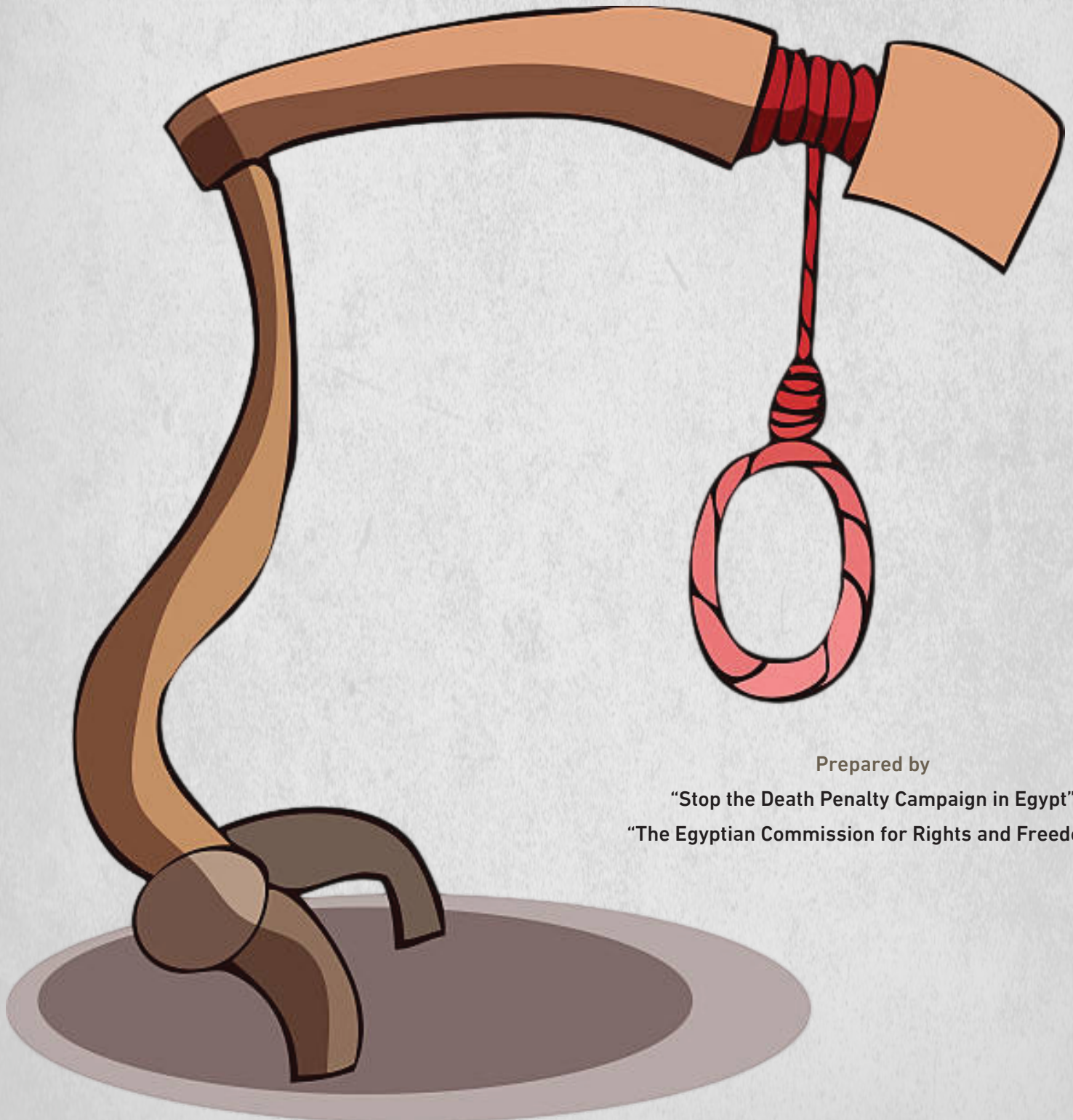


# The Road to the Gallows 4

A descriptive statistical report on the status of the death penalty during the year 2025



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## Introduction

For the third consecutive year, the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms continues issuing its annual monitoring report series entitled “The Road to the Gallows.” At the beginning of 2024, it issued its first report monitoring death sentences in Egypt during the time period of the year 2023, according to a monitoring methodology that takes into account the legal stages through which a death sentence passes, beginning with referral, then the court judgment, and ending with the confirmation of the ruling, and in some cases, execution. It then issued the second version to monitor the rulings in the first half of 2024, before issuing a comprehensive report covering both 2023 and 2024 to conduct a standard comparison between the two years.

The report covers the stages of the death penalty, as it monitors cases of referral to the Grand Mufti of the Republic, before the issuance of the death sentence, and the transition to the Court of Appeal stage, which was introduced beginning in 2024, then the confirmation of the ruling by the Court of Cassation, up to execution in some cases. Taking into account that the monitoring depends primarily on the defendant in a specific case as the basic unit for the monitoring itself, it also monitors the number of rulings monitored and announced according to the methodology of the report. Reference will be made to the total number of monitored rulings, in addition to focusing on the rulings in their context according to the case/defendant structure.

The current report monitors 541 cases of death sentences issued during the year 2025 from various criminal courts of different legal degrees, with their classification according to the current legal status. It also reveals the challenges associated with transparency of information in death penalty cases. The legal distribution of the rulings came as follows: 177 death sentences (first degree), which are the rulings issued by the criminal court after receiving the opinion of His Eminence the Mufti; 221 referrals to the Mufti (first degree), which are preliminary decisions before pronouncing the final ruling. Meanwhile, 25 confirmations of the death sentence became final, after the defendant exhausted all appeals before the Court of Cassation. As for the criminal appeals courts, the appellate circuits issued 78 death sentences (second degree), which are the rulings issued by the Court of Appeal after its adoption as a degree of litigation since January 2024 under Law No. 1 of 2024, while 20 referrals to the Mufti (second degree) were issued, which are decisions by the Court of Appeal before issuing the final ruling. Finally, 20 actual executions of the death sentence were carried out by the prison administration, consisting of 19 males, and one female who was executed together with two of her brothers.

During the past three years 2023, 2024, and 2025, the Stop the Death Penalty Campaign in Egypt has monitored and documented 1513 death sentences in their different legal stages, and this monitoring process resulted in three detailed databases supported by reliable sources, and they were reviewed according to the sources and tools available within the scope of the monitoring research governorates. It is worth mentioning that the previous year 2025 witnessed a noticeable rise compared with the years before it, whether in the number of death sentences issued in general by all judicial bodies, or even in the number of citizens against whom the sentence was carried out.

Thus, 541 cases faced death sentences during the year 25, while 509 citizens faced death sentences in the year 24, while during the year 23 the punishment was issued against 454 persons. At the level of executions, the past year witnessed the implementation of the punishment against 20 citizens; as for the year 24, the death penalty was implemented against 13 persons, while 8 individuals were executed during the year 23. The total number of death sentences in their different classifications in 2025 increased over 2024 by 32 cases, while the total rulings increased over 2023 by 87 cases. Meanwhile, the number of death sentences confirmed by the Court of Cassation reached 25 cases in 2023, 35 cases in 2024, and finally 25 cases in 2025. Finally, the implementation of the death penalty expanded to reach 20 cases in 2025, while it was 13 cases in 2024, compared with 8 cases in 2023.

This report comes within the context of the Stop the Death Penalty Campaign in Egypt, which pushes toward the abolition of the death penalty in general, especially in light of the great scale of violations to which the course of litigation in Egypt is subjected, whether within the procedures of arrest and bringing in, or inside places of detention, reaching the litigation stage itself, together with the effort to strengthen discourse around the extent of the justice of execution as a punishment, and its connection to the broader framework of criminal justice in its wider concept.



## Methodology of the report and research challenges

The methodology of this report depends on monitoring and analyzing the data related to the death penalty in Egypt during the year 2025, beginning from January until the end of December, within the framework of the Commission's effort to oppose the death penalty as one of the axes of its legal and human-rights working framework and vision.

The report relied on three main sources for collecting information: media coverage, following cases with the greatest likelihood of a death sentence, and direct interviews with lawyers of persons sentenced to death at different stages.

Media outlets covered a wide geographical area of rulings, while taking into consideration the effort exerted to verify the correctness of the news. Following murder cases enhanced a more precise understanding of the development of the stages of litigation, the number of sessions, and the status of those sentenced. Meanwhile, the methodology closest to credibility was the direct follow-up with lawyers, as this mechanism guaranteed greater access to information and a deeper understanding of the context of the case. On this basis, the monitoring methodology is integrated so as to make available wide geographical coverage and greater intensification in specific cases, and this methodology comes at a time when sufficient information about death sentences in Egypt is not available.

At the stage of verifying information, a review process was carried out through multiple mechanisms to guarantee accuracy and reliability, according to the nature of the sources. Thus, the correctness of journalistic news was verified by comparing it with multiple sources, instead of relying on a single source. Meanwhile, the electronic archive of more than ten Egyptian newspapers was consulted in order to follow media coverage and obtain electronic copies of judicial rulings from the available platforms. In addition, communication was made with lawyers, the families of the defendants, and journalists in order to obtain updated information about the cases.

The research team faced several challenges, most notably the absence of official statistics, as the judicial or executive authorities in Egypt do not issue accurate data about death sentences or the numbers of those upon whom the punishment was carried out, in addition to comprehensive data on criminal rulings in Egypt, which requires reliance on alternative investigative means.

The lack of details in journalistic coverage still represents a basic obstacle, as newspapers depend on cases that attract public attention, and they lack a mechanism for following criminal rulings, in addition to the absence of main information such as case numbers or the names of the defendants—which are anonymized.

It was also observed that there is confusion between the stages of litigation, as some news items included inaccurate information mixing the referral of defendants to the Mufti with the issuance of the death sentence, in addition to contradictions between rulings issued by the criminal court or the Court of Appeal, which required additional verification. It was also observed that some governorates witness limited journalistic coverage of criminal cases, which obstructs access to accurate data. The research team also discovered fabricated news or news republished without updating, which imposed an additional challenge in verifying its correctness.

To address these challenges, the research team relied on ensuring that the news was circulated in more than one reliable journalistic source, excluding referrals to the Mufti for which no later confirmation was found that they turned into a death sentence, or those that do not contain complete data reinforcing the credibility of the news, and focusing on data verified by lawyers and the families of the defendants in the absence of official sources.

The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms believes that the figures contained in this report represent one aspect of reality, and do not represent the complete picture, due to the lack of official statistics. Despite the challenges, the team adhered to the highest possible degree of accuracy and verification in order to ensure the reliability of the data contained in this report.



# Counting and analyzing death sentences in the time period

## from January 2025 to the end of December 2025

### Structure of monitoring in the report

The research team monitored the issuance of 541 cases of death sentences during the year 2025, and the figure indicates the issuance of one of the death sentence decision represented in referral, first-degree judgment, second-degree judgment, confirmation, or execution, on the basis that the primary unit of monitoring means one defendant in a specific case. On this basis, the issuance of two death sentences against the same defendant means two death sentences, and the issuance of death sentences against defendants in the same case means many rulings according to the number of defendants. Meanwhile, updating the status of the ruling does not here mean an increase in the number, such as when a defendant is referred to the Mufti and then a first-degree death sentence is issued; in that case, it is not added to the number of death sentences.

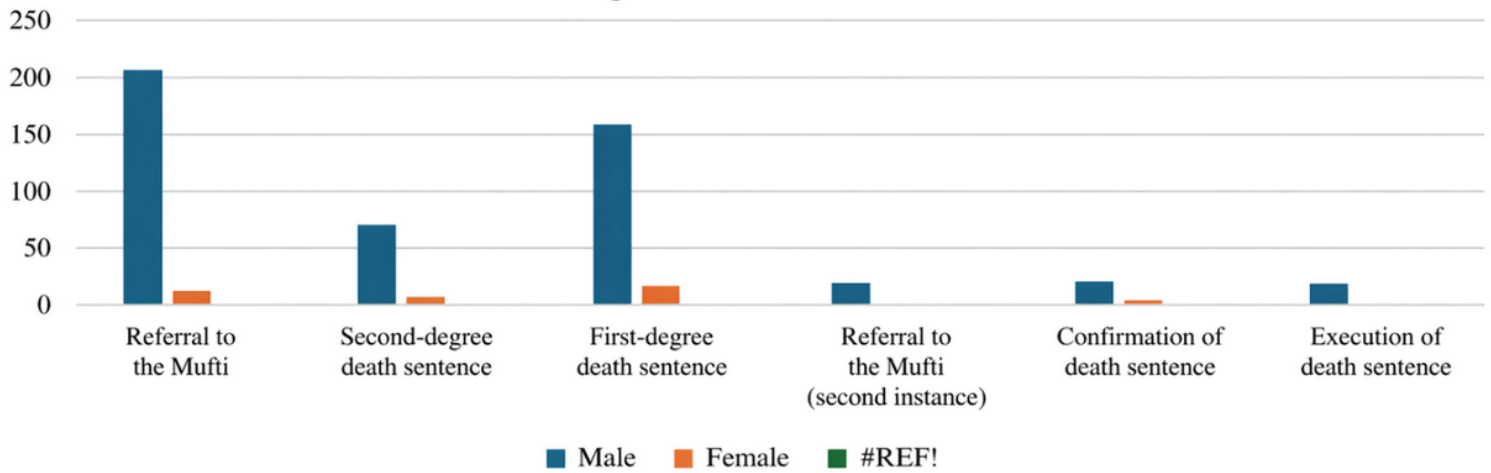
### The latest legal status in the monitoring

The following table shows the number of defendants according to the current legal status at which the monitoring stopped, while including categories related to rulings of referral of the papers to the Grand Mufti of the Republic, in addition to death sentences issued by the Courts of Appeal under the classification of second-degree death sentence. It is necessary to indicate that the research team adopted the mechanism of stopping at the monitored data. Thus, the referral cases (221 referral rulings from the criminal court, and 20 referral rulings from the Court of Appeal) do not mean that they are a standing ruling in and of themselves, but rather a preliminary ruling for the issuance of a death sentence. Given the rarity of the court changing its conviction after referral to the Mufti, the number of referrals may be considered the number of death sentences.

The previous year 2025 witnessed a noticeable rise compared with the years before it, whether in the number of death sentences issued in general by all judicial bodies or even in the numbers of citizens against whom the sentence was carried out. Thus, 541 cases faced death sentences during the year 25, while 509 citizens faced death sentences in the year 24, while during the year 23 the punishment was issued against 454 persons. At the level of executions, the past year witnessed the implementation of the punishment against 20 citizens; as for the year 24, the death penalty was implemented against 13 persons, while 8 individuals were executed during the year 23.

The number of death sentences in their different classifications in 2025 increased over 2024 by 32 cases, while the total rulings increased over 2023 by 87 cases. Meanwhile, the number of death sentences confirmed by the Court of Cassation reached 25 cases in 2023, 35 cases in 2024, and finally 25 cases in 2025. Finally, the implementation of the death penalty expanded to reach 20 cases in 2025, while it was 13 cases in 2024, compared with 8 cases in 2023.

Latest Legal Status of the Defendants



Number of defendants	latest legal status
221	Referral to the Mufti
78	second degree Death sentence
177	first degree Death sentence
20	Referral to the Mufti (second degree)
25	Confirmation of death sentence
20	execution of the death sentence
541	total

Based on this, the classification “Referral to the Mufti” refers to the cases at which the monitoring stopped without the availability of information regarding the final ruling, whether the death sentence was confirmed or mitigated in the following session.

As for the classification “Death sentence (first degree)”, it refers to the rulings issued by the criminal court after receiving the opinion of the Mufti, while “Death sentence (second degree)” and “Referral to the Mufti (second degree)” relate to the decisions issued by the Court of Appeal, which was activated as an additional level of litigation starting from the year 2024.

The table and the chart also include the rulings confirmed by the Court of Cassation, where the defendant has exhausted their right to appeal and the court has upheld the ruling issued against them.

Finally, the table includes cases of the execution of the death penalty, according to what was announced by the prison administration regarding the implementation of the rulings against the convicted individuals (male/female).

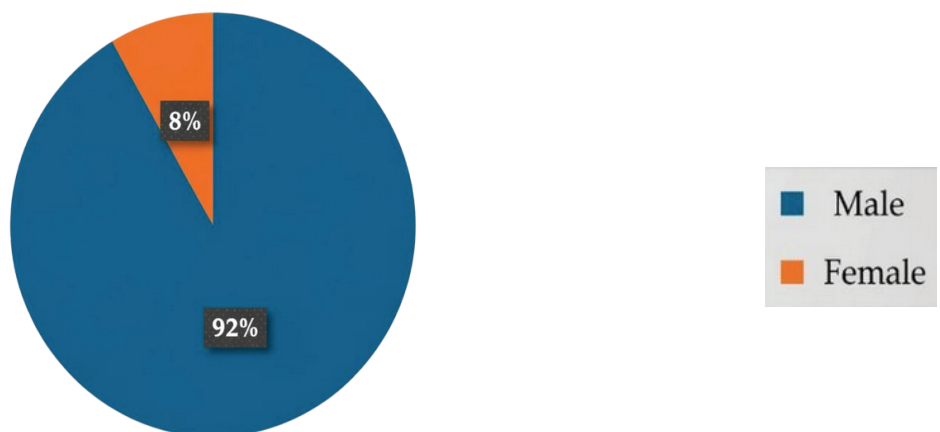
#### Death sentences according to gender

According to the gender of the defendants, males constituted the highest percentage in all stages of issuing death sentences.

As the following chart shows, the total number of male defendants reached 497 out of 541, while the number of females did not exceed 44 defendants, representing 8%, as shown below.

Current legal status	Male	Female	Total
Referral to the Mufti	208	13	221
Second-degree death sentence	71	7	78
First-degree death sentence	159	18	177
Second referral to the Mufti	19	1	20
Confirmation of death sentence	21	4	25
Execution of death sentence	19	1	20
Total	497	44	541

Distribution of Death Sentences by Gender



## Classifications of crimes that led to the death penalty

The research team identified four main types of crimes on the basis of which the defendants were convicted and death sentences were issued against them:

**Intentional murder:** A crime in which the perpetrator has a direct intent to take the life of the victim with prior planning and premeditation. Intentional murder may be associated with aggravating circumstances such as theft, kidnapping, or rape, and may also occur without any aggravating factors.

**Sexual assault:** Includes crimes related to sexual assault in its various forms regardless of the gender of the victim. In some cases, these crimes are the primary motive behind committing intentional murder.

**Drug trafficking:** Refers to crimes related to smuggling drugs, bringing them from abroad, trafficking them, and cultivating them in cases not legally authorized.

**Terrorism crimes:** Refers to incidents that are judicially examined through terrorism circuits in criminal courts.

The category “Not specified” refers to execution cases, where the research team limited itself to the available data.

Current legal status	Murder	Sexual assault of a minor	Terrorism	Drug trafficking	Not specified	Total
Referral to the Mufti	210	8	1	2	0	221
Second-degree death sentence	73	1	0	4	0	78
First-degree death sentence	164	5	1	7	0	177
Second referral to the Mufti	18	1	1	0	0	20
Confirmation of death sentence	24	1	0	0	0	25
Execution of death sentence	11	1	0	0	8	20
Total	500	17	3	13	8	541

According to the previous table, intentional murder crimes obtained the largest share of death sentences at a rate of 92%, while death sentences related to drug offenses reached 3.5%, and those based on sexual assault reached 3%, while terrorism crimes were less than 1%, and finally eight cases that faced the death penalty were not classified, representing 0.5%.

The research team still holds the full conviction that the death penalty is closely linked to a deeper understanding of the nature of crimes and the reasons behind them. The common ground from which the discussion around the death penalty begins is the achievement of criminal justice. Understanding the shared root causes behind murder crimes may contribute to reducing these causes and thus reducing the punishment, in addition to questioning the effectiveness and objectives of punishment as a tool for social control or deterrence. Therefore, the research team sought to establish a relationship between the causes of crime and the punishment.

### Objective causes behind the crimes under study, especially intentional murder

The research team analyzed news reports that attempted to cover decisions of referral to the Grand Mufti or court decisions of death sentences—in order to reach a set of objective causes behind the crimes, especially murder. At the same time, we emphasize that the existence of a cause for the crime does not mean justifying it in any way; rather, it leads us to support the victims and society by understanding the motives to prevent the crime from occurring and to reach a more effective punishment than execution. This is the strongest theoretical framework from which the Egyptian Commission proceeds, as we believe that the death penalty does not provide a just system, nor a safe system through deterrence.

Current legal status	Murder	Sexual assault of a minor	Terrorism	Drug trafficking	Not specified	Total
Display of force	9	0	1	0	0	10
Revenge motives	163	0	0	0	0	163
Political motives	2	0	2	0	0	4
Family motives	44	1	0	0	0	45
Emotional motives	54	0	0	0	0	54
Material motives	140	0	0	0	0	140
Organized crime	0	0	0	10	0	10
Material motives	10	0	0	0	0	10
Organized crime	12	4	0	0	0	16
Current legal status	66	12	0	3	8	81
Organized crime	500	17	3	13	8	541

**These causes were identified according to the following:**

**Display of force:** When the news indicates violence practiced by the defendant against the victim without a clear reason, as a manifestation of imposing power, or when the expression “display of force” is explicitly mentioned along with the previous conditions.

**Fear of scandal:** When the news indicates that the crime occurred after the victim discovered another crime previously committed by the defendant, whether a customary or legal violation; this may indicate that the crime is conditional upon discovery or exposure.

**Revenge motives:** When the news does not indicate fear of scandal or concealment of a previous act, this reason indicates that the crime was a motivated reaction by the defendant against the victim, meaning there is an indication of prior acquaintance between the perpetrator and the victim.

**Political motives:** Crimes in which defendants are tried for offenses of a political nature, whether violence was involved or not. The difference between revenge and political motives lies in the personal relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, and possibly the nature of the victim’s work or profession. Cases classified under terrorism were included in this category.

**Emotional motives:** Crimes that occur between parties in a romantic relationship, such as killing a lover or mistress, or killing a spouse due to such a relationship.

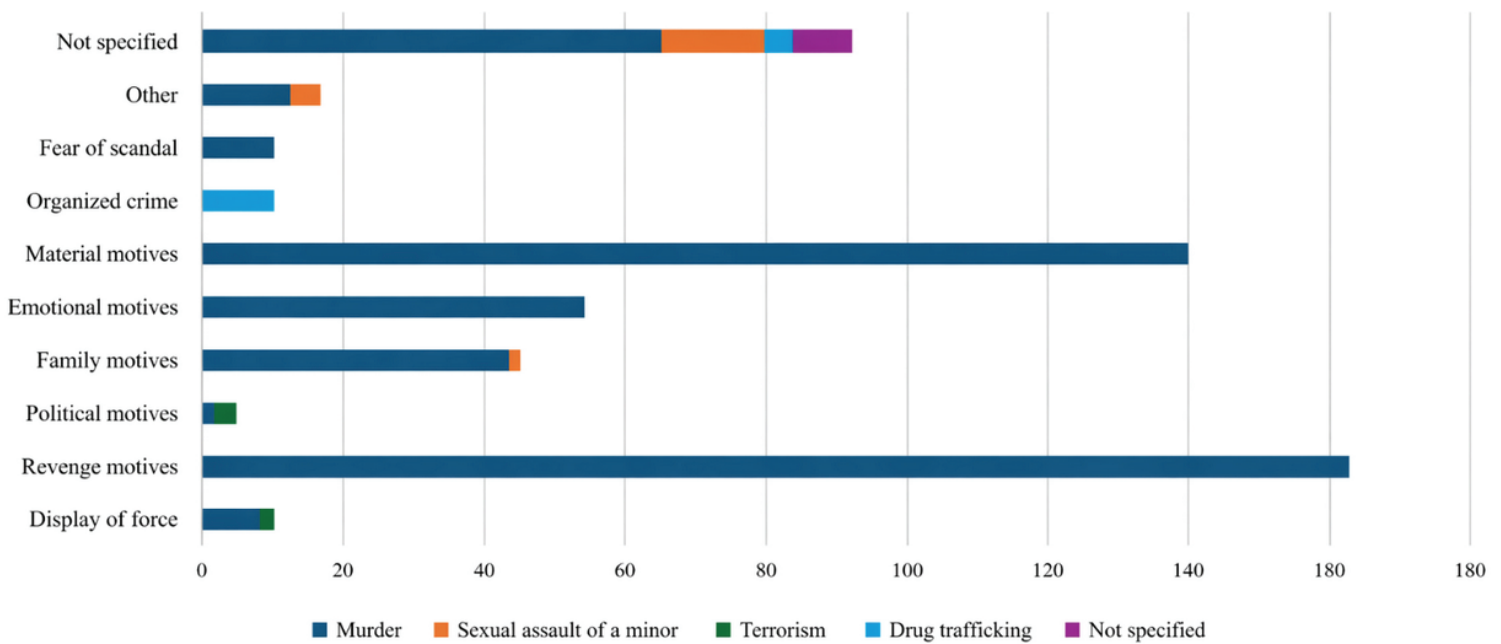
**Family motives:** Crimes based on domestic violence within the nuclear family or extended family. Most motives revolve around honor, legal inheritance, and control by the stronger party/parties in family relationships—often males over females—due to various reasons including, but not limited to, incorrect social and cultural legacies.

**Material motives:** Refers to all crimes that occurred due to financial disputes or the perpetrator’s desire to obtain the victim’s property or money.

**Organized crime:** Refers to drug trafficking crimes, which depend on organization beyond individuals, whether the defendants are few or the case reveals a larger network.

**Other:** Refers to crimes where no cause was indicated or could be inferred, in addition to sexual assault cases that require broader study of motives that this research cannot cover.

Distribution of the Causes of Crimes According to Their Nature



The previous chart indicates that revenge motives were behind the majority of murder crimes, with a share of 163 cases, followed by material motives with a share of 140 cases, in the case of excluding crimes for which the causes could not be determined. These crimes include sexual assault of minors, as these crimes cannot be confined under a single framework, and studying the reasons behind these assaults requires more precise research work, which goes beyond the scope of this study.

Revenge and material motives still rank at the top of the reasons behind crimes that lead to the death penalty, followed in third and fourth place respectively by emotional motives and family motives. While this conclusion has been repeated in previous reports, it calls for further highlighting the link between the common causes of crimes and the reduction of punishment. It also suggests that the existence of punishment as a deterrent does not necessarily lead to a reduction in crimes; rather, in some cases, the perpetrator may be fully aware of the seriousness of the crime, and this does not deter them from committing it.

Revenge motives also indicate the absence of the authority of the judiciary in the social imagination, or the absence of a culture of the courts among people, and their resort to taking revenge with their own hands. This fuels the cycle of violence in which killing and death sentences become a phenomenon that deserves deep research, focused time, and political and research will to design better paths to justice.

## Geography of death sentences during the year 2025

As for the geographical distribution according to the type of incident, the following table shows the distribution of the penalty according to the distribution of governorates:

### Number of cases

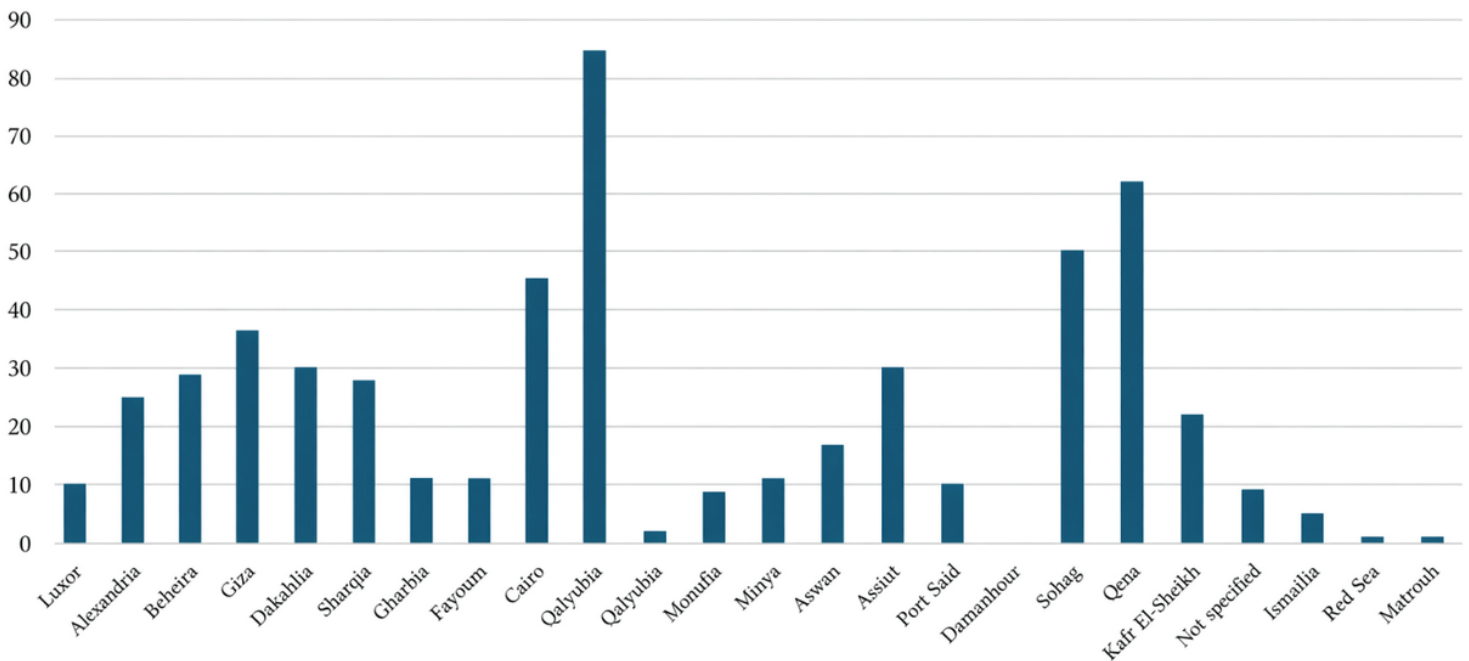
Luxor	10
Alexandria	25
Beheira	29
Giza	37
Dakahlia	30
Sharqia	28
Gharbia	11
Fayoum	11
Cairo	46
Qalyubia	85
Qalyubia	2
Monufia	9
Minya	11
Aswan	17
Assiut	30
Port Said	10
Damanhour	0
Sohag	50
Qena	62
Kafr El-Sheikh	22
Not specified	9
Ismailia	5
Red Sea	1
Matrouh	1
Total	541

We note that Qalyubia Governorate had the largest share of death sentences of different degrees with 85 rulings, followed in second place by Qena Governorate with 62 rulings, then Sohag Governorate with 50 rulings, and Cairo with 46 rulings.

This does not necessarily indicate that the number of rulings in these proportions is accurate and corresponds to reality; rather, it may indicate that these governorates have the largest share of media coverage that focuses on crimes and court follow-ups. The prominence of Qalyubia Governorate may be evidence that press coverage plays a major role in the availability of information, as it has ranked among the top positions over the past four years.

Taking into account the absence of a clear reason for this, media coverage plays a fundamental role as a hypothesis in explaining the governorate's lead in death sentences.

Number of Defendants According to the Distribution Across Governorates



## Conclusion and Recommendations

This descriptive report sought to highlight the most prominent conclusions reached by the research team at the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, within the series of descriptive reports titled “The Road to the Gallows.” It also focused on linking social factors with death sentences, alongside documenting rulings at their various levels.

While the report shows the continued predominance of revenge motives and material motives behind death sentences, it is necessary to reconsider the relationship between death sentences and the promotion of criminal justice, and the need to open the field for researchers to study the causes of crimes, in an effort to reach more comprehensive mechanisms within the criminal justice process.

## General recommendations of the “Stop the Death Penalty Campaign in Egypt”

Over the past years, the “Stop the Death Penalty Campaign in Egypt,” issued by the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, has consistently called for the necessity of the Egyptian authorities’ commitment to their international obligations, and for reducing the number of crimes punishable by death, which in Egyptian law reaches approximately 50 crimes.

The campaign seeks to draw the attention of the Egyptian legal community—lawyers, judges, and legislators—to the risks inherent in the continued expansion in the application of this irreversible punishment, and the escalation of the revenge tendency it causes within society. Within this framework, the campaign adopts the following recommendations:

Replacing the death penalty, wherever it appears in any criminal law, with life imprisonment without the possibility of conditional pardon, in certain crimes determined by law.

Reducing the number of crimes punishable by death under Egyptian law, which exceeds 50 crimes, and limiting the application of the penalty to the most serious crimes.

Introducing a legislative provision allowing the reduction of the death penalty to life imprisonment without the possibility of conditional pardon, in cases where an agreement is reached between the perpetrator and the family of the victim on financial compensation, leading the victim’s guardians to waive their civil rights, with the exception of crimes classified as war crimes or genocide. This recommendation was addressed theoretically in the report “Islamic Sharia and the Death Penalty,” issued within the activities of the World Day Against the Death Penalty 2023. The report can be accessed through the website of the Egyptian Commission [1].

The commitment of the Egyptian government to implementing Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which it has ratified, and working to limit the implementation of the death penalty, leading to its abolition.

Signing the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at the gradual abolition of the death penalty.