



Women's Rights and Empowerment in Egypt

Egypt takes a strong approach to women's empowerment. Within the past several years, Egypt has approved a series of laws, decrees and councils meant to advance the freedoms of women and facilitate women's participation in society.

- ▶ Egypt's legislative framework supports women across various spaces, including financial inclusion, motherhood and childcare, career success and optionality, and healthcare.
- ▶ In 2017, which President Sisi declared to be the "Year of Egyptian Women," he endorsed **The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Women 2030**, a comprehensive strategy to ensure the full participation of women in society and provide inclusive action items to accomplish these goals. The strategy has four pillars: political empowerment and leadership, economic empowerment, social empowerment, and protection of women.

Legislative Framework

Egypt has prioritized the need for a robust legislative framework which supports and protects the rights of women. The government actively seeks out the expertise of the National Council for Women in developing and refining its laws.

Economic and Social Empowerment

Egypt has been a force for progress in its implementation of law surrounding economic and social empowerment. Recent gains benefit working mothers, incarcerated mothers, and women in rural areas.

- ▶ In 2019, Egypt issued a social security and pension law that vastly expanded coverage to irregular jobs and seasonal workers, allowing women in rural areas or those performing domestic work to benefit from coverage.
- ▶ The crucial needs of mothers are also a central tenet of Egypt's legislative framework. In particular, Egypt has expanded maternity leave to four months and issued a decree to protect incarcerated women and their right to care for children until the age of four, which includes childcare. Penalties and executions are also delayed for these women.
- ▶ In 2017, the Ministry of Education offered women educational guardianship over their children following divorce.
- ▶ In 2021, two decrees issued by the Minister of Manpower secured for women the freedom to work at night and the agency to work in any industry or profession of a woman's choosing. These decrees also ensure that women simultaneously receive proper health benefits.
- ▶ In 2019, the Financial Regulatory Authority mandated women's representation on boards of financial firms.
- ▶ Breadwinning women are prioritized for selection in the home rental space as a result of 2018 expansions developed by the Ministry of Housing.
- ▶ The Ministry of Education in 2020 issued a decree exempting female heads of household from school fees.

Fast Facts

Egypt advanced

165

policies supporting women during COVID-19

30%

of Egyptian diplomats are women

164

women currently serve in the Egyptian Parliament

The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women

2030

was developed to address the needs of women across various segments of society

Egyptian women serve in senior-level government roles, including: national security advisors, head of economic court, deputy governor of the central bank, and public prosecution and state council.



Eliminating Violence Against Women

The Egyptian government recognizes its fundamental responsibility to protect women from violence of all forms. The government continues to refine not only its laws, but also its definitions and frameworks for understanding the nature and various forms of violence against women.

- ▶ In early 2021, the Egyptian Parliament announced harsher punishments for female genital mutilation. This effort was marked by an increase in the maximum sentence to 20 years and banning relevant medical workers from practicing for up to five years. Family members involved in requesting the procedure will also face imprisonment.
- ▶ Last year, the Egyptian parliament passed a law to protect the identities of individuals who report sexual assault or harassment, encouraging more women to come forward.
- ▶ Egypt passed its first law on protection of personal data in October 2020.
- ▶ Under Egyptian law, women also receive protections against human trafficking, kidnapping, forced marriage, rape, sexual harassment and indecent acts.
- ▶ During the 2019 Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, President Sisi pledged “not to sign any law that is unfair to women.”

COVID-19 Response

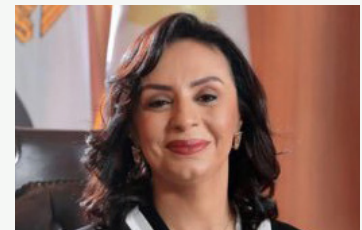
Egypt’s COVID-19 response prioritized the needs of women. The response was praised regionally and globally as a model for centering the unique barriers faced by women during the pandemic.

- ▶ Egypt was the first country to issue a rapid response policy supporting women during COVID-19.
- ▶ The UNDP and UN Women COVID-19 policy Global Gender Response Tracker indicated that Egypt was the first MENA region nation to implement COVID-19 policies sensitive to the needs of women.
- ▶ Egypt was recognized by UN Women as a nation that developed emergency measures to support female entrepreneurs and informal traders with resources such as cash transfers, subsidized credits, and grants.
- ▶ The United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted Egypt’s resolution on strengthening national and international rapid response to the impact of the coronavirus on women and girls.
- ▶ Egypt has implemented about 165 COVID-19 policies considering the needs of women.

Female Leadership in Egypt



Rania Al Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation



Dr. Maya Morsy, President of the National Council for Women in Egypt



Nadia Ahmed Abdou Saleh, first female governor in Egypt



Manal Awad Mikhael, first female Coptic Christian governor and second female governor in Egypt



Faiza Abulnaga, National Security Advisor to the President