

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN EGYPT - HOW CAN SWEDEN MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The following recommendations have been developed by Operation 1325 with support from the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR).

SITUATION ANALYSIS

- Egypt is an important regional actor and engaged in several on-going peace processes and could thereby play an instrumental part in pushing for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the region.
- Although women's participation in politics has increased significantly since 2012, women still only make up 25 % of Government and 15 % in Parliament.
- Egypt suffers from high levels of gender-based violence, including sexual abuse and harassment against women, with 70 % of Egyptian men admitted to sexual harassment.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN SHORT

- Support Egypt to strengthen Women, Peace and Security within its regional leadership.
- Increase Egyptian women's participation in politics.
- Prevent gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

SUPPORT EGYPT TO STRENGTHEN WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY WITHIN ITS REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

Egypt is a significant geopolitical actor and is currently engaged in several on-going peace processes, such as the Israeli-Palestinian and current Libyan conflict. Egypt could thereby play an important role in furthering the Women, Peace and Security Agenda regionally. Egypt is also an important contributor to UN peace keeping missions and could increase women's participation in peace keeping missions and ensure that all personnel receive training on UNSCR 1325 and the importance of preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. Egypt has furthermore recently announced that it will develop its first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which could present a good opportunity for Egypt to take regional responsibility for the Women Peace and Security Agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should continue to support initiatives which engage with conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the region and enable local civil society to contribute to increasing women's participation in peace processes through advocacy and research.
- Sweden should advocate that the UN, in line with UNSCR 1325, actively engages with Egypt regarding the recruitment of women peace keeping personnel and that all deployed personnel receives in-depth training on UNSCR 1325 and the importance of preventing abuse and sexual exploitation.
- Sweden should advocate that the EU and UN encourages Egypt to take an active regional role in regard to UNSCR 1325, and that the forthcoming Egyptian National Action Plan for Women Peace and Security, includes references to women's meaningful participation in regional peace processes.



Operation 1325 is a Swedish civil society organization working for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325. Founded by several Swedish women's and peace organizations in 2003, the organizations objective is to increase women's influence at all levels of peace processes and in conflict resolution.

The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) is an independent non-governmental organization dedicated to improving women's status in Egypt and the Arab region.

INCREASE EGYPTIAN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Women's participation in Egyptian politics has increased significantly since the Arab Spring in 2012 and the introduction of a constitutional clause which reserves 25 % of all seats in local councils to women and the first women governor being appointed in 2017. However, women's political participation still remains low with 25 % women in Government and 15 % in Parliament. One of the barriers to increasing women's participation in politics is women's low participation in the labor market, which currently stands at 24.7 % , and thereby results in women lacking economic independence. Egyptian law, furthermore, forbids women from taking jobs in certain sectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should advocate that the EU, in line with the third pillar the EU Gender Action Plan concerning women's participation in decision making, uses its position to encourage the Egyptian Government to actively increase women's political participation on national and local level.
- Sweden should provide support to women's civil society networks to lobby for higher participation of women in politics, particularly in regard to the inclusion of young women, in line with UNSCR 2250.
- Sweden and the EU should in diplomatic dialogue advocate for a repeal of Decree No. 155 of 2003 which hinders Egyptian women from being employed in certain sectors and the removal of legal and practical barriers to women's formal employment.

PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

While the Egyptian Government adopted a law in 2014 which criminalizes sexual harassment, the law has been poorly implemented. High levels of sexual harassment persist. According to a study done by UN Women and Promundo in 2017, more than 60 per cent of men reported having sexually harassed a woman or girl. Women's rights activists who have criticized the poor implementation, including the activist Amal Fathy, have faced legal reprisal for their criticism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should offer to provide gender training to Egyptian law enforcement actors involved in investigating and interrogation procedures related to cases of violent crimes or harassment against women.
- Sweden should increase support to Egyptian civil society organizations and contribute to raising their capacity to assess and monitor women's access to justice and organize advocacy campaigns for legislative reform in regard to domestic abuse.
- Sweden should support and provide legal assistance to Egyptian women's rights activists. In light of this, Sweden should publicly condemn the prolonged pre-trial detention of women activists.



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