



[Human Rights Watch Details the Arbitrary Detainment of Sudanese Refugees and Asylum Seekers at the Hands of Egyptian Police](#)

Prominent global rights advocacy organization Human Rights Watch (HRW) has released a report detailing the troubling mistreatment of Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers at the hands of Egyptian police forces. The investigation found that at least 30 Sudanese refugees were arbitrarily arrested in 2 separate recent raids in December 2021 and January 2022. First-hand accounts by HRW uncovered that those detained were subjected to forced physical labor and abuse. Particularly concerning is the fact that these Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers fled their native country to escape violence at the hands of security forces, and are regrettably facing similar violations in Egypt as well. HRW highlighted how many of those targeted by El-Sisi regime authorities have also been active in protesting against discriminatory treatment and in solidarity with the pro-democracy movement taking place in Sudan – which has emerged in the aftermath of the recent October 2021 military coup there that derailed the democratic transition process in the country. HRW and other rights activists have called for accountability toward those responsible for the refugee mistreatment and abuse.

The individuals interviewed provided thorough accounts of the mistreatment they faced at the hands of police forces. One described how he was arrested by plainclothes police officers and driven to a secure facility, where he was then subjected to forced physical labor and beating. Following this, the police released him and others in the middle of the desert and they had to rely on the kindness of strangers to return home. “Refugees, like everyone else, have the right to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly,” said Joe Stork, the Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch. In light of the findings, Stork called on the Public Prosecutor to investigate and bring charges against the police authorities behind the human rights violations.

Unfortunately, the mistreatment of Sudanese refugees has become far too common under the repressive El-Sisi regime in Egypt. There have been multiple credible accounts of this in recent years. Sudanese refugees have described the circumstances which forced them to flee their native country and seek a safe haven in neighboring Egypt, and how it is therefore disheartening that they can face similar abuse there as well. Often times little to no effort is made by El-Sisi authorities to investigate disappearances and accusations of abuse. Additionally, Sudanese refugees may be subjected to unfair scapegoating for some of the economic woes in Egypt. All told, El-Sisi’s government has come under increasing scrutiny for human rights abuses, and the mistreatment of refugees is just one component and reason behind this.

There are an estimated 2 to 5 million Sudanese refugees in Egypt. A large majority of them have either fled the conflict in the Darfur region in northern Sudan or the repressive conditions that have worsened under the existing military coup. Sudan has currently slipped back under military rule despite a widespread and large-scale pro-democracy movement in the country.