

Egypt: Address abuses and ensure a fair trial in the 2016 Haram apartment explosion case

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On the first day of the trial before the eastern Cairo criminal military court of those accused in connection with the 2016 explosion in the Haram district of Giza, the International Commission of Jurists calls on the Egyptian authorities to: investigate allegations of torture and other ill-treatment; ensure reparation for those arbitrarily detained; and end the trials of civilians before military courts.

“The case has been under investigation by the State Security Prosecution for more than five years, involving prolonged pre-trial detention and severe restriction on the right to legal counsel, in a flagrant violation of Egyptian and international law,” said Said Benarbia, the ICJ’s MENA Programme Director. “Detaining people pending trial for that length of time makes this case yet another example of how the authorities are using pre-trial detention as a tool of repression and to punish, in violation of Egypt’s obligations under international human rights law”.

In January 2016, hundreds of people were arrested, and some forcibly [disappeared in connection with](#) an explosion in the Haram district of Giza that killed seven police officers and four civilians, and injured 15 others.

A number of those detained have reportedly been subjected to ill-treatment and denied fair trial rights guaranteed by Egyptian and international law, including the right to receive family [visits](#). In addition, to the ICJ’s knowledge, while all the accused may have briefly met their lawyers in highly restrictive circumstances at the state prosecution office each time they have been remanded into custody, over the years, they have been denied their right to legal counsel before trial as their lawyers have not been allowed to visit them in prison.

The ICJ calls on the Egyptian authorities to investigate the incidents of enforced disappearance, ill-treatment and other human rights violations with a view to bring those responsible to justice.

“Notwithstanding the gravity of the charges involved, civilians should not be brought before military courts,” said Benarbia. “the jurisdiction of military courts should be limited to trials of military personnel in cases of strictly military offences; it should not extend to crimes over which civilian courts have jurisdiction, human rights violations or crimes under international law,” he added.

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