

INŠPIRUJTE SA TÝMTO LISTOM ALEBO NAPIŠTE VLASTNÝ LIST ÚRADOM A POŠLITE HO MAILOM ALEBO POŠTOU NAJNESKÔR DO 14. AUGUSTA.

Minister of Interior

Ministry of Interior; 25, El Sheikh Rihan Street; Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
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Dear Minister,

I am gravely concerned about the arbitrary arrests and detention of Sudanese nationals in Egypt solely for their migration status, and their forced returns to Sudan, where an internal armed conflict has raged since April 2023. These unlawful deportations are taking place without individualized risk assessments or the possibility to claim asylum. Tens of thousands of undocumented Sudanese refugees, including those awaiting appointments with UNCHR, also risk of arbitrary detention, and forced return to Sudan.

Since September 2023, Egyptian police and Border Guard Forces have been carrying out mass arrests of Sudanese refugees based on their migration status, with UNHCR reporting the deportation of at least 3,000 people that month alone. Since September 2023, police, mainly in plain clothes, have been conducting mass identity checks targeting Black people in Cairo and Giza, arresting those found without valid identity documents or residence permits. In Aswan governorate, Sudanese refugees are vulnerable to arrest while travelling in or boarding buses, in the streets of the city of Aswan and its outskirts, in remote areas bordering Sudan and in public hospitals when receiving treatment for injuries sustained during road accidents on their journey from Sudan to Egypt. Those arrested are subsequently detained in police stations, riot police camps, and other makeshift facilities such as warehouses and stables inside military sites across the governorate for periods ranging from a few days to six weeks, before being forcibly deported. Detainees are subjected to cruel and inhuman detention conditions, including overcrowding and lack of sanitation and adequate food, and denied access to healthcare.

The mass arrests and expulsions are happening after the Prime Minister issued a decree, on 29 August 2023, requiring all foreign nationals in Egypt to regularize their status through Egyptian sponsors and payment of fines. This is also taking place amid rising racist and xenophobic speech in traditional and social media and statements by top officials on Egypt's economic burden of hosting refugees.

I urge you to immediately halt all collective expulsions to Sudan and respect the principle of non-refoulement by not transferring anyone to a place like Sudan where they would be at real risk of serious human rights violations. I also urge you to end the arbitrary arrest and detention of Sudanese nationals solely based on their migration status; and immediately release all those arbitrarily detained. Pending their release, ensure that they are held in conditions in line with the international standards on the treatment of prisoners, and have access to their families, lawyers, and any medical care they might require.