

20th Session of the Working Group of the UPR

UPR of Egypt

Statement by A u s t r i a

Austria welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of Egypt to the UPR and thanks them for the submission of their national report.

Austria acknowledges the considerable challenges Egypt is faced with at the moment. However, the response to these must not come at the cost of human rights. Respect for diversity of opinion and of the role of civil society will help to make progress truly sustainable.

Austria is concerned about the legal framework that strongly restricts the freedom of assembly, leading to harassment and arrests of peaceful protesters and human rights defenders. We are alarmed at the imprisonment of journalists on spurious charges. We also have serious concerns regarding death sentences and long prison sentences against hundreds of political opponents, with disregard to universally accepted procedural guarantees.

We are concerned about excessive use of force by security agents, in particular the events that occurred in the context of the Rabaa and Nahda sit-ins, and we are worried about a lack of accountability in this context. We hope the report of the official fact-finding commission on these events will be delivered soon.

Austria would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Modify Law 107/2013 (on the Right to Public Meetings), bringing it in line with international standards
2. Urgently review the Presidential decree expanding the role of military courts with a view to ensuring fair trial guarantees and limiting the jurisdiction of military courts
3. Enact an NGO Law that allows international and national human rights NGOs to operate without interference in line with international standards
4. Release and drop charges against all journalists and media workers arrested in the context of performing their duties
5. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against torture

I thank you.