



[Human Rights Watch Issues a Report Documenting Unlawful Extrajudicial Executions Committed by Egyptian Security Forces](#)

Earlier this week, Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a detailed report on systematic extrajudicial and summary executions committed by Egyptian security forces under the el-Sisi regime. In many of these, the Ministry of Interior claimed that those killed were terrorists, however, HRW's findings contradict these assertions and show that the victims posed no immediate threat to the national security of Egypt. HRW found that there had been 755 killed under the government's guise of 143 "terrorist shootouts," and while regime forces put forth this contention, further investigation into the matter demonstrated that most of the individuals who disappeared were in fact summarily executed. Under international law, extrajudicial killings are illegal in both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights – for which Egypt is a signer and a member state, respectively. In light of the report, HRW has called for targeted sanctions and the freezing of assets towards those involved, as well as a halt in arms sales to the Egyptian government due to the growing evidence of flagrant human rights violations.

The unlawful summary executions have little documentation and are dismissed by Egyptian regime officials. The United States has in the past expressed serious concern over the state of political and human rights in Egypt, and broadly condemned extrajudicial killings, but has yet to release a comment on the Human Rights Watch report. Back in February, however, the United States did approve the plans for \$197 million in missile sales to the Egyptian government. Human rights advocacy groups have stated that because of this further proof of the latter's engagement in extrajudicial executions, it is clear that the United States and other powerful allies should ensure that its foreign policy dealings do not enable this behavior and on the contrary, hold guilty officials accountable for these egregious acts.

The report by Human Rights Watch sheds light on a very detailed pattern of extrajudicial killings under the el-Sisi regime. In each instance, Egyptian security forces claim that the victims fired first. The families of 14 of those killed however have consistently stated that the individuals were first detained, with 8 having personal witnesses to the arrest itself. This signals that the security forces committed the unlawful executions after the arrest took place, when they were in a position to fabricate the conditions surrounding the killings. HRW received 5 forensic evidence documents, including pictures, which directly contradict the shootout narrative expressed by the el-Sisi regime officials. These offer proof of execution-like killings, rather than violent shootouts between two separate parties. Adding to the callous nature of the executions is the manner in which families of the victims learned of it, whereby many received news of their loved one's death via news media. Furthermore, some had to wait months for the release of their relative's body, while others have never even been granted that.

Human Rights Watch has called for the targeted freezing of assets and economic sanctions against those responsible for the human rights abuses. Historically, Egypt has been a main recipient of security funding, missiles, and other arms sales, but rights advocates are fair to point out that these should be reconsidered on the basis of the incumbent regime's track record of consistent and blatant violations. The economic sanctions and the freezing of sales and assets should be implemented unless the Egyptian government ceases such deplorable behavior against its own citizens.