stm
MAP	[4]	United Nations Cartographic Section (UNCS): Egypt, January 2004 http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/egypt.pdf
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	[2]	FCO Country Profile: Egypt, last reviewed 9 February 2007 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1018535850786
	[3]	CIA World fact book: Egypt, last updated 15 March 2007 https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/eg.html
	[6a]	USSD Background Note: Egypt, August 2006 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm
	[6b]	USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Egypt, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78851.htm
	[13a]	Freedom House (FH) Freedom in the World 2006: Egypt http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2006&country=6956
	[28a]	BBC Country Profile: Egypt, updated 22 January 2007 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/737642.stm

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	[2]	FCO Country Profile: Egypt, last reviewed 9 February 2007 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCou ntryProfile&aid=1018535850786
	[5]	Constitution of Egypt, 1971 http://www.egypt.gov.eg/english/laws/constitution/index.asp
	[6a]	USSD Background Note: Egypt, August 2006 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm
	[6b]	USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Egypt, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78851.htm
	[7]	Jane's Information Group (Jane's) Country Profile: Egypt, last updated 22 February 2007 http://sentinel.janes.com/docs/sentinel/NAFRS_country.jsp?Prod Name=NAFRS&Sent Country=Egypt& (<i>Subscription</i>)
	[8a]	United Nations Development Programme – Human Development Report (UNDP-HDR) 2006: Egypt Fact sheet http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/country_fact_s heets/cty_fs_EGY.html
	[8b]	United Nations Development Programme – Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (UNDP-POGAR): Egypt in Brief, undated http://www.undp-pogar.org/countries/country.asp?cid=5
	[9a]	Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU): Information on the Majlis Al Chaab (People's Assembly), undated http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2097.htm
	[9b]	IPU: Information on the Majlis Ash-Shura (Advisory Council), undated http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2374.htm
	[11a]	Amnesty International (AI) Annual Report 2006 http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/egy-summary-eng
	[12]	Human Rights Watch (HRW) World Report 2007: Egypt http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/egypt14701.htm
	[13a]	FH Freedom in the World 2006: Egypt http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2006&country=6956
	[13c]	FH Countries at the Crossroads 2005: Egypt http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&edition=2&ccrpage=8&ccrcountry=84
	[23]	The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) Press Statement (3): Results of the Monitoring of the Public Referendum over the Constitutional Amendments, 26 March 2007 http://www.eohr.org/press/2007/pr0326-2.shtml

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	[6b]	USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Egypt, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78851.htm
CHILDREN	[1]	Europa World Online, Education (accessed on 8 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/ (<i>Subscription</i>)
	[6b]	USSD Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Egypt, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78851.htm
	[6f]	USSD Trafficking in People Report: Egypt, 5 June 2006 http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65988.htm
	[18]	Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSC) Global Report 2004 http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=942
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	[20]	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Unions' Rights 2006 http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991223875&Language=EN
ETHNIC GROUPS	[1]	Europa World Online, (accessed on 8 March 2007) http://www.europaworld.com/pub/ (<i>Subscription</i>)
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	[14]	Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Attacks on the Press 2006: Egypt http://www.cpj.org/attacks06/mideast06/egy06.html
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