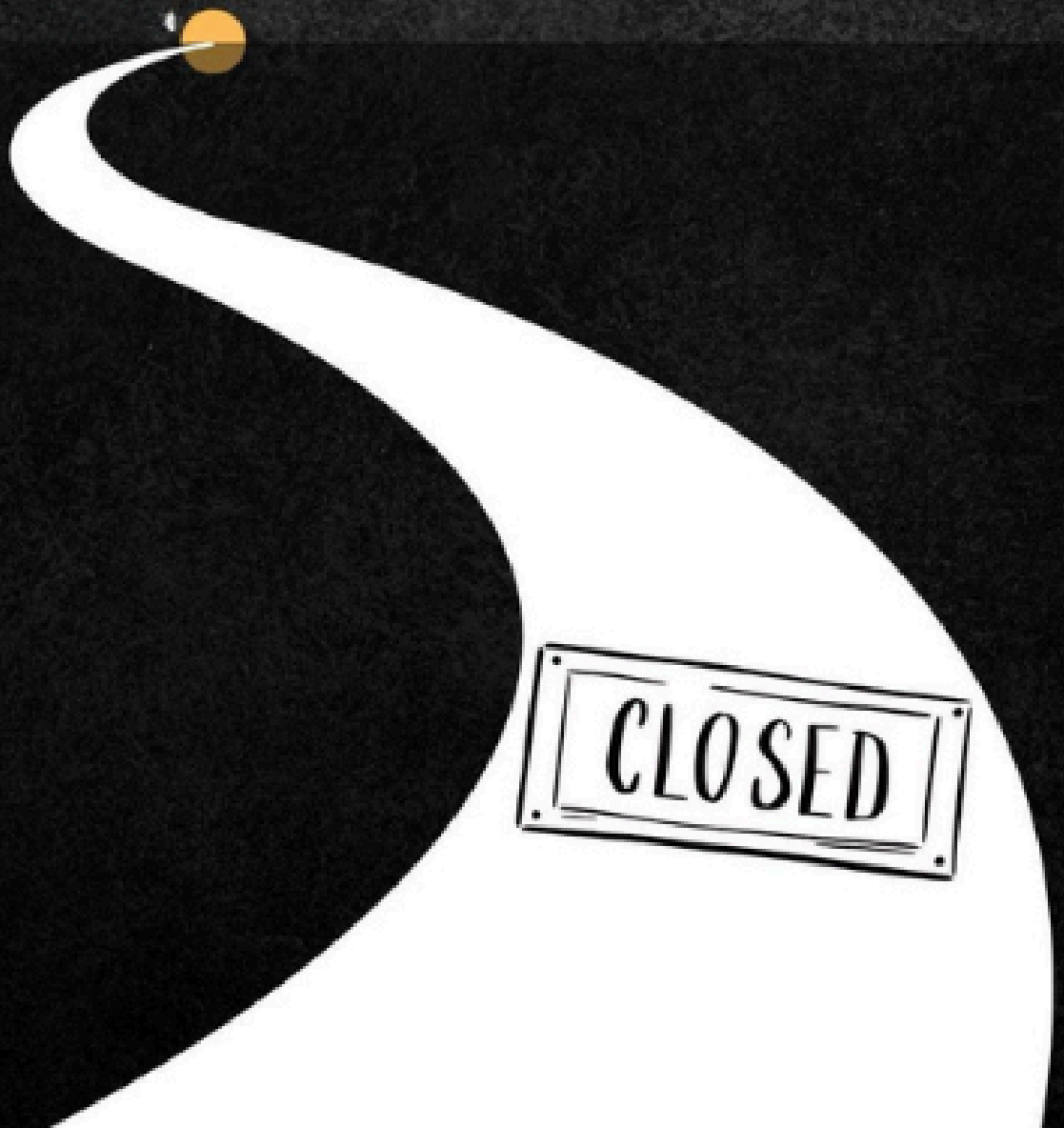


# Without Competitiveness

The 2024 Egyptian Presidential Elections





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# The 2024 Egyptian Presidential Elections: Without Competitiveness

## **Acknowledgement**

Several researchers, activists, and volunteers both inside and outside of Egypt participated in the preparation of this report. They monitored, recorded, and documented the violations mentioned herein. Due to the security risks faced by all those involved in public affairs in Egypt, particularly human rights defenders, and given the sensitive nature with which Egyptian security agencies handle the presidential election file, they have chosen to remain anonymous to ensure their safety and security.

Law and Democracy Support Foundation wishes to extend its sincere gratitude and appreciation to them, with the hope that we will be able to duly recognize their intellectual and moral contributions to this report shortly.

## **Introduction**

Since President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi assumed power, Egypt has witnessed a severe and unprecedented deterioration in democracy, political participation, and civic engagement in its modern history. This decline has been accompanied by a sharp deterioration in the state of human rights and freedoms. The authorities have systematically marginalized all political and civil society forces, and restricted citizens' freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, organization, and other rights and freedoms. This context cannot be separated from the presidential elections.

It appears that the current president feels that his position has become untenable without resorting to repression and granting free rein to security agencies to address all issues and confront all democratic demands and practices in Egypt. Despite having control over the entire electoral process and enjoying the support of all state institutions, he does not trust his ability to win an election where citizens can choose candidates to compete. Consequently, he has

systematically prevented disfavored potential candidates from even reaching the voting stage—a recurring issue in every presidential election he has contested.

Had matters proceeded naturally, the presidential term ending in 2023 would have been the current president's last. He would not have been entitled to run in the presidential elections at all. However, in a regression of one of the most significant gains of the January Revolution, he amended Article 140 of the Egyptian Constitution in 2019, ensuring his continued tenure. His parliament extended the presidential term to six years and allowed for additional terms, whereas it previously restricted him to a single re-election.

The political will to pursue a democratic path has been absent during the current president's tenure. The Egyptian authorities and various agencies have played a role in selecting his competitors in every election he has contested. They have consistently excluded any serious contenders who publicly declared their intention to run and claimed to be more competent and deserving of the presidency than the current president. The authorities only allowed specific candidates, some of whom were likely chosen with the authorities' input, to participate in a sham electoral process intended to present the current president as the legitimate winner to both domestic and international audiences.

Moreover, the authorities have habitually pursued potential candidates and their campaigns and supporters through judicial and security means after excluding them, as seen in previous elections with candidates such as Lieutenant General Sami Anan, human rights lawyer Khaled Ali, and Colonel Ahmed Konsowa. The same is happening in the current elections with former MP Ahmed Tantawy. This is likely intended to destroy their political future and serve as a warning to anyone who dares to challenge the current president or both.

It is worth noting that the stage of collecting popular endorsements for potential candidates is the foundation upon which the entire election is built. It is the stage where it is determined who will be able to compete and the nature of the competition. Any fundamental flaws and obstacles during this stage can invalidate the entire election, as they are practically impossible to remedy in later stages. Such issues can lead to the exclusion of deserving candidates, as has happened in the current elections with the exclusion of candidate Ahmed Tantawy, the most prominent challenger to the current president.

The Law and Democracy Support Foundation has observed in this report that following the announcement of the High Electoral Commission's timeline for the presidential elections and the commencement of the endorsement collection phase, all state institutions rallied to support and endorse the current president's candidacy for a new term. Furthermore, his supporters and advocates, alongside security agencies and employees of the notary offices, mobilized to impose his control and will on the endorsement collection process and to intimidate his opponents. Additionally, all media outlets gathered to support and endorse him while attacking his opponents. In some cases, certain media personalities affiliated with the Egyptian regime went as far as to vilify and accuse his opponents of deliberately harming Egypt's security.

This phase witnessed systematic violations and breaches of international law, the constitution, and national legislation. These violations ranged from preventing citizens from issuing endorsements to coercing them into endorsing the current president. Physical assaults, intimidation, arrests, and criminal prosecutions were also reported.

Karim Abdel Rady

Executive Director of the Law and Democracy Support Foundation

## **Methodology**

This report was prepared based on monitoring and documentation by the Foundation's team, whether through conducting personal interviews with victims of violations, using the Foundation's questionnaire, or monitoring data issued by potential candidates or videos posted on social media by the election campaign officials of potential candidates. Additionally, testimonies from several prominent activists and public figures were documented.

The report employed a sampling system, as it was difficult, due to insufficient resources and the lack of political will from Egyptian authorities to allow civil society to monitor these elections, and to monitor all violations during the endorsement collection phase. Therefore, the team focused more on monitoring notary offices that witnessed violations and restrictions, while documenting several violations from multiple sources.

It is worth noting that victims of violations and informants decided not to disclose their names for security reasons. This report relies on several articles published on the websites of legal institutions as supplementary sources. Furthermore, the report presents descriptive statistics and visual presentations concerning various variables such as "type of violation," "perpetrator of the violation," "social group," "age group," and "governorate where the violation occurred," with the governorates divided according to Decree No. 8 of 2023.

**Temporal Scope:** This report covers the endorsement collection phase of the Egyptian presidential elections and adheres to the timeframe from September 25, 2023, to October 14, 2023.

**Spatial Criterion:** This statistical analysis focuses on monitoring violations against potential candidates or their supporters that occurred within the borders of the Arab Republic of Egypt or Egyptian embassies and consulates abroad.

## **Summary**

Between September 25, 2023, and October 14, 2023, the Law and Democracy Support Foundation team monitored the first stage of the presidential elections, known as the "Citizens' Endorsement of Presidential Candidates" phase. The High Electoral Commission issued the timetable and procedures for the 2024 presidential elections, stipulating that a presidential candidate must obtain endorsements from at least twenty members of the House of Representatives or be supported by a minimum of twenty-five thousand citizens eligible to vote in at least fifteen governorates, with a minimum of one thousand supporters from each governorate.

The Commission also issued regulations and procedures governing the endorsement of citizens for presidential candidates, affirming every eligible citizen's right to endorse a presidential candidate by visiting a notary office or diplomatic mission according to the prescribed model.

The Commission designated notary offices responsible for issuing endorsements for presidential elections and tasked the Ministry of Interior with maintaining security and order during the 2024 presidential elections. Several prominent figures, including Jamila Ismail, President of the Constitution Party, current President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Farid Zahran, President of the Egyptian Democratic Party, former parliamentarian Ahmed al-Tantawi, Abd al-Sanad Yumama, President of the Wafd Party, and Ahmed al-Fadhli, President of the Democratic Peace Party (one of the defendants in the case of killing Egyptian protesters during the January Revolution, known as the Camel Battle), declared their intention to run in the 2024 presidential elections.

The endorsement collection phase witnessed Egyptian authorities' violations of the right to vote by preventing and restricting potential candidates and their supporters. Various methods of prevention and restriction were documented, including the gathering of el-Sisi supporters with thugs outside notary offices, threatening supporters of other candidates, attempting to clash with them, and forcing them to leave the notary office without endorsing candidates.

Sometimes, the violations escalate to physical assault, dragging, and verbal abuse without intervention from security forces. Additionally, there are instances of forcibly confiscating mobile phones and deleting documented videos of violations by security personnel or el-Sisi supporters. Plainclothes security personnel have detained citizens, searched them without proper justification, and forced them to unlock their mobile phones, all in violation of the constitution and laws.

As for notary office employees, deliberate destruction of national ID cards belonging to some citizens has been observed, along with falsely claiming the invalidity of their cards. Some notary offices have deliberately closed their doors to supporters of any candidate other than el-Sisi or claimed a "system failure" to delay and obstruct the endorsement process, prioritizing el-Sisi's supporters.

In response to the exposure of violations and the publication of statements by some potential candidates regarding the prevention and harassment of their supporters, and the submission of numerous complaints to the National Election Commission by citizens or potential candidates,

the Commission issued a statement claiming direct supervision to rectify technical malfunctions that occurred unexpectedly in a few documentation offices. It ensured the continuous operation of these offices until all citizens' requests for endorsement forms for their preferred candidates were fulfilled. After the implicit acknowledgement by the National Election Commission of the prevention and harassment in the endorsement process, the current President issued Decree No. 426 of 2023 amending the composition of the Commission.

Ahmed Tantawi, the former parliamentary deputy, called on his supporters and followers to issue popular endorsements that match the endorsement model for presidential candidacy due to the harassment and prevention faced by his supporters and followers. The next day, the Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of 8 of Tantawi's supporters on charges of forging endorsements.

Additionally, Gamila Ismail, the head of the Constitution Party, announced her party's decision not to participate in the upcoming elections after the party decided not to nominate a candidate. Tantawi also held a press conference where he announced that his campaign was able to gather only 14,000 endorsements, mostly from Egyptians abroad, after Egyptian authorities prevented them from collecting the required popular endorsements.

Finally, the State Security Prosecution referred Ahmed Tantawi, Mohamed Abu al-Diyar, and 21 others from his campaign for trial in the case known as the "Popular Endorsements" case before the misdemeanour court. The report pointed out the performance of the media, whether state-owned or independent, during the period of collecting presidential endorsements, where the Egyptian media exhibited a clear bias towards the current president, acting almost as the government's mouthpiece. This bias was evident in several aspects, starting from highlighting el-Sisi's achievements over the past ten years and giving more airtime to guests supporting him than to the opposing candidates. Media programs adopted the state's perspective of impartiality and lack of violations during that period, ignoring the truth. Moreover, media coverage of the Egyptian presidential elections included joint broadcasts between television channels covering the events of the "Homeland Saga" conference. Lastly, researchers from the institution observed some TV presenters and program hosts repeatedly attacking Ahmed Tantawi and his supporters with speeches filled with hatred, incitement and calls for violence against him and his supporters.

During that period, researchers from our NGO documented and monitored 569 incidents of violations, where they recorded and documented 638 violations. It's worth noting that some incidents were documented and observed to have more than one violation, which explains why the number of violations is higher than the observed and documented incidents.

The NGO's team documented 179 cases of prevention from endorsing due to deliberate obstruction, slow processing, intentionally compiling names in the designated list to reserve precedence under the guise of ensuring citizens' inability to endorse, closure of the notary offices without endorsing, followed by the observation and documentation of 151 cases of non-endorsement under the pretext of "system collapse."

Regarding the perpetrators of the violations, the LDSF's team documented 661 individuals during 569 incidents, taking into account that some documented incidents involved more than one person responsible for the violation, explaining why the number of violators exceeds the observed incidents. Employees of the notaries offices recorded the highest rates of perpetrators with 326 cases, whether through direct refusal, system collapse, bias, or intentional obstruction.

This was followed by 213 cases involving thugs and supporters of the current president, who were mobilized in front of the notary offices to prevent citizens from exercising their right to nominate and vote, whether through physical assault, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, or the closure of the notary offices.

Furthermore, the rights of election victims were classified according to age stages based on observation and documentation, with the age group from 21 to 30 accounting for 227 cases, representing 40% of the total documented cases, followed by the age group from 31 to 40 with 135 cases, representing 23.8%.

Finally, the NGO's researchers documented violations in 24 governorates and 8 countries through embassies or consulates. Cairo governorate recorded the highest rate of electoral violations with 142 incidents, followed by Giza governorate with 76 incidents, and then Alexandria with 53 incidents. As for embassies and consulates, Saudi Arabia recorded the highest rate with 5 documented violations, followed by Kuwait with 4 documented violations.

## Monitoring and Documentation of Violations and Descriptive Statistics:

The researchers of the LDSF documented and observed 569 incidents of violations through direct documentation with the victims, institutional forms, or through the LDSF's researchers' monitoring of social media platforms. This section aims to provide a statistical overview of the monitoring and documentation of violations during the first phase of the 2024 presidential elections. These violations are classified according to the type of violation, the responsible party, the gender of the victims, the age groups of the victims whose testimonies have been documented, and finally, they can be categorized by the governorate where the violation occurred.

### Types of Violations

The following table highlights the documented and observed violations by researchers during the first phase of the presidential elections, specifically the "endorsement collection phase." A total of 638 violations were documented from 569 incidents, noting that some incidents involved multiple types of violations, explaining why the number of violations exceeds the number of documented incidents.



The violations documented include, but are not limited to:

- Prevention from endorsing candidates through deliberate obstruction and slow processing.
- Claims of "system collapse" to delay or prevent endorsements.
- Physical assaults, verbal abuse, threats, and intimidation by thugs and supporters of the current president.
- Destruction of national ID cards and the unjustified closure of real estate offices.
- Seizure of mobile phones and deletion of recorded videos of violations by security forces.

Type of Violation	Total
Prevention from Endorsement	179
Technical Malfunction	151
Discrimination and Lack of Neutrality	47
Prevention from Endorsement through Threats of Assault	38
Prevention from Endorsement by Closing notaries Office Premises	38
Prevention from Endorsement through Assault	36
Insult and Defamation	29
Stop and Search	23
Prevention from Endorsement through Intimidation and Fear	19
Prevention from Endorsement through Threats of Imprisonment	16
Coercion to Endorse Sisi	15
Employee Refusal	13
Deliberate Destruction	10
Prevention from Endorsement by Closing Embassy Premises	5

Prevention from Endorsement by Denying Entry to Notaries Office	5
Harassment	3
Physical Altercation	2
Unlawful Detention	2
Power Outage	2
Arrest Incident	2
Setting Specific Days for Presidential Endorsements	1
Theft	1
Possession of a White Weapon	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>638</b>

## Responsible Parties

As for the following table, which shows the responsible parties for the violations during the mentioned period, the LDSF's team documented 661 individuals responsible for the violations across 569 incidents. It is important to note that some documented incidents involved more than one person responsible for the violation, which explains why the number of responsible individuals is higher than the recorded incidents. Employees of the Notaries Office recorded the highest rates of individuals responsible for violations, totaling 326. These included direct

refusals, claims of technical malfunctions, discrimination and lack of neutrality, or deliberate delays and procrastination. Following this, 213 individuals were identified as thugs and supporters of the current president who were mobilized in front of Notaries Office premises with the aim of preventing citizens from exercising their right to endorse and vote, whether by assault, insults and defamation, threats and intimidation, or closing the real estate offices.

The documented incidents involved various responsible parties, including:

- Notaries Office employees were recorded as the highest offenders with 326 documented cases.
- Thugs and supporters of the current president, with 213 cases, aimed at preventing citizens from using their right to endorse and vote.

Responsible for the Violation	Total
Notaries Office employee	326
Thugs	213
Nation's Future Party	47
Security personnel	62
Embassy employee	9
Consulate employees	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>661</b>

## Gender and Age of Victims

The following table illustrates the breakdown of victims of election rights violations documented by the LDSF's researchers according to gender. The researchers documented 523 cases through direct documentation and forms, while 46 incidents were monitored through social media. These incidents included statements from potential candidates at the time, videos from potential candidates, or election campaign officials.

Gender	total
female	76
male	493
total	569

The violations were also classified according to the gender and age of the victims:

The following table indicates the distribution of election rights violation victims according to monitoring and documentation by age groups. The institution's researchers documented 569 violation incidents, with researchers documenting violations against victims aged 21 to 30, totaling 227 cases, accounting for 40% of the total documented cases. This was followed by the age group of 31 to 40 with 135 cases, representing 23.8%

- Age group 21 to 30: 227 cases, representing 40% of the total documented cases.
- Age group 31 to 40: 135 cases, representing 23.8% of the total documented cases.

age	total
From 18-20	30
From 21-30	227
From 31- 40	135
From 41-50	54
From 51-60	14
From 61-70	8
From 71-80	1
unkown	100
<b>total</b>	569

## Geographic Distribution

The following table illustrates the monitoring and documentation of violations according to the province where the violation occurred. It is noted that the LDSF's researchers monitored and documented 569 violations across 24 provinces and 8 countries through

embassies or consulates. Cairo recorded the highest rate of presidential election violations with 142 violations, followed by Giza with 76 violations, and then Alexandria with 53 violations. As for embassies and consulates, Saudi Arabia recorded the highest rate with 5 documented violations, followed by Kuwait with 4 documented violations.

Violations were documented across 24 governorates and 8 countries through embassies or consulates:

- Cairo governorate recorded the highest rate of violations with 142 incidents.
- Giza governorate followed with 76 incidents.
- Alexandria had 53 incidents.
- Among embassies and consulates, Saudi Arabia had the highest rate with 5 documented violations, followed by Kuwait with 4.

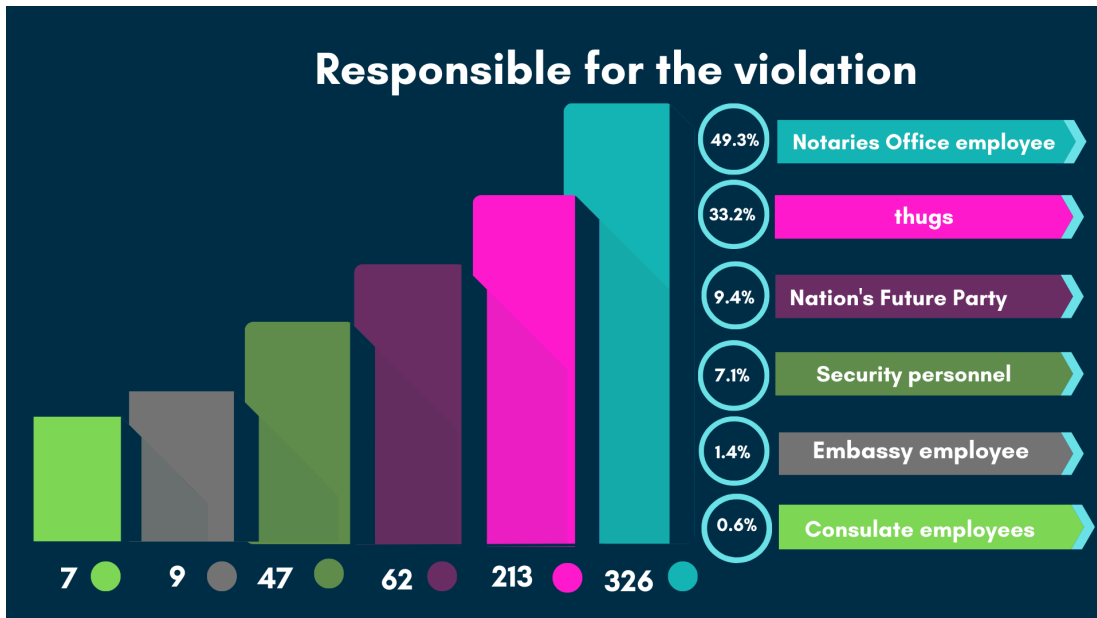
<b>governorate</b>	<b>total</b>
cairo	142
Giza	76
Alexandria	53
Sharqia	44
Dakahlia	30
Kafr El-Sheikh	25
Minya	23
Gharbia	21
Assiut	19
Fayoum	17
Qalyubia	16
Monufia	15
Beheira	12
Aswan	11
Damietta	10
Ismailia	7
Beni Suef	7
Sohag	6
Luxor	5
Qena	4

Port Said	4
Suez	3
Marsa Matrouh	3
Hurghada	1
<b>total</b>	<b>554</b>

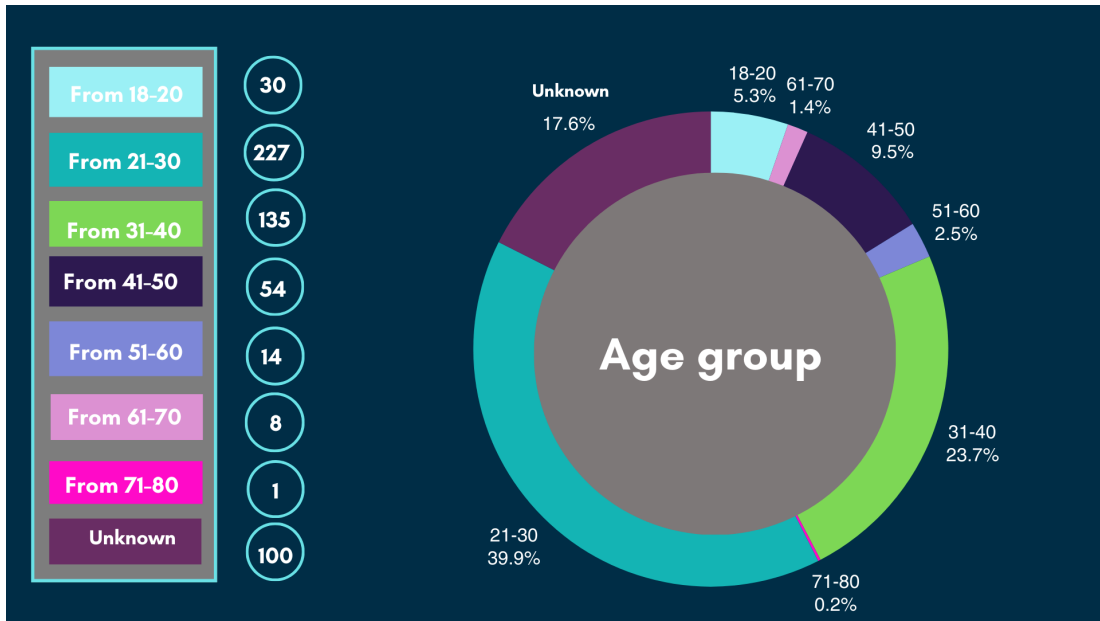
Embassy/Consulate	total
Saudi Arabia	5
Kuwait	4
South Korea	1
Austria	1
United States	1
Italy	1
Russia	1
South Africa	1
<b>total</b>	<b>15</b>



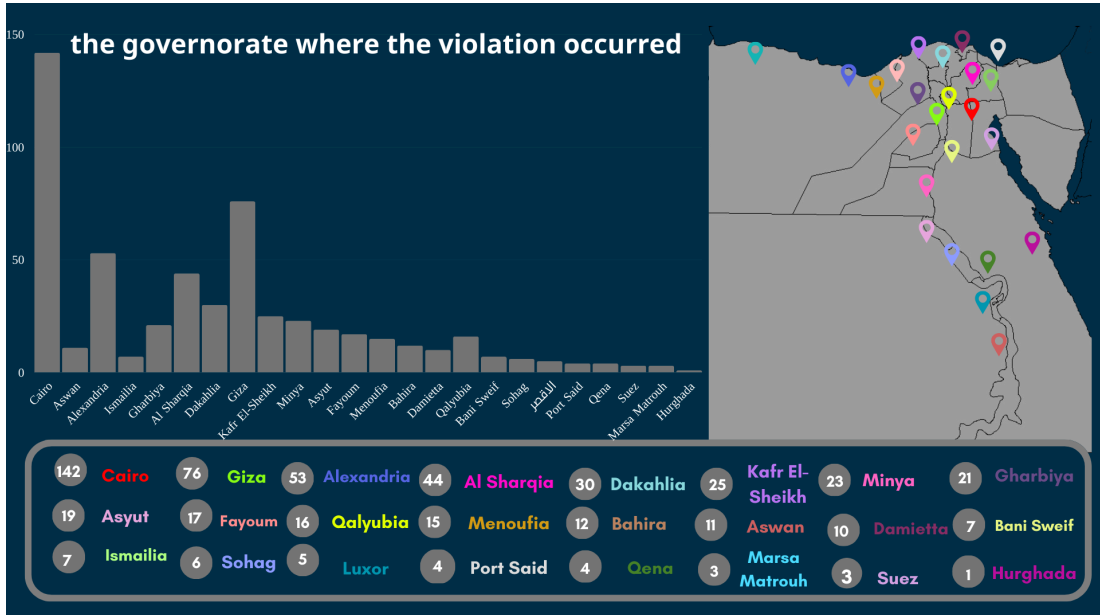
### Responsible for the violation



### Gender and Age of Victims



**The governorate where the violation occurred**



**Violations abroad**



# Violations abroad

