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EVALUATION REPORT

UDF-EGY-09-388– Enlarging the Social Base for Democracy and the Rule of Law in Egypt

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Disclaimer
The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) Background

This project ran from 1 April 2011 – 30 April 2013, with a total grant of USD 250,000. It was implemented by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS). The target population consisted of Egyptian young persons involved in civil society organizations and political parties, with a geographical focus on Upper Egypt. The context was the period of feverish political activity and instability following the Revolution, including repression of civil society organisations and democracy advocates. Special emphasis was given to training in the use of social media to stimulate citizen journalism and free exchange of thoughts. The three key outcomes identified in the Project Document were:

- Increasing the capacity of young activists and Egyptians working in NGOs to understand, analyze, and engage in two specific areas: democratic participation / electoral processes and marginalized political groups.
- Providing local activists and NGOs in Upper Egypt, a neglected area, with training tailored to local needs.
- Providing networking possibilities through participation in workshops, training sessions, and conferences.

(ii) Assessment of the project

The project was **relevant** in several dimensions – (i) in view of the youth focus which was well supported by baseline assessments presented in the Project Document that identified low youth participation in democratic processes, (ii) in view of the high-energy political environment following the Revolution and elections that were upcoming at the time of project implementation, and (iii) in its focus on social media, the catalyst of the Arab Spring. The project focused mostly on Upper Egypt, a region in which civil society has been relatively neglected by democracy supporters.

Relevance, as well as effectiveness and impact, were bolstered by the generally good quality of the workshops implemented, although participants interviewed stated that the level and quantity of material presented was too great for the (already substantial) duration of the workshops. The grantee CIHRS is a well-established pro-democracy NGO with a network that is both broad and deep. This allowed it to recruit high-quality trainers and facilitators. A relatively high proportion of participants were already in the broad CIHRS network, suggested by alumni of CIHRS' long-running summer program on human rights. This presented both advantages (in effectiveness) and possible disadvantages (in terms of impact). To some extent, the project supported capacity already in place rather than expanding the base for democracy support at a time of great repression.

The security situation, including violence in Cairo and travel disruptions between Cairo and Upper Egypt, led to a number of changes in planned activities. The changes in planned activities implemented were reasonable and represented a flexible response. However, for example, while the project achieved good gender balance, the degree to which women could participate was limited by difficulties experienced in traveling. The project responses to

unexpected problems in security were reasonable and effective, but were ad hoc in nature rather than based on any risk assessment and management strategy to be found in the Project Document. Particularly since the project was designed with an elections schedule in mind, the risk of delays and disruptions might have been foreseen.

Efficiency was assessed as globally satisfactory. The expenditure on workshops was in line with the number of participants, the duration of the trainings, and the quality of the trainers and facilitators hired. It may be debatable whether workshops were the best use of scarce resources in Egypt at the time, but it would likely have been difficult to implement any activity more directly contributing to democracy in Egypt at this tense time. The proposal was a strong one and represented a chance for UNDEF to support a sound, well networked partner (one with which it had worked before, as well) at a crucial point in time.

While the grantee has provided some percentages purporting to show **impact** at the individual level, such as greater likelihood of voting and adherence to a political party, no information was provided on how these were estimated and, as presumably self-reported, they must be taken with a grain of salt. Moreover, while interviews with beneficiaries identified some impacts at the individual level, these must be placed in the context of the overall political situation in Egypt, marked by lack of civic engagement and distrust of political institutions and processes. Nonetheless, there were several advocacy campaigns organized by workshop participants. Subjects were chosen in a participatory process involving participants from each participating city and included one aimed at reducing sexual harassment in Asiyut and another to give farmers access to clean water in Beni Suef. Both of these achieved national media attention. In Luxor, a public health campaign resulted in improvements in the local hospital and project participants lobbied public officials for the development of tourism. Led by a lawyer, beneficiaries designed a draft Law on Municipal Elections, but the fate of this draft is unknown

With impact difficult to estimate, it is somewhat hard to reach a judgment on **sustainability**. While the emphasis on social media was sensible, government repression of social media was also on the rise, in addition to which, access to the internet and mobile telephony turned out to be difficult in Upper Egypt. The project seems to have been thought as a component of a broader program rather than a project standing on its own, meaning that even if outputs were of high quality; there was little chance for continuity except as part of an overall program. Some participants have joined NGOs (especially in Cairo, where civil society is most active) while some have done little with their training. Perhaps not surprising, some evidence indicates that human rights activists have more effectively used their training than have political activists.

UNDEF **added value** in financing this project. Under the repressive conditions in Egypt at the time of implementation, it had become virtually impossible for bilateral democracy supporters to operate and supporters not explicitly bilateral but closely identified with foreign interests (e.g., Open Society Foundations, OSF, and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, EIDHR) were regarded with deep suspicion. Civil society was under attack. The fact that UNDEF, as a UN agency, was able to intervene under the radar of government stands, together with the ingenuity of the grantee, as a tribute to UNDEF's ability to work in difficult countries under adverse circumstances.

(iii) Conclusions

- This project provides evidence that **it is possible to implement a high-quality project even in a context of feverish political change and insecurity**. The reasons that the project was successful were that the grantee had excellent capacity and that UNDEF was flexible, thanks in part to the relationship of trust that had already developed with the grantee through an international Arab Spring workshop previously implemented. Ultimately, the guarantor of project success was the quality of the grantee. This conclusion derives from findings on relevance and effectiveness.

- A practical conclusion has to do with project implementation. There has for some time been a justifiable premium placed on extending democracy support beyond capital-based elites. This can lead to organizational and logistical problems. In this case, while the travel of women was admittedly impaired, **it proved sensible to bring people from the regions to the capital rather than trying to export activities from the capital to the regions.** This conclusion derives from findings on effectiveness and related risk assessment.

- The project underscored that, **in projects based in part on an elections calendar, delays and security problems are not unlikely**. The responses in this case were more ad hoc and after the fact than they were the result of a risk assessment and contingency response plan. This results from the finding on effectiveness.

- As a well-established NGO, CIHRS management of funds and budgeting appears to have been sound, and when consideration is taken of the level of training at the workshops, their duration, and the number of participants, there was reasonable value for money. The larger picture, however, is that during the period in question, the project supported democracy networks in a country where they were under severe pressure from a repressive government. It is not clear that an activity promoting democracy more directly than a series of training workshops would have been possible in Egypt at this time.

- It has been stated that there is some limited evidence of individual-level impact and some, weaker, of broader impact despite the challenging environment. This suggests that **a well-designed project can achieve results even in a fractured political landscape**. One of the successes of the project is that, at the workshop level, even groups comprised of very diverse and sometimes deeply opposed political interests were able to learn and work together. **While some groups in the Middle East may prove beyond the pale, a politically inclusive approach at the grass-roots level can succeed.** This conclusion is based on the findings relating to relevance, impact and sustainability.

- Despite the emphasis on social media and development of trainees' ICT skills, we found **no strong evidence that project beneficiaries are continuing to stay in touch or acquiring the I**CT skills required to proceed with robust advocacy campaigns as per the project's goals. More attention should have been paid to promoting post-workshop networks. Moreover, following the explosion of application in the Arab Spring, social media are proving to be **a mixed blessing. Government repression of opposition social media and use of social media for its own purposes has exploded worldwid**e, not just in

Europe. **While social media can leverage democratization efforts, they cannot substitute for the legal and constitutional work, watchdog monitoring, and other nuts-and-bolts activities that make civil society a catalyst for democracy.** In addition, the charm of social media should not obscure democracy supporters form the fact that access to internet and mobile telephony is often expensive and slow outside the capital.

- While project effectiveness was enhanced by the fact that a significant number of workshop participants were effectively hand-selected through CIHRS' alumni network, this may have had a negative effect on project impact. Finally, a number of participants interviewed commented that the level and quantity of material presented was high relative to the workshops' (already substantial) duration. These observations arise from our consideration of impact and effectiveness.

- CIHRS seems to have succeeded in widely publicizing project activities in the media, including on-line media. On its own website, some activities are easily found, but many are not, so that the project becomes somewhat lost in the broad range of CIHRS activities. Moreover, none of summaries of workshops contain photographs of activities as they were carried out, a major communications gap. This conclusion derives from findings on relevance and sustainability

(iv) Recommendations

- It is now over 18 months since the project mid-point. With about 400 persons having participated in trainings and workshops, this ***would be a good time to do a follow-up survey of beneficiaries*** to ascertain what their subsequent activities have been and how they have used the training received. We based this on Conclusion (iii). Based on Conclusion (viii) it would be especially interesting to compare and contrast the impressions of participants selected via the two modalities.

- ***Again based on Conclusion (viii) the pros and cons of the application process should be evaluated***. Selecting the participants in the training workshops is crucial to project success CIHRS depended mainly on the network of alumni of its long-term summer school in order to recruit the trainees (participants); however, an approach more slated towards open call for proposals might make for higher impact. Such a process would need to build in enough time and oversight to procure top-notch applicants. The workshops, quoting from some interviewees, were- "very intensive" -and provided too much information to be grasped in such short time. Therefore, it is vital to dedicate sufficient time, and set a realistic workshop time frame, so the trainees are able to acquire the offered knowledge and allow adequate time to apply the workshop's skills in real-time and concrete exercises.

- The percentages quoted in the Final Narrative Report as evidence of impact were vague and impressionistic. Drawing on its long experience, ***CIHRS could invest effort in trying to devise individual-level indicators of impact, both qualitative and quantitative, that it can apply in future work.*** Open-ended exploratory questions might be more informative than quantitative self-assessment scales. In developing such a tool, CIHRS could benefit from the work of institutions such as National Endowment for Democracy

(NED) and OSFs which have attempted to develop holistic to impact assessment. We base this on Conclusion (iii).

- Two steps might improve sustainability. One is doing more to encourage continued contact between trainers, facilitators, and participants, which seems to have fallen off rapidly in most cases after project end. More emphasis on technical capacity building on how to use social media to pursue advocacy could also have strengthened sustainability and been included at the stage of project design. It is also desirable, in future, to expend greater effort in documenting workshop activities, especially visually through photos and videos, and posting these on the CIHRS website.

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

i. The project and evaluation objectives

This report contains the evaluation of the project entitled "Enlarging the Social Base for Democracy and Rule of Law in Egypt". The project ran from 1 April 2011 – 30 April 2013, a period of 25 months (the last of which represented a no-cost extension), with a total grant of USD 250,000 (out of which UNDEF retained USD 25,000 for monitoring and evaluation). Based in Cairo, the project was also active in Alexandria and Upper Egypt.

The project was designed and implemented by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS). As defined in the Project Document, the overall objective was to increase the capacity of young Egyptians working in NGOs to contribute in two areas: democratic participation /electoral processes and empowering politically marginalized groups. Specific areas of concern included training in democratic processes and constitutional law, (especially local governance) and, increasingly as the project proceeded, the use of social media to build an advocacy campaign. The project was judged appropriate because, when it was designed, elections were on the horizon. The target population consisted of NGO activists in Upper Egypt, a neglected region because most democracy-related assistance in Egypt has been concentrated in Lower Egypt. The preferred beneficiary age range was the twenties; in fact, however, there was considerable involvement of older persons, which became an issue for the project relevance. Particular attention was given to achieving gender balance (roughly 50%) and representing a plurality of political views.

UNDEF and Transtec have agreed on a framework governing the evaluation process, set out in the Operational Manual. According to the manual, the objective of the evaluation is to "undertake in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved".

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by an international expert, working with a national expert, under the terms of the framework agreement between UNDEF and Transtec. In accordance with the agreed process, the evaluation aimed to answer questions across the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of *relevance*, *effectiveness*, *efficiency*, *impact*, and *sustainability*, as well as the additional criterion of *UNDEF value added* (see Annex 1).

The evaluation took place from February – March 2014 with the fieldwork in Egypt conducted from 23-27 February. The evaluators reviewed available project documentation and contextual / background materials prior to going to the field (Annex 2). Project staff interviews and a final debriefing were held at CIHRS's Cairo office. Project beneficiaries, i.e. NGO activists who had participated in workshops organized under the project, were interviewed in the CIHRS office or by Skype / telephone. The interview schedule was set by the CIHRS program officers with some support from the Transtec local expert. It included

workshop participants, trainers, facilitators, CIHRS program officers, and CIHRS senior management past and present. CIHRS advised that security considerations made travel to Upper Egypt inadvisable, basing their view not only on the still-unsettled situation at the time of the evaluation but on the security problems that had led to revision of planned project activities and travel difficulties during the project. The experts were able to contact a number of beneficiaries in Upper Egypt through Skype / telephone. All things considered, it is not believed that staying in Cairo seriously impeded the evaluation, although visits to NGO offices in the south would have given a more accurate picture of their capacity.

(iii) Development context

Egypt has been one of the gravest disappointments experienced by the global democracy movement. The popular dissatisfaction which forced out the corrupt authoritarian regime of Hosni Mubarek in early 2011 was followed by the election of a Muslim Brotherhood-dominated government many of whose policies were inconsistent with liberal democracy and hostile to groups such as women and religious minorities. Worse, when the government proved incapable of governing, it was overthrown by a military coup, whose leaders then arranged an election that fell far short if international standards. Egypt has become the leading example of what American democracy expert Thomas Carrothers has called "pushback": resistance to the liberal democratic political model in general and, in particular, the harassment of pro-democracy advocates, including international donors and NGOs. In Egypt, international NGO staff was subjected to criminal prosecution and offices were shut down. A favorite weapon of repression has been the freezing of NGO bank accounts, making it impossible for them to operate. The government actively promotes the view that international NGOs are foreign implantations and that national organizations working with them are serving foreign interests to the detriment of Egypt. While there are pockets of resistance, the scale and sophistication of repression of pro-democracy forces is unprecedented. CIHRS senior staff characterized the situation for democracy and human rights advocates at the time of the project, and evaluation, as more difficult than anything they had experienced in the past (see Annex 5 for a recent report from the French press).

The project implementation period was turbulent, being characterized by two regime changes – from Mubarek to the Muslim Brotherhood and from the Islamist government to a military junta – and two popular uprisings. The political mood was volatile, often changing from month to month. On the third anniversary of the revolution, over 100 persons were killed in street demonstrations, leading to widespread outrage even among regime supporters.

The project's focus on youth marked a strategic decision. Frustrated young persons were the catalyst for the "Arab Spring" which reached Cairo in early 2011 One-third of the Egyptian population is aged 18-35 and baseline data (from surveys conducted by the Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies) presented in the Project Document revealed that political participation of youth is low. Decades of anemic economic growth and heavy-handed labor market policies have slowed the growth of employment opportunities. At the same time, education, in particular higher education, has been expanded, partly just to absorb large numbers of unemployed young persons. Quality has deteriorated and employers complain of skills mismatch, with many graduates not able to write a business letter or plan a simple project.

A development of importance that helped to inform project strategy has been the explosion of social media. According to CIHRS management, social media have effectively broken down the state monopoly on information and given ordinary citizens the ability to think and disseminate their thoughts. It has become a major force for correcting misinformation in the mainstream media and inspired a new generation of citizen journalists able to identify local problems, report on them, and advocate for change. While suffering from the digital divide between major cities and hinterlands, it has enormously facilitated communication between geographically dispersed groups. This has been of special importance in Egypt, where Upper Egypt has traditionally lagged in development behind the North. At the same time, the expansion of social media has been matched by redoubled government efforts to control it. This has taken the form both of repression that has greatly impaired freedom of opinion and increased use of social media by government for its own purposes. As stated in the project Final Narrative Report, Reporters Without Borders has characterized Egypt as one of the ten most internet-repressed countries in the world.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

(i) Project strategy and approach

Quoting the Project Document, the overall objective was stated as to empower young Egyptian human rights defenders and youth activists in order to increase their involvement in political dialogue and debate during the upcoming election period. The intervention proposed was an integrated education and media initiative in which participants would be simultaneously trained in human rights strategy, the use of new media technologies, and advocacy for increased involvement in political dialogue.

Specifically, the project aimed to

(1) Increase the capacity of young activists and Egyptians working in NGOs to understand, analyze, and engage in two specific areas: democratic participation / electoral processes and marginalized political groups.

(2) Provide local activists and NGOs in Upper Egypt, a neglected area, with training tailored to local needs.

(3) Provide networking possibilities through participation in workshops, training sessions, and conferences.

The project proposed the main following activities/ouputs:

(1) Two workshops on democratic participation in Cairo and one in Upper Egypt (approximately 30 participants apiece, 5 days, training in new media, electoral processes, civil and political rights).

(2) One workshop in Cairo and one in Upper Egypt on marginalized political groups (approximately. 30 participants, 5 days, training on stifling of dissent and freedom of association)

(3) Three workshops in Upper Egypt to address the lack of attention to activists and NGOs in this region, themes to be developed according to self-assessed needs.

(4) Follow-up conference in Upper Egypt (30 participants, 2 days)

(5) Final conference Cairo (60 participants, 1 day)

(6) Dissemination of training materials and final conference report

Workshop sites in Upper Egypt were Aswan, Luxor, Fayoum, Beni Suef, Assiut and Minya.

With its extensive experience both in Egypt and the region in training young persons in democracy and human rights and elections upcoming, it was felt that the workshops could significantly encourage youth participation, both as activists and candidates.

(ii) Logical framework

The Project Document translates CIHRS's programmatic approach into a structured plan of project activities and intended outcomes, including the achievement of the project's overall and specific objectives. The framework below aims to capture the project logic.

Project Activities	Intended Outcomes	Medium-term impacts	Long-term development objective
Promote democratic participation, political engagement and electoral awareness			
• **2 workshops (Both in Cairo in July 2011 and October 2011) with total number of 75 participants, most of them were from Upper Egypt.**	-Strengthening participants' capacities in terms of new media, electoral processes, Egyptian and international civil and political rights.	Developing a cadre of well-prepared and active candidates for the next elections within the transitional process. Educating youth trainees on democracy through country-comparatives approach (Latin American and East European countries).	Strengthen democratic participation of young persons, thereby bolstering the legitimacy of democratic processes and institutions.
Develop the awareness on political marginalization and freedom of expression			
• **2 workshops (one in Cairo in December 2011, and 1 in Fayoum in January 2012) with total number of 56 participants.**	-Training and debate on marginalized political groups and social network actual role in the current political situation.	Increased youth awareness in terms of the political marginalized and segregated groups and reducing attendants' apathy in regard to the political accountability.	
Enhance engagement in the State's local bodies and promote the good governance concept			
• **3 workshops (Minya, Beni suif and Assiut during September 2012) with a total average participants of 120 trainees in the three governorates.**	-Training on human rights covenants' history and the State's political entities, in addition to a thorough training on municipalities.	Establishing a platform for more knowledgeable activists and political leaders.	
Training on political and religious diversity			
• **4 workshops in Fayoum, Aswan, Luxor and Cairo (September, November 2012 and, Jan 2013) with average attendants of 100 total participants.**	-Training on how to develop advocacy campaigns with a focus on the local governance accountability tools and mechanisms.	Launching effective local lobbying and advocacy campaigns on governorates level.	
Final project conference			
• **One conference for final showcasing and recap (April 2013).**	-Conference to review the conducted campaigns and forming the draft law on local municipalities.	Drafting a law on local municipalities to be submitted to the next elected parliament. Analyzing the conducted advocacy campaigns to avoid the possible deficiencies.	

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) Relevance

The project implementation period was marked by constant political uncertainty and turbulence, which naturally had an impact on the project. Project workshops were characterized by heated discussions of military trials of civilians, violation of minority political rights, and the constitutional and political system, all subjects highly relevant to the Egyptian political situation.

Political Timeline

A breakdown of the key events that occurred simultaneously during the project and affected the timeline thereof:

- Feb 2011: Mubarak steps down after 18 days of protest that spilled out from Cairo's Tahrir square.
- March 2011: Military crushes new protests and many protesters arrested.
- October 2011: Military crushes Christian minority protesters at Maspero-midtown.
- November 2011: Muslim Brotherhood sweeps the parliamentary elections after six-week process that results in an overwhelming victory for Islamist parties
- May 2012: Presidential elections begin June 2012: Military grabs more power The day before the presidential runoff election, the military, acting on a ruling by the Supreme Court, shuts down the parliament
- June 2012: MB Presidential candidate sworn in as President.
- August 2012: The president orders top generals of SCAF to be retired. At The time, He chose Gen. Abdul Fattah el-Sisi, as his defense minister.
- November 2012: Islamists drafted the new constitution.
- December 2012: Egyptians march to the Presidential Palace calling for the President to quit his position.
- Jan 2013: Protests return to Tahrir square protesting against Morsi and reject what they perceive as abuse of power.
- July 2013: Military removes Morsi from his office.

Essential to relevance was proper selection and preparation of trainees; this is also discussed further below under Impact. Participant selection was especially difficult in remote areas of Upper Egypt. Given the vulnerability of women's rights and the rights of minorities such as Christians, Nubians, and Bahai under the Islamist government, reaching out to these groups was particularly important to achieving relevance. The project scored good marks on diversity of participants. For example, it aimed at a 50-50 sex ratio and achieved it. Travel by female workshop participants was sometimes difficult, but the project coped with this challenge on an ad hoc basis. The choice to focus on Upper Egypt was appropriate as this is an under-served region, however, some beneficiaries expressed doubts about how familiar their trainers were with the local context. Holding workshops in Upper Egypt also facilitated the participation of some women who would have found it difficult to travel to Cairo. Several female participants from Upper Egypt were unable to attend the end-of-project conference in Cairo.

While the emphasis was on young persons, mostly in the 20s, practical factors meant that the effective cut-off age was 35, leaving room for considerable divergence of interests and perceptions among participants. In some groups, as reported by a number of beneficiaries

interviewed, age differences presented a challenge to achieving relevance.

Not surprising given the hothouse atmosphere of post-Arab Spring Egypt and the project goal of achieving pluralism, participants held a wide range of political views, ranging from Salafist (from the more progressive wing of the movement) to Western liberal. Conflicts were common and had to be dealt with by workshop facilitators. In general, the diversity of participants – and their degree of toleration for each other – was highest in Cairo. In some governorates, as reported by beneficiaries, participants tended to know each other and political dividing lines and disputes were well established. There were effectively no Muslim Brotherhood participants. Some trainees were well attuned to politics (a few had been Members of the dissolved Parliament) while others were political novices. All were university graduates and had had at least some involvement in social movements. Organizers' views were that the human rights activists, focused on advocacy, were well selected while political activists, focused on elections, were less so. A difference could be seen between some human rights advocates, with no interest in partisan politics, and political party members. Applicant selection was, of course, not always successful. One attendee interviewed frankly stated that the training was not very relevant to her, but that she had been in the habit of attending donor-finance workshops since University and had been contacted by a friend at an NGO in her municipality.

The emphasis on social media was particularly appreciated by the beneficiaries interviewed and, as the project proceeded, social media were given growing attention in response to beneficiary wishes. This is a mark in favor of project flexibility. However, it needs to be remembered that mobile telephones and internet access are expensive and that downloading and uploading are very slow in many places. A number of beneficiaries mentioned internet constraints as a downside factor. Many places do not have wireless internet access. It was necessary to use cloud storage, not a cost-effective approach.

(ii) Effectiveness

Effectiveness was enhanced by the fact that CIHRS, founded in 1993 as a study / training center and having added advocacy to its activities in 2005, was an exceptionally strong partner, as well as one well-known to UNDEF through past collaborations. It seeks to ground human rights in Arab culture and politics and publishes the only human rights journal in Arabic. CIHRS has long had a strategic focus on youth, and specifically on training the next generation of civil society leaders.

Political Marginalization in Egypt workshop - Fayoum City, Jan 27 - Feb 1, 2012

The CIHRS staff member responsible for the project has been at CIHRS since 2005 and speaks English with native fluency. CIHRS is engaged with the Human Rights Centre in Geneva, has contact with the European Commission, and has been involved holistically in the region, e.g. Darfour and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It is at ease with donors, having received support in the past from the

Open Society Foundations, the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, and a range of bilateral donors – Swedish SIDA, the Norwegians, the Dutch, the Finns, and AusAid. Significantly missing from this list is USAID, an agency which it looks upon with suspicion.

As described in the project Final Narrative Report, a number of activities had to be curtailed or moved due to the security situation in Upper Egypt and transport disruptions between Cairo and Upper Egypt which affected both beneficiaries / participants and trainers / staff. It was agreed in the Launch Note to this evaluation that not every change would not be assessed, as these have been described and justified in detail in the Final Narrative Report, but rather that the larger question of whether the project responded to challenges flexibly would be considered.

The accompanying table summarizes activities actually implemented. CIHRS originally proposed to hold two Cairo conferences, one for 30 participants from Upper Egypt and one for 60 participants from the entire country. After consultation with UNDEF (and in response to street disturbances in and around Tahrir Square), CIHRS allocated the funds for the first activity to holding workshops in Fayoum, Asyut, Cairo, and Sohaj. The second activity hosted 80-90 persons who had participated in the trainings and lasted two days instead of the originally planned three to facilitate the attendance of participants from Upper Egypt. Due to security concerns, the second workshop on marginalized groups was moved from Upper

Project Activities: a Summary

Activity	Notes
2 workshops on democratic participation, both in Cairo, one for participants from Upper Egypt.	Curriculum covered new media, electoral processes, Egyptian and international civil and political rights, Egyptian Law on Political Rights and Electoral Law. 35 and 22 participants, respectively, 5 days.
2 workshops on marginalized political groups in Cairo and Upper Egypt	Curriculum developed by human rights program officers in consultation with trainers and members of target groups in CIHRS' NGO network. 20 and 36 participants, respectively, 6 days.
Workshops in Minya, Beni Suef, and Assiut	Following a needs assessment mission, it was determined that emphasis should be placed on enabling human rights activists in Upper Egypt to better report on human rights violations to Cairo-based NGOs. Average of 46 participants apiece; 5days
Additional training in Fayoum, Aswan, and Luxor; 1 training for marginalized groups in Cairo	Implemented curricula previously developed. Average of 37 participants apiece; 5 days.
Final project conference, Cairo	Three components: • Groups formed at each preceding workshop in order to design and implement advocacy campaigns presented their work. • Current municipal electoral law presented • Discussions facilitated by a lawyer on proposals for a draft future municipal elections law. 45 participants, mostly from Upper Egypt. 2 days
Dissemination	All workshop material – lectures and working group recommendations -- was posted online. Participants had already received hard copy during workshops.

Egypt to Cairo, with CIHRS covering participants' travel costs. Political unrest caused delay in the fourth workshop on marginalized groups.

All of these, and other changes, were reasonable responses to the difficult circumstances during the implementation period and CIHRS deserves high marks for having essentially delivered the promised package during turbulent times. The net result is that, having been originally envisaged to operate in three governates, due to high demand it ended up carrying out workshops in nine. Project staff's own self-assessment is that this widening was one of the marks of project success.

Workshops were run by trainers – most but not all from outside CIHRS – and facilitators who were mostly CIHRS alumni. Many workshops were 5 or 6 days in length, allowing a substantial amount of material to be covered in depth. Beneficiaries interviewed were largely satisfied with the quality of the training they had received, although some were of the view that the amount of material presented was excessive for the time available to absorb it. The accompanying box gives an idea of the volume of material presented in the first workshop. Quality control included distributing questionnaires to participants after every workshop and review of the suggestions made. Trainers were debriefed by senior CIHRS staff.

(iii) Efficiency[1]

Project management was entrusted to two Human Rights Education Program Officers working under the supervision of the Director and Deputy Director. Mid-project the two were replaced by a single program officer in the context of normal staff turnover. Administrative matters were handled by CIHRS back office staff. Reporting was excellent. Of the USD 225,000 available USD 217,000 was spent, an acceptable figure. USD 160,000 of this, about 65 percent, was allocated to workshop costs. A total of about 400 persons received training, suggesting reasonable value for money. The cost of $400 per participant must be balanced against the fact that many workshops were 5 or 6 days in length. The level of material presented was relatively high and the trainers and facilitators employed were experienced. A question that may be posed (for relevance as well as efficiency) is whether a project consisting entirely of workshops was the best use of resources in Egypt at this time. This can be debated, but the political and security context needs to be kept in mind – a workshop-based project was probably the most effective way of injecting a significant amount of support into the democracy community, serving to maintain existing networks and support capacity in place, in a way that would not attract unwanted attention.

(iv) Impact

In a country in political crisis such as Egypt, it is unreasonable to expect a macro-level impact from a few days of training. More relevant is the question of how much impact the trainings have had at the level of individuals. At this level, the turbulence of the implementation period had mixed effects. As reported by both trainers, beneficiaries, and senior project staff, while unsettled conditions raised major challenges for implementation, they also increased the level of engagement of the workshop participants.

[1] Quantitative assessments made in this section are based on the total amount of project expenditure, which excludes the budget amount reserved for evaluation by UNDEF.

Essential to impact was proper selection of the trainees. This seems in general to have been adequate, but both trainees and trainers stressed the length of time and degree of oversight required to recruit the right participants and prepare them for the training. As one participant in the fourth Fayoum workshop put it, “There is a real need to assess the participants prior to the implementation of the project and the workshops to be held.” The trainee selection process was a combination of targeted recruitment and open call. The open call was issued over the CIHRS website and through other usual avenues of dissemination (e.g. partner NGO websites, newspapers). In addition, CIHRS contacted political parties, political youth groups, university journalism departments, and NGOs to solicit recommendations. In effect, the project reached out first to alumni of its well-established summer school on human rights in order to identify potential participants. The application process for these persons was relatively simple, whereas persons applying under the open call had to fill out a detailed questionnaire and were subjected to a relatively demanding selection process. One result of selection was that a significant proportion of trainees were already embedded in democracy networks. While supporting existing networks was not out of place at the time, and keeping in mind that the level of material presented in trainings was high, the project still might have benefitted from casting its net wider, assuming that the need for careful candidate selection described above could be met. The general assessment of one facilitator was that human rights advocates were better-selected than political activists.

Trainers were selected from the CIHRS database (as opposed, for example, to via an open call, again an instance of supporting an existing network). Trainers expressed the view that 25 was a maximum number of workshop participants for high-quality training. While most trainees were involved in the areas covered by the workshops, inevitably the application process failed to weed out some whose activities were not in line with the training provided (an instance of this was described above). This was a problem not only for impact, but for relevance.

The grantee reports, in the Final Narrative Report, that the rate of voter participation among workshop participants, 40% before the project, rose to 100% and that, whereas 18% of participants belonged to a political party before participating in the project, 50% had joined one following the project and the proportion becoming active in campaigning and advocacy rose from 10% to 55%. All of these numbers obviously have to be taken with a grain of salt, because the FNR does not stipulate how they were estimated or checked. They do, however, probably indicate a higher rate of political participation as a result of the project. This is some evidence of impact at the original level.

Impact beyond the direct beneficiaries was limited by the overall weakness of civic engagement and the absence of an educated or politically aware electorate. Most citizens have never participated in a fair and open election. At the time of the project, municipal councils had been abolished by the military government and some 50,000 municipal councilors dismissed. The training delivered general information on municipal governance, which permitted lawyers among the trainees to draft a law on municipalities. At the time of the field mission, this had not yet been submitted to Parliament. However, participants received training on how municipalities work and how to campaign for municipal office. One participant in his twenties interviewed stated that he planned to use his new-found knowledge of municipal governance to run for office on a liberal party ticket.

The project was designed with upcoming elections in mind, but these were delayed and, when they took place, were deeply marred by irregularities. While this was entirely beyond the control of the project implementation team, it had negative effects on impact as well as sustainability. We pose the question, above, whether the project should have had a better risk assessment and management strategy to deal with political risks and the security situation.

A major component of the project was advocacy campaigns that emerged from the workshops. Workshop participants were asked to come up with ideas for local problem campaigns / solutions to advocate for, these to be presented at the final project conference. The idea was that, out of 6-8 promising ideas in each governate, one would be selected, based on discussions and mutual agreement, to be implemented in one municipality with the support of others. In some governates, beneficiaries found it hard to agree on what campaigns they would support. However, being compelled to work together to arrive at commonly agreed goals was one means by which conflicts between participants with widely varying political views were defused. In Minya, the area selected for action was health, in Sohaj homelessness, in Beni Suif persons with disabilities. In Aswan, where most participants were politically involved, there was agreement to defer selection of an area in which to advocate until municipal elections were scheduled. In Fayoum, it proved impossible for workshop participants to find agreement on what are to work on. Many participants were reported to have no time because they were out of university and working. Age differences sometimes played out in discussion of campaigns. Among women, for example younger participants were enthusiastic about IT-intensive ideas while older ones were more likely to focus on issue of sexual harassment.

Information on the success of advocacy campaigns organized in the context of the workshops is mostly lacking. The campaign against sexual harassment in Assiut and the campaign for farmers' access to clean water in Beni Suef received national media attention. Some information on two project-related advocacy campaigns in Luxor is given in the accompanying box.

The project was highly successful in publicizing its activities through local and national media, including over the internet, and provided UNDEF with full media coverage report. A number (albeit not all) of project workshops were reported on CIHRS' excellent webpage. However, there was a tendency for the UNDEF-sponsored workshops to be mixed in with the entire range of CIHRS events, lectures, and workshops – a dedicated section of the web page would have given the project higher profile.

(v) Sustainability

The original intention was to develop materials available on line to facilitate access, however, most materials were in fact developed in printed form. Training manuals were in the form of books, and sustainability would have been better served if these had been distributed in memory devices or in an online-accessible web page. Moreover, when the project ended, contact between trainers and trainees ceased. Some beneficiaries wished that there had been more follow-up supervision of the advocacy campaigns decided on. However, trainers did make an effort to direct trainees towards NGOs where they could

apply their skills. There were several success stories in which trainees went to work for NGOs, especially in Cairo where civil society is concentrated. The ex-project manager (and trainer) reported that some trainees are now working with her in the area of psychological counseling for victims of torture. Project purpose would have been better served if there had been more matching of trainees to NGOs in Upper Egypt continuing

As would be expected, there was some attrition at individual level. One beneficiary interviewed had subsequently become a teacher, was no longer involved in human rights, and had no practical interest in being a political candidate.

After each workshop and in each governate, a Facebook page was set up to allow participants to keep in touch with each other and plan the advocacy campaigns that they had decided on. Only one other grant participant interviewed said, however, that while she kept in touch with fellow participants via Facebook, this was on a purely personal basis. The grantee reported the rate of post-workshop networking at 70 percent without explaining precisely what this means.

Impact related project outcome
Luxor Governorate

The project's stakeholders and beneficiaries, both trainers and trainees in Luxor, used the techniques and skills obtained during the workshops held within the framework on the project to develop two change-making interventions in their governorate, in response to the challenges they are facing on daily base. The below participatory experiential interventions were:

1- Health focused campaign.

Almost 20 trainees along with two volunteer trainers have been working together to launch a campaign in order to improve the health-care standard provided in Esna Public Hospital. They managed to create an online and offline advocacy campaign and lobby the Hospital administration to respond to the local needs and improve the standard of care provided, in addition to recruiting more physicians to care for child patients. The project was successful, given the fact that the hospital managed to increase the staff members in the relevant unit while adding one significant piece of diagnostic equipment based on the calls of project volunteers.

2- Tourism Promotion Campaign

The trainers and more than 23 trainees related to the project, rallied in May 2014, in response to the appointment of MB governor in Luxor. They called for a change in the tourism policies in the governorate, as being one of the main income generation sources in the city. They also demonstrated to express their full support to the tourism professionals and stressing the message that Luxor is a first class tourism destination in their pursuit to promote tourism in their city. They are seeking to maintain this event in order to mark it as "Luxor day of tourism".

(vi) UNDEF Value Added

It is fair to say that UNDEF added, in the sense of being able to provide support that other democracy supporters would have found difficult to deliver. At a point in time when bilateral support for democracy in Egypt was effectively being dismantled and EU support (e.g.,

EIDHR and the civil society components of the European Neighborhood Programme or ENP) was looked upon with suspicion, UNDEF was able to operate freely. The fact that it had a history of collaboration with the grantee, including organizing an international conference on the Arab Spring previously, made collaboration easy. The grantee expressed appreciation to UNDEF for having been flexible on funding staff costs and the requested changes in line with the rapidly evolving political and security situation were easily dealt with, partly because of UNDEF flexibility and partly because of the plausibility with which CIHRS made its case for adjustments.

V. CONCLUSIONS

i. Based on our assessments of relevance, effectiveness, and impact, **it is possible to implement a quality project even in a context of feverish political change and insecurity**. What were the ingredients of this success? First, the grantee was highly experienced and had excellent capacity. Second, UNDEF was flexible, thanks in part to the relationship of trust that had already developed with the grantee, and was able to operate in a way that bilateral and even supranational democracy supporters may not have been. It is also arguable that UNDEF, as a UN agency, had better access t Egypt.

ii. Based on the same criteria, **a well-designed democracy project can achieve results even in fractured political landscape**. One of the greatest challenges in supporting democratization in the Middle East and North Africa has been how to deal with Islamist parties whose idea of democracy is very different from the Western liberal model. While there are those who are clearly beyond the pale, this project shows that an inclusive approach at the grass-roots level can succeed. In a number of cases, alliances of conservative Salafist participants and Westernized liberal ones were able to join forces behind a shared purpose at the grassroots level.

iii. **Long-term follow-up needs to be improved if sustainable impacts are to be maximized**. Despite the Facebook pages put in place, there is little evidence that project beneficiaries broadly considered are continuing to interact with each other. This could have been foreseen at the project design stage. Some do continue to interact, but remember that some were selected based on the existing CIHRS network. The vague percentages cited in the Final Narrative Report as evidence of impact at the individual level are not very credible.

iv. Based on our findings for relevance, impact, and sustainability, **social media is an invaluable tool, but also needs to be assessed critically.** The world was riveted when the Arab Spring revealed youths outmaneuvering forces of repression with their Tweets, texts, blogs, and emails. But social media is content-neutral. In Egypt, as in countries such as China and Russia, social media have become a major disseminator of government mis-information. Repressive media laws have allowed governments to crack down on users of social media to choke off their activities. The message is that, while social media can leverage democratization efforts, they can also work to stifle it. Social media cannot substitute for the legal and constitutional work, watchdog monitoring, and other nuts-and-bolts activities that make civil society a catalyst for democracy. The internet, and mobile telephony, are means to an end, not ends in themselves. It is also ironic that, in a project whose thrust was based on social media and internet / mobile phone technology, poor access to those technologies should have been an issue, albeit apparently a rather minor one.

When a project is seeking to benefit people in an area **outside the capital, bringing**

participants to the capital can sometimes be more effective than on-site implementation, at least for some activities. There has understandably been a push to decentralize projects as much as possible, to reach under-served areas and benefit those outside capital-based elite circles. Sometimes, this can interfere with effectiveness and, in the final analysis, the project would have been better implemented if people from the region(s) had been brought to the capital. Admittedly, in Egypt, while the project generally did well on gender balance, travel to Cairo was impossible for some women.

v. **This project serves as a reminder that election schedules are notoriously subject to change.** Any project which anchors itself on preparation for a future e**lection is taking on substantial risk. While we assessed that the changes in activities implemented** were a good response to the emerging situation, the participation of women and minority groups was somewhat affected by security problems. A number of advocacy activities were delayed until elections had taken place.

vi. **Ultimately, the guarantor of project quality is the capacity of the grantee**. Few NGOs in Egypt would have had the depth, experience, or credibility required to implement this project successfully. This can be interpreted as a compliment to UNDEF for choosing its partners wisely; on the other hand, it also is evidence that, in many countries, especially those in political turmoil, the choice of partners is limited. UNDEF aims to give civil society voice to serve as a catalyst for democratic development, but the number of organizations with good potential to succeed in that role may be few. UNDEF prides itself on financing high-risk, potentially high value added projects, but there are practical and prudential limits to risk taking

vii. **While workshops were of high quality, two aspects give cause for concern**. One is that the two-pronged approach to applicant selection – one aimed at reaching out to members of CIHRS' network for nominations and one via an open call, with the first much more expedited than the second, may have enhanced project effectiveness while limiting impact. Note must also be taken of the view expressed by a number of interviewees that the level and quantity of material presented was high compared to the time available to absorb it.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. It is now some 18 months since the project mid-point. With about 400 persons having participated in trainings and workshops, this would be a good time to do a follow-up survey of beneficiaries to ascertain what their subsequent activities have been and how they have used the training received. We based this on Conclusion (iii).

ii. The percentages quoted as evidence of impact were vague and impressionistic. Drawing on its long experience, CIHRS could invest effort in trying to devise reasonable indicators of impact at individual level. Indicators used need not be all quantitative, in fact, open-ended exploratory questions might be more informative. In developing such a tool, CIHRS could benefit from the work of institutions such as NED and OSFs which have attempted to develop holistic approaches to impact assessment. We base this on Conclusions (iii) and (viii), the latter because it would be interesting to know the differing impacts on participants who came into the project via the two different routes.

iii. Based again on Conclusion (viii), the application process needs to be reviewed. Selecting the desired participants for the training workshops is crucial to project success. CIHRS depended in large part on the network of alumni from its long-term summer school in order to recruit the trainees (participants), however, the pros and cons of this approach versus an open call should be considered. .

iv. More attention needs to be paid to continuing communication between the trainers, facilitators and trainees. If CIHRS has managed to keep together a network of its summer school alumni, it must have the capacity to do the same for participants in a major workshop series. This could be combined with technical capacity building training to continue to strengthen youth beneficiaries' communication and advocacy skills after project close.

v. While CIHRS successfully promoted workshop activities through the press, including online media, only a limited subset of activities are documented on the CIHRS website, with the effect that they become lost in the large number of general CIHRS activities (workshops, lectures, seminars, report releases, etc.). For those that do appear on the website, more could have been done to document activities visually, through photos and videos posted online.

IX. ANNEXES
ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value-added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF‟ s comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

UNDEF

- Final Narrative Report
- Mid-Term/Annual Progress Report
- Project Document
- Milestone Verification Report

CIHRS

- Workshop agenda and manuals
- Final report, Workshop on Democracy and Elections for Egyptian Activists and Journalists, 2-10 July, 2011. Final Report. 2nd Workshop on Democracy and Elections for Egyptian Activists and Journalists, 4-8 October, 2011

OTHER SOURCES

- http://en.rsf.org/egypt.html
- http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/egypt.aspx
- http://www.mei.edu/content/secular-parties-egypts-political-landscape
- http://www.merip.org/mer/mer147/egyptian-political-parties
- https://www.fidh.org/International-Federation-for-Human-Rights/north-africa-middle-east/egypt/

ANNEX 3: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

Sunday February 23	
Samer Elshehawi	Facilitator
CIHRS Staff Group Meeting	
Sally Thoma,	Ex- Human Rights Education Program Officer - CIHRS Office
Kheloud Goma'a	Facilitator
Monday February 24	
Ziad El Elemy	Trainer
Mohamed Sameer Darwish	Participant in the 1st and 7th workshops
Nahla Soliman	Trainer in 1st and 2nd workshops
Sherine Michael (phone interview)	Participant in the 11th workshop in Luxor
Ibtisam Sha'ban (phone interview)	Participant in the 4th workshop, Fayoum
Tuesday February 25	
Bola Adel (Skype interview)	Participant in the 3rd and 9th workshops
Mohamed Ibrahim (Skype interview)	Participant in the 6th workshop in Minia
Ziad Abdel Tawab	Assistant Director, CIHRS
Ahmed El Gohary	Human Rights Education Program Officer, CIHRS
Wednesday February 26	
Ahmed Hamed	Participant in the 1st workshop and facilitator in the 2nd
Awny Ahmed (Phone interview)	Participant in the 7th workshop
Fady Maged (Phone interview)	Participant in the 8th workshop in Fayoum
CIHRS Staff Debriefing	

ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS

CIHRS	Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
HREPO	Human Rights Education Program Officer
NGO	Non governmental Organisation
OSF	Open Society Foundation
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Funds

ANNEX 5 – CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS "Le Monde"

Wosening Repression of NGOs in Egypt

Files are piling up on the desks of Egyptian NGOs. Since the repression against members of the Muslim Brotherhood broke out in the summer of 2013 only to spread to all dissident voices, the cases keep coming. This gigantic task is complicated by the constant threats against civil society.

However, concerning the November 10th deadline set for NGOs to register under the law of 2002, the Minister of Social Affairs Ghada Wali wishes to be conciliatory, promising to examine one by one the cases of NGOs registered under other laws before a new law is voted by the incoming Parliament of 2015.
"We would prefer to be registered as an NGO. That way we would pay less tax. The problem is that the regime wants to place us under the supervision of the Ministry, a political entity. It is a matter of principle," says Amr Abdulrahman of the Egyptian Initiative for Individual Rights (EIPR), registered as a limited corporation. The 2002 law, judged intrusive, does not respect the freedom of association, guaranteed in the Constitution. It gives the Ministry veto power over every project and grant, as well as the power to freeze the activities and assets of the NGO.

The EIPR and other NGOs demand a "serious and transparent dialogue" with the Minister, who has never met with them. They managed to come to common understanding with her predecessor Ahmed Al-Borai, but it was shelved. In June a new text was circulated which foresees placing Ministry employees in NGOs and forming a committee including members of the security forces to approve projects and grants. "The new law would be the end of the independence of NGOs and their transformation into governmental organizations. The EU would cut off financing. The goal is to prevent the development of an independent civil society," says a Western diplomat.

The threat posed by the ultimatum, as well as others circulated in the press, has come to reality for some NGOs. The Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary (ACIJLP), founded in 1996 as a group of lawyers, a consultant to the UN and the International Criminal Court, closed when it was refused registration on the grounds that its name implies that the judiciary is not independent.

Other groups have closed or moved their offices abroad. The precedent of December 2011 is on everyone's mind. Seventeen national and international NGOs, suspected of "conspiracy against the state" were the object of raids and judicial charges. The organizer of this campaign, Fayza Aboul Naga, was named national security counselor in November.

Some international NGOs, such as the Carter Foundation and Human Rights Watch, have ceased activities. Social sector organizations are questioning their future in view of the registration issue. Out of fifteen French NGOs, only one has gotten the green light from the Minister. "There is a level of suspicion and incomprehension, a complexity and opacity that one has rarely seen elsewhere," says a representative of one of these NGOs, preferring to remain anonymous in view of the sensitivity of the subject. Foreign donors, the main source of funding for national NGOs, feel threatened and are re-evaluating their activities. An amendment to the criminal code criminalizes direct or indirect receipt of foreign finance held to damage "national interest."
"The Egyptian press condemns hidden foreign grants seeking to destabilized the country. There is a general distrust of civil society," says the diplomat. The principal human rights NGOs are accused of receiving secret U.S. funds and their heads of being agents of the "Arab Spring." "In terms of repression, what we observe now is without precedent. Under Mubarket, we fought to broaden our space; now we fight to have one," concluded Bahai Eddin Hassan of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, established twenty years ago.

Hélène Sallon, Le Monde 28 November, 2014. (Translated L. MacKellar)