

EGYPT

*Political and sectarian tensions led to sporadic attacks against schools, damage and looting of university buildings, and arbitrary arrest and injury of students on campus.*⁶⁷⁵

CONTEXT

On 11 February 2011, President Hosni Mubarak was ousted following a popular uprising, and after one-and-a-half years of military rule, Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood was elected President. However, in July 2013, the military deposed him, leading to a violent crackdown on his supporters. Security forces killed more than 600 pro-Morsi protesters during the dispersal of two Cairo sit-ins on 14 August 2013.⁶⁷⁶ Sharp divisions, especially between Islamists and secular groups, continued to result in violent confrontations.⁶⁷⁷

Under Mubarak, there was a history of staff and students at universities being closely monitored by plainclothes state security on campus.⁶⁷⁸ In October 2010, an administrative court ordered security forces off university campuses.⁶⁷⁹

Egypt's net primary enrolment was estimated at 96 per cent (2011),⁶⁸⁰ gross secondary enrolment was 72 per cent (2010)⁶⁸¹ and gross tertiary enrolment was 29 per cent (2011).⁶⁸² The adult literacy rate was 72 per cent (2010).⁶⁸³

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In February 2012, a court in the southern city of Assiut sentenced Makarem Diab, a Christian school teacher, to six years in prison on charges of defaming Islam.⁶⁸⁴ The case against Diab was

brought by Islamist colleagues who accused him of mocking Islam's prophet Mohammed.⁶⁸⁵ In September 2012, Nevine Gad, a Christian social studies teacher at a preparatory school in Manfalout, Assiut province, was arrested and charged with blasphemy after a student complained about a lesson on Islamic history she had given, with a section on the life of Mohammed.⁶⁸⁶

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS

In November 2012, the Lycee Al-Horreya 'Bab El Louk' sustained heavy damage when Central Security Forces, Egypt's riot police, used the school to launch attacks on protesters in Cairo over four consecutive days. Molotov cocktails left parts of the school in flames and soldiers threw school furniture at protesters.⁶⁸⁷

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Attacks on higher education facilities

On 6 February 2011, in an attempt to quell protests, the Egyptian authorities closed all universities. The American University was damaged during protests in November 2011.⁶⁸⁸

During December 2011 clashes, in which the military opened fire and protesters threw Molotov cocktails, the Egyptian Institute, a research institution, was destroyed by fire and its invaluable collection of books and journals largely destroyed.⁶⁸⁹ The government accused protesters of throwing petrol bombs at the building.⁶⁹⁰

Attacks on higher education students, academics and personnel

Protests, clashes and arrests related to the wider political unrest frequently took place on university

campuses. On 6 April 2009, eight people were injured and 15 were arrested in clashes between opposition and pro-government students during a protest in Ain Shams University in Cairo.⁶⁹¹

In early September 2012, hundreds of Egyptians protested in Alexandria over the alleged torture by police of a student who was arrested while participating in a demonstration at Alexandria University.⁶⁹²

ATTACKS ON EDUCATION IN 2013

Schools and universities were affected by the many political protests that turned violent in 2013. Pro- and anti-Morsi demonstrators clashed around Cairo University on 2 July.⁶⁹³ Witnesses reported gunmen shooting from the top of the Literature Faculty and other university roofs.⁶⁹⁴ Protests just outside the university campus were ongoing for two months, before being violently dispersed by security forces on 14 August.⁶⁹⁵ In September and October protests took place on several campuses. Twelve people were wounded at Ain Shams University.⁶⁹⁶

Twenty-three were injured in clashes at Zagazig University between students or between students and residents for and against the Muslim Brotherhood: 15 in an incident of fighting between students⁶⁹⁷ and eight in an incident of fighting between students and residents.⁶⁹⁸ On 20 October, 55 students were arrested after they tried to take their protest onto the streets from the campus of Cairo's ancient Al-Azhar University.⁶⁹⁹

Unrest also affected schools in central Cairo. In January, the Al-Howeiyaty Secondary School for Girls was burned down and the Lycee Al-Horreya was set on fire in violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces.⁷⁰⁰

A number of Christian schools were attacked during a wave of sectarian violence that targeted Christian churches and property across the country – predominantly in Upper Egypt – immediately following the events of 14 August. For example, in Minya city, the Coptic boys' school complex and the Saint Joseph's girls' school, among other Christian buildings, were attacked and set on fire on 14 August.⁷⁰¹ The same day in Bani Suef, 125 kilometres south of Cairo, a mob looted and set fire to a Franciscan girls' school.⁷⁰²

With the start of the new academic year, a number of student supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood led protests or called on fellow classmates to boycott schools, rallying against what they called a 'military coup'. Several students were arrested, including seven high school students in Fayyoun during a student-led protest in September and another two high school students in Marsa Matrouh who were distributing flyers calling for students to boycott school in protest.⁷⁰³

One Christian school teacher, Demyana Abdelnour, was arrested in May 2013 for blasphemy and ordered to pay the equivalent of more than 25 years of her salary after being accused by students of expressing disgust when speaking about Islam.⁷⁰⁴

ENDNOTES EGYPT

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