



# **The Road to the Gallows**

A Descriptive Statistical Report on the Death Sentences Database 2023

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## **Introduction**

At the end of 2021, the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) launched its first monitoring report titled "No Turning Back," aiming to shed light on death penalty cases issued by Egyptian courts of various levels, from the referral of papers to the Mufti to execution, covering the period from August 2020 to August 2021.

This descriptive statistical monitoring report continues the efforts of previous monitoring work, covering death penalty cases at various stages, from the referral of papers to the Mufti to execution, from January 2023 to December 2023.

This report reveals the trend of expanding the issuance of death sentences during the aforementioned period, highlighting the relationship between financial and social conditions and the justice system, especially in criminal cases, which poses a real danger to society. The research team observed that killings driven by financial needs (e.g., theft) ranked second among the reasons for premeditated murder, following revenge motives.

ECRF believes that justice is the most effective way to contain society and protect its rights and freedoms. This report emphasizes that the death penalty should be aligned with and even employed within the framework of true justice, which ECRF advocates. The data presented in this report reflect a significant deviation from justice, evidenced by the connection between crime, punishment, and social indicators.

The research team found that during the monitored period, 454 death sentences were issued, including 124 referrals to the Mufti, 297 first-degree death sentences, 25 confirmations of death sentences by the Court of Cassation, and 8 executions. These numbers indicate a strong correlation between the application of the death penalty and social and legal factors. The following pages present the monitoring and statistical outcomes conducted by the research team.

## **Methodology of the Report**

This research relies on data verification and monitoring conducted by the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) during the period from January to December 2023, within the framework of opposing the death penalty. ECRF's monitoring methodology is based on three primary sources:

1. Media and press coverage of news related to the death penalty, whether referring to death sentences or the potential issuance of such sentences, serves as a key indicator for the referral of papers to the Mufti.
2. Direct monitoring of criminal court sessions across several Egyptian governorates, focusing particularly on premeditated murder cases. This includes direct communication with defense attorneys and families of the accused.
3. Coverage of various entities involved in death penalty cases, including final and confirmed death sentences issued by the Egyptian Court of Cassation and executed death sentences during the specified period.

The data was verified and cross-checked with multiple sources to ensure accuracy. The research team used various methods, including media archives and online platforms, to obtain electronic copies of judgments. Direct communication with lawyers and families of the convicted individuals was also employed to update case data.

## **Research Challenges**

The research team met many challenges and difficulties during the monitoring and auditing process. Most notably, there is no official monitoring by any judicial or executive body of the exact numbers of sentences handed down by the criminal courts at the provincial level; The Panel should therefore have activated various research mechanisms to access the most accurate data in the light of available information. report, with daily media monitoring of news reported by a

journalist of crimes in which defendants face death sentences.

The research team also encountered difficulty in auditing press releases, especially since press news does not contain full data on the facts and causes of the case. and usually, the case number or names of the accused are not mentioned, in most cases, only the first letters of the names or the whereabouts of the incident are indicated. which constitutes a greater burden in the process of information gathering and auditing, It may sometimes have come to the discovery by the research team of fabricated news solved from old news. or inconsistent information by confusing a referral order with a death sentence, Press coverage is not aimed at monitoring and accuracy as much as it is interested in delivering the news. So we found that there are many provinces from which news is rarely covered, This reflects the correspondents' coverage and does not necessarily reflect the absence of executions in these governorates.

Some news also monitors the transfer of an accused to the mufti of the Republic and does not refer to the death sentence or not at the next hearing, The order is subject to the possibility of covering the hearings from lawyers, which poses another challenge for the research group in confirming the investigated referral orders and did not indicate news of the execution decision. as well as lack of evidence that may help access official data. The Research Group therefore preferred to adhere to a more reliable methodology for ascertaining the authenticity of the press news first by delivering it in more than one major newspaper, and to ascertain official data if available, but does not include referral provisions that did not find news of the death sentence hearing, and merely stand at the point of reliability of the referral decision.

### **Statistics and Analysis of Death Sentences from January to December 2023**

The following tables and charts present the statistical data and analysis for death sentences issued in 2023:

#### **Table 1: Death Sentences by Month (January - December 2023)**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Referrals Mufti</b>	<b>to First-Degree Sentences</b>	<b>Cassation Confirmations</b>	<b>Executions</b>
January	10	25	3	0
February	8	22	2	1
March	12	28	4	0
April	9	24	3	0
May	11	30	2	1
June	10	27	4	1
July	13	33	3	0
August	12	29	2	1
September	9	25	2	1
October	10	28	0	2
November	10	28	0	1
December	10	28	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>8</b>

### **Current Legal Status**

The current legal status of death penalty cases in Egypt involves a multi-stage judicial process. The following outlines the key stages:

1. **Referral to the Mufti:** This is the initial step where the court refers the case to the Grand Mufti of Egypt for a religious opinion on the death sentence. This step is not binding but is a formal requirement.
2. **First-Degree Sentences:** After receiving the Mufti's opinion, the court issues its verdict. If a death sentence is confirmed, it becomes a first-degree sentence.
3. **Court of Cassation:** Convicted individuals have the right to appeal their sentences to the Court of Cassation. This court reviews the legal aspects of the case and can confirm, annul, or order a retrial.
4. **Execution:** Once all legal avenues have been exhausted, and if the death sentence is confirmed, it proceeds to the execution phase.

The following table summarizes the legal status of death penalty cases as of the end of December 2023:

**Table 2: Legal Status of Death Penalty Cases (as of December 2023)**

<b>Legal Status</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>
Referrals to Mufti	124
First-Degree Sentences	297
Cassation Confirmations	25
Executions	8

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### **Types of Crimes Leading to the Gallows**

The types of crimes that result in death sentences in Egypt can be broadly categorized into:

1. **Premeditated Murder:** This is the most common crime leading to death sentences. It includes murders that are planned and executed with intent.
2. **Terrorism-Related Crimes:** These include acts of terrorism that result in loss of life and are aimed at destabilizing the state.
3. **Drug-Related Crimes:** Involving large-scale drug trafficking operations that are linked to organized crime syndicates.
4. **Other Crimes:** This category includes crimes such as kidnapping resulting in death, rape resulting in death, and armed robbery resulting in death.

**Table 3: Types of Crimes Leading to Death Sentences (2023)**

<b>Type of Crime</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>
Premeditated Murder	211
Terrorism-Related Crimes	112
Drug-Related Crimes	75
Other Crimes	56

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### **Reasons for Premeditated Murder**

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The reasons for premeditated murder are varied and often complex. The following outlines the primary motivations identified:

1. **Revenge:** Personal vendettas and family feuds are a significant cause of premeditated murders.
2. **Financial Gain:** Murders committed during robberies or for insurance payouts.
3. **Jealousy:** Crimes of passion where the perpetrator is driven by jealousy.
4. **Other:** Includes a variety of other motives such as mental illness, disputes over property, etc.

**Table 4: Reasons for Premeditated Murder (2023)**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>
Revenge	88
Financial Gain	54
Jealousy	42
Other	27

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### **Geographic Distribution of Death Sentences**

Death sentences in Egypt are not evenly distributed across the country. The following table provides a breakdown of death sentences by governorate:

**Table 5: Death Sentences by Governorate (2023)**

<b>Governorate</b>	<b>Number of Death Sentences</b>
Cairo	78
Giza	62
Alexandria	45
Qalyubia	40

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<b>Governorate</b>	<b>Number of Death Sentences</b>
Asyut	35
Sharqia	33
Dakahlia	30
Other Governorates	131

## **Chart 2: Geographic Distribution of Death Sentences**

(Include corresponding pie chart here)

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## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of this report highlight a concerning trend in the application of the death penalty in Egypt. The data indicates that social and financial factors significantly influence the issuance of death sentences. The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) makes the following recommendations:

1. **Judicial Reform:** Implement comprehensive judicial reforms to ensure fair trials and adherence to due process.
2. **Social Support Programs:** Establish programs to address the underlying social and economic issues that lead to crime.
3. **Moratorium on Executions:** Call for a moratorium on executions while reforms are being implemented and reviewed.
4. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Increase public awareness about the implications of the death penalty and promote alternatives to capital punishment.
5. **International Collaboration:** Engage with international human rights organizations to adopt best criminal justice and human rights practices.

The ECRF remains committed to advocating for the rights and freedoms of individuals and ensuring that justice prevails in all cases.

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