

EVIDENCE SUBMITTED BY REDRESS TO THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INQUIRY ON THE UK'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

9 October 2023

About REDRESS

1. REDRESS is an NGO that pursues legal claims on behalf of survivors of torture in the UK and around the world to obtain justice and reparation for the violation of their human rights. Under its international justice program, REDRESS has been operating in the MENA region for over 30 years.
2. REDRESS, in collaboration with national and international partners, has been investigating the use of torture in Egypt in light of the country's obligations under relevant international law. On 2 October 2023, REDRESS submitted its report *Torture in Egypt: A Crime Against Humanity* to the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) ahead of its review of Egypt.¹

Submission Summary and Recommendations

3. This submission focuses on the UK's relationship to Egypt, and offers information relevant to four of the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC)'s questions:
 - What are the key challenges facing the countries of the Middle East and North Africa in the medium and long term and what implications do these have for UK foreign policy?
 - How can and should the UK engage with countries whose regimes do not respect human rights but who may be important for our resilience strategy, counter-terrorism efforts, economic growth, green energy transition, or who need humanitarian assistance?
 - To what extent should the UK prioritise political stability over the advancement of democracy in its relations?
 - What are the prospects for working with allies like the US and France? What are the prospects for working with international organisations?
4. A particular challenge for Egypt is the frequency of torture. Despite international outcry and protest from inside and outside Egypt, the authorities continue to detain and torture dissenters with impunity. REDRESS' new report establishes that torture in Egypt is so systematic and widespread as to amount to a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and customary international law. This finding reflects the seriousness of human rights abuses in Egypt and makes it even more critical for the UK to take firm action.
5. REDRESS urges the UK to take advantage of its close political and economic relationship with Egypt to pressure el-Sisi's regime to enact human rights reforms to challenge torture, in particular by following the example of the United States by making aid conditional on such reforms.² REDRESS also urges the UK to prioritise the protection of human rights, to promote accountability for Egyptian officials involved in committing

¹ See REDRESS, [Torture in Egypt, A Crime Against Humanity](#), 2 October 2023.

² See US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, [Chairman Cardin Statement on Foreign Military Financing to Egypt](#), 3 October 2023.

torture and other violations using its sanctions and universal jurisdiction frameworks. Doing so will encourage better governance and stability in Egypt, improving the relationship between Egypt and the UK.

Key Challenges: Torture in Egypt as a Crime Against Humanity

6. Military commander Abdel Fattah el-Sisi came to power through a coup in 2013. Just like his predecessor, former President Hosni Mubarak, during his 30-year authoritarian reign, el-Sisi used the guise of combatting terrorism to justify the use of torture and arbitrary detention. Following the coup, torture and other forms of ill-treatment were used against el-Sisi's political opponents.³
7. Over the last five years, as political and economic conditions have deteriorated, Egypt has increased its use of arbitrary detention and torture to suppress dissent and political activism. In many cases, detainees are tortured by police officers and held incommunicado before prosecutors bring charges.⁴
8. For decades, Egyptian authorities have practised torture as a tool to suppress dissent and against certain minorities.⁵ Authorities disproportionately arrest human rights defenders (HRDs), activists, LGBTIQ+ individuals, academics, journalists, lawyers, and opposition politicians for their political or human rights activism.⁶
9. Members of the National Security Agency (NSA) and the National Police are directly responsible as perpetrators of systematic torture. Also implicated are members of the Military and General Intelligence.⁷ In addition, the judiciary and State prosecution services (including the Supreme State Security Prosecution, (SSSP)) contribute to these crimes by facilitating and creating an enabling environment for the prevalence of torture and other persecution of Egyptians.⁸
10. The nature of torture in Egypt meets the threshold requirements for crimes against humanity under Article 7 of the Rome Statute.⁹ Although Egypt is not a State party to the Rome Statute, the definition of 'crimes against humanity' embodied in the Statute

³ See REDRESS, [Torture in Egypt, A Crime Against Humanity](#), 2 October 2023, pp. 9-12.

⁴ [Ibid.](#)

⁵ Amnesty International, ["Hosni Mubarak: A Living Legacy of Mass Torture and Arbitrary Detention"](#), 25 February 2020.

⁶ State of Finland on behalf of a group of countries, ["General Debate Item No 4: Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention: Joint Statement on Egypt"](#), 46th Session of the UNHRC, 12 March 2021.

⁷ Human Rights Watch, ["We Do Unreasonable Things Here"](#), 5 September 2017.

⁸ [Ibid.](#)

⁹ ICC, [Rome Statute](#), Article 7(2)(e). For purposes of the Rome Statute, torture is the "intentional infliction of severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, upon a person in the custody or under the control of the accused," but does not include "pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to, lawful sanctions".

reflects the definition of crimes against humanity under customary international law,¹⁰ which is binding on Egypt.¹¹

11. The methods of torture used by the Egyptian authorities, including beatings, electrical shocks, sexual violence such as forced anal exams and virginity tests, the denial of access to medical care and treatment, lack of family contact, and other acts that cause severe pain and suffering meet the threshold for torture codified in international law and standards.¹² The methodical use of torture (physical and psychological) as a tool to stifle dissent and for discrimination by the Egyptian authorities meets the Article 7(1) contextual requirement of a “widespread or systematic” attack.¹³
12. The torture and arbitrary detention of dissidents in Egypt is part of a State policy. Egypt’s emergency legal framework has long been used to facilitate the commission of serious human rights violations against activists, HRDs and others, including arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, and other ill-treatment, as well as sham criminal proceedings based on fabricated charges.¹⁴ Additionally, the 2015 Counter-Terrorism Law includes overly broad and vague terms to define the term “terrorist” and what constitutes an “act of terrorism” or “terrorism financing”.¹⁵ This has allowed security forces, such as the NSA, to commit serious human rights violations on a wide scale unchecked.¹⁶ In March 2021, a group of 31 States at the UNHRC expressed deep concern in relation to Egypt’s application of terrorism legislation against HRDs, LGBTI persons, journalists, politicians, and lawyers, as well as other measures to punish individuals for exercising their rights.¹⁷
13. Finally, the plethora of documentation on the prevalence of torture in Egypt, including decisions from the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, Communications

¹⁰ International Law Commission, ["Draft Articles on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity, with Commentaries"](#), Yearbook of the International Law Commission 2019, Vol. II, Part Two, p. 30. Also see Yudan Tan, ["Crimes against Humanity"](#), in "The Rome Statute as Evidence of Customary International Law" (Brill, 2021), Chapter 4.

¹¹ The International Court of Justice found in *Belgium v. Senegal* that the prohibition of torture was a *jus cogens* norm, therefore the prohibition of torture committed on a wide scale should be considered *jus cogens* as well. The fact that the prohibition on crimes against humanity is now part of customary international law means that Egypt does not need to be party to a treaty that prohibits crimes against humanity before it can be held accountable for committing them. See International Court of Justice, [Questions relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite \(Belgium v. Senegal\)](#), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2012, pp. 422 - 463, at p. 457, para. 99; International Law Commission, ["Draft Articles on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity, with Commentaries"](#), Yearbook of the International Law Commission 2019, vol. II, Part Two, p. 24.

¹² The Istanbul Protocol provides a partial list of torture methods. The list includes blunt trauma (e.g., from punching and kicking), positional torture (e.g., through suspension and prolonged constrained movement), electric shocks, sexual violence, deprivation of normal sensory stimulation, psychological manipulation, denial of medical and mental health care and treatment, and solitary confinement. OHCHR, ["Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment"](#) (Istanbul Protocol), 2022.

¹³ REDRESS, [Torture in Egypt, A Crime Against Humanity](#), 02 October 2023, p. 30.

¹⁴ [Ibid](#) at p. 32.

¹⁵ [Ibid](#) at pp. 32-34.

¹⁶ [Ibid](#).

¹⁷ State of Finland on behalf of a group of countries, ["General Debate Item No 4: Human Rights Situations that Require the Council’s Attention: Joint Statement on Egypt"](#), 46th Session of the UNHRC, 12 March 2021.

and Reports from the UN Human Rights Committee and other human rights bodies,¹⁸ NGO reports,¹⁹ and media reports, establish that military and civilian superiors and commanders knew or should have known of the widespread commission of torture against dissenters and others in Egypt.

14. Therefore, the commission of torture in Egypt amounts to crimes against humanity under customary international law and the Rome Statute, and is also a grave and systematic violation of the United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT).²⁰ This analysis, in the report attached as an appendix, builds on already established evidence on widespread torture in Egypt, and presents it in a new light that exposes the grave nature of the situation to encourage key stakeholders, including the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office, to act.
15. *In light of this analysis, the UK should use its role in the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Security Council, and other international bodies to push for the eradication and investigation of torture in Egypt as a crime against humanity.*

UK legislation on Torture and Crimes Against Humanity

16. The criminal law of England and Wales provides for universal jurisdiction over the crime of torture²¹ and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions,²² allowing national authorities to investigate and prosecute these offences when committed outside of the UK by foreign nationals. Section 134 of the Criminal Justice Act 1998 defines the crime of torture and echoes the definition in the UNCAT, which the UK ratified in 1988.²³
17. The courts of England and Wales can exercise jurisdiction over the offences of torture committed outside of the United Kingdom by any person, regardless of their nationality.²⁴ If the suspect is not in the UK, but is likely coming to the UK, the international crimes unit at the Metropolitan Police can open an investigation before the accused enters the territory.²⁵ For an arrest warrant to be issued and for the suspect to be charged, the suspect must be present in the UK, or their presence anticipated.²⁶

¹⁸ See e.g., HRC, "[Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Egypt](#)", UN Doc. CCPR/C/EGY/CO/5, 14 April 2023, CAT, [Report](#), UN Doc A/51/44 (SUPP), para. 184; and CAT, [Report](#), UN Doc A/72/44, 2017, para. 60; CAT, [Report](#), UN Doc A/49/44, 1994, para. 86; AT, [Report](#), UN Doc A/54/44, 26 June 1999, para. 207.

¹⁹ See e.g., Human Rights Watch, "[We Do Unreasonable Things Here](#)", 5 September 2017; Amnesty International, "[Egypt: 'Officially, you do not exist'](#)", 2016; EIPR, "[The Trap: Punishing sexual difference in Egypt](#)", November 2017.

²⁰ [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment \(Convention against Torture\)](#).

²¹ [Section 134 Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(CJA\)](#).

²² [Section 1 Geneva Conventions Act 1957 \(GCA\)](#).

²³ United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies Database, [Ratification Status for United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#). Torture requires: i) the intentional infliction of severe pain or suffering on another; ii) by a public official; iii) in the performance of their duties. No specific purpose is required for a finding of torture under the CJA, unlike the CAT. Trial International, [Universal Jurisdiction: Law and Practice in England and Wales](#), May 2022, p. 5.

²⁴ Trial International, [Universal Jurisdiction: Law and Practice in England and Wales](#), May 2022, p. 13.

²⁵ [Ibid.](#)

²⁶ [Ibid.](#)

18. The International Criminal Court Act criminalises and provides for universal jurisdiction over crimes codified in the Rome Statute of the ICC, including crimes against humanity.²⁷ The courts of England and Wales can exercise jurisdiction over the offences of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed abroad by any person who: i) is a UK national or UK resident at the time of the crime; or ii) became a UK national or UK resident after the crime and still resides in the UK when proceedings are brought.²⁸
19. The UK has had opportunities to prosecute Egyptian officials under universal jurisdiction, but instead has granted them “Special Mission Immunity”, undermining the absolute prohibition of torture, encouraging impunity, and normalising torture. For example, in September 2015, Egyptian General Mahmoud Hegazy made an official visit to the UK. There is evidence that General Hegazy is responsible for torture and other atrocities in Egypt, including the Rabaa Square massacre of 2013, during which Egyptian security forces killed at least 900 people. The Metropolitan Police did not investigate or arrest him because the Foreign Office advised that he had special mission immunity.²⁹
20. *Given the absolute prohibition of torture, the UK should exercise universal jurisdiction over Egyptian officials in the UK involved in the commission of torture of Egyptians. To facilitate these prosecutions, the UK should restrict its practice of providing personal immunity from criminal jurisdiction for those accused of involvement in torture.*

The UK’s relationship to Egypt

21. Despite Egypt’s human rights record, the United Kingdom is one of Egypt’s most important trade and investment partners. Trade between Egypt and the United Kingdom totalled 4.5 billion GBP in 2022, which represents a 43% year over year increase.³⁰ UK Investment in Egypt in 2022 totalled 21 billion GBP, with UK companies making significant investment in the Egyptian renewables sector.³¹ British Petroleum boasts that it has “become a major pillar of [Egypt’s] energy industry”, as it has produced almost 50% of Egypt’s gas and close to 10% of Egypt’s oil.³²
22. Additionally, the UK government continues to partner with Egypt. In 2020, the head of MI6 met el-Sisi in Cairo to discuss “intelligence cooperation”.³³ Since July 2017, the UK

²⁷ [Ibid](#) at p. 14. Crimes against humanity include: “Any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack: murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, forcible transfer of population, imprisonment, or other severe deprivation of physical liberty, torture, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual offences of comparable gravity, persecution against any identifiable group, enforced disappearance, apartheid, and other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering/serious injury to body or to mental/physical health”. ICC, [Rome Statute](#) Article 7.

²⁸ Trial International, [Universal Jurisdiction: Law and Practice in England and Wales](#), May 2022, p. 14.

²⁹ This was challenged in the High Court. REDRESS and Amnesty International intervened in the case, arguing that there is insufficient state practice accompanied by recognition of legal obligation to show a clear rule of customary international law that obliges States to grant visiting foreign officials on “special missions” personal immunity from criminal jurisdiction. In 2016, the Divisional Court found that customary international law does require States to secure personal immunity for officials on “special mission” visits to the UK. In 2018, the Court of Appeal confirmed this judgment. See REDRESS, [Special mission immunity and General Hegazy case](#), July 2018.

³⁰ Ahram Online, [British Embassy in Cairo celebrates King Charles III’s 75th birthday](#), 22 June 2023.

³¹ [Ibid.](#)

³² British Petroleum, [Egypt](#).

³³ Ahram Online, [Egypt’s Sisi discusses intelligence cooperation with chief of Britain’s MI6](#), 09 November 2020.

has authorised more than 20 million GBP in military aid to Egypt, and Egypt regularly attends the DSEI arms fairs that occur every two years in London.³⁴ In 2019-2020, Egypt was designated a “key market” by the Defence and Security Exports unit of Britain’s trade ministry.³⁵ In April 2023, Lord Ahmed, the Minister for the Middle East, visited Cairo, reaffirming Egypt’s strategic relationship with the UK.³⁶ Meanwhile, Egyptian diplomats continue working as always in London while Egypt remains one of the UK’s “human rights countries of concern”.³⁷

23. This level of economic and military involvement presents an opportunity for the UK to leverage its relationship with Egypt to encourage el-Sisi’s regime to pursue genuine human rights reforms that eradicate torture and connected violations. In recent years, the Egyptian government has attempted to placate international actors calling for an end to human rights violations by creating State-controlled human rights agencies, adopting a National Human Rights Strategy,³⁸ and hosting international conferences such as the 2019 African Commission and 2022 UN Climate Change Conference (COP27).³⁹ The Egyptian government in part used COP27 to project a *façade* of tolerance, while simultaneously suppressing activism at the conference.⁴⁰
24. This close relationship also leaves the United Kingdom vulnerable to legal liability if the UK’s financial or military investments are used in the commission of human rights violations, including the commission of crimes against humanity.⁴¹ This concern is heightened by the fact that at least one UK citizen and human rights activist, Alaa Abdel Fattah, was tortured by Egyptian authorities and continues to be arbitrarily imprisoned and denied consular services in Cairo.⁴²
25. Since 2021, the United States has conditioned a portion of its annual aid to Egypt on progress with regards to human rights, and particularly on the release of political

³⁴ Campaign Against Arms Trade, [Defence and Security Equipment International](#), 6 June 2023.

³⁵ Campaign Against Arms Trade, [Priority Markets](#), 07 October 2020.

³⁶ Gov.uk, [Lord Ahmad reaffirms UK-Egypt strategic relationship](#), 06 April 2023.

³⁷ UK Parliament, [Egypt: Human Rights, Question for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#), 7 December 2020. The United Kingdom has taken isolated actions to support human rights reform in Egypt, such as Lord Ahmad meeting with Alaa Abdel Fattah’s family during his visit to Cairo in April. REDRESS applauds the actions the UK has taken. However, the UK’s actions have not meaningfully challenged Egypt’s impunity.

³⁸ CAT, [“Fifth Periodic Report submitted by Egypt under Article 19 of the Convention, due in 2004”](#), UN Doc. CAT/C/EGY/5, 27 December 2021, paras. 35 – 36.

³⁹ UNFCCC, [Sharm El-Sheik Climate Change Conference \(COP27\)](#), 6-20 November 2022.

⁴⁰ COP Civic Space, Prisoners of Conscience, [“Mohammed El-Qassas”](#), [n.d.].

⁴¹ For example, in 2011, British made tear gas was used against protesters participating in the revolution that overthrew former President Hosni Mubarak. The Independent, [British-made tear gas was used on Egypt’s protesters](#), 04 December 2011.

⁴² In February 2023, Alaa Abdel Fattah’s family submitted evidence to the FAC in response to a call regarding hostage taking. The submission highlights how high-level talks between British and Egyptian officials have failed, even just to secure consular access for Alaa, and calls for the UK to apply political and economic pressure to Egypt. [Written evidence submission on behalf of the family of Alaa Abd el-Fattah \(SLH0043\)](#), 02 February 2023.

prisoners.⁴³ In 2023, the United States announced that it would withhold all its rights-conditioned aid after the Egyptian government failed to make sufficient progress.⁴⁴

26. *The UK should apply diplomatic, commercial, and political pressure to the Egyptian government and demand that Egyptian authorities stop imprisoning and torturing dissidents and political activists.*

The UK must reprioritise human rights in its engagement with Egypt

27. In its call for evidence, the FAC asks how the UK can continue to manage its strategic relationships with MENA countries committing human rights violations. As it stands, the UK's failure to leverage its relationship with Egypt suggests that the UK is unconcerned with human rights, even those of its own citizens.⁴⁵ The UK can and should consider how to hold the Egyptian government accountable for human rights violations, including torture. Doing so will reinforce the UK's commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights, and should result in more credible and sustainable economic, military, and political relationships with allies and partners around the world.
28. Apart from having the responsibility under international law to hold Egypt accountable for torture,⁴⁶ it is of a strategic value for the UK to prioritise action regarding the human rights situation in Egypt for two reasons. First, holding the Egyptian government accountable for its human rights record will bolster other actions the UK is taking to improve human rights around the globe without being viewed as holding double standards. For example, the United Kingdom is currently sanctioning individuals from Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Russia for human rights violations, including for the torture of human rights defenders.⁴⁷
29. Second, it is well established that a state's stability is inextricably linked to its respect for the human rights of its citizens.⁴⁸ As the FCDO acknowledges in its 2022 Human Rights Programme summary: "Human rights violations and abuses and the absence of the rule of law lead to unstable and less prosperous societies. They create a world where the safety of all individuals, including British citizens, is at greater risk. The inadequate protection of human rights creates a cycle of insecurity, instability, and poverty. Human

⁴³ Politico, [Biden to withhold, restrict some military aid to Egypt](#), 13 September 2021.

⁴⁴ AL-Monitor, [US Senator blocks \\$235 million in Egypt military aid over rights](#), 3 October 2023; *see also* World Development vol. 158, [Aid effectiveness: Human rights as a conditionality measure](#), October 2022, finding that the measurement and monitoring of human rights provision is a useful tool in gauging the likely effectiveness of foreign aid; Political Studies Association, Human Rights Violations, [Political Conditionality and Public Attitudes to Foreign Aid: Evidence from Survey Experiments](#), 18 January 2021, finding that British voters are less supportive of aid to countries with reported human rights abuses.

⁴⁵ In an op-ed in *The New York Times* about her son's continued imprisonment, Alaa Abdel Fattah's mother, Professor Laila Soueif, writes: "The pressure that the United States and Europe claim to exert on the Egyptian government to clean up its human rights act is meant only to placate certain portions of their constituents. The Egyptian authorities respond accordingly. They understand that "clean up your human rights act" actually means "we support you, but please try not to embarrass us." The New York Times, [My Son is Not Alone. Millions of Young People Commit His Crime](#), 17 December 2021.

⁴⁶ The absolute prohibition on torture has reached the status of *jus cogens* under international law, giving rise to an obligation for all States to act against those who commit torture.

⁴⁷ Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation HM Treasury, [Consolidated List of Financial Sanctions Targets in the UK](#), 21 April 2023.

⁴⁸ *See* US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, [Chairman Cardin Statement on Foreign Military Financing to Egypt](#), 3 October 2023.

rights... are the bedrock of successful and progressive societies. Countries where human rights are respected, including those with a strong record on gender equality, tend to be more prosperous, democratic, and stable. Corruption is less likely to take root, and extremism is less likely to find fertile ground.”⁴⁹

30. Over the past decade in Egypt human rights have been abused by the Egyptian government and ignored by the international community. The political and economic situation has rapidly deteriorated as a result of el-Sisi’s policies,⁵⁰ leading to thousands fleeing the country every month.⁵¹ Now, just two months ahead of a presidential election the results of which will very likely be falsified, more unrest is expected as 60% of Egyptians struggle at or below the poverty line while also contending with the regime’s violent political oppression.⁵²
31. REDRESS urges the FAC to consider that a government that readily imprisons and tortures its citizens for criticising it is also a government that actively fosters domestic instability, even if, in the short term, it appears otherwise.
32. *The UK must consider, after almost a decade of impunity on the part of el-Sisi’s regime, that unless the Egyptian government is pressured to take serious steps towards accountability and reform, the human rights situation is not going to improve, and instability will continue.*

Recommendations

33. The UK government should levy targeted Magnitsky sanctions against Egyptian officials who are involved in the commission of torture as it qualifies as a crime against humanity.
34. The UK government should take advantage of its close economic relationship with Egypt to pressure el-Sisi’s regime to enact human rights reform, investigate all allegations of torture and other human rights violations, and hold those responsible to account.
35. The UK government should ensure that perpetrators of torture are held accountable including through universal jurisdiction and other accountability avenues, where possible.
36. The UK government should leverage its position on the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council to establish an investigative body, such as a Commission of Inquiry or a Fact-Finding Mission, or a Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Egypt, tasked with monitoring, investigating, and establishing the facts and circumstances of torture as a crime against humanity in Egypt, as well as other human rights violations.⁵³ The evidence collected by such a body should be used to facilitate accountability efforts.

⁴⁹ Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, [Human Rights Programme summary 2022 to 2023](#), 30 March 2023.

⁵⁰ Middle East Eye, [Egypt ‘second most at risk of debt crisis after Ukraine’](#), 12 September 2023. risk; Al-Jazeera, [Egypt to hold presidential vote in December as economic crisis worsens](#), 25 September 2023.

⁵¹ International Organization for Migration, [Migration Flow to Europe: Arrivals](#), updated 2 October 2023; National Public Radio, [Egypt’s vanishing village men: Risking it all to get to Europe](#), 21 July 2023.

⁵² Middle East Monitor, [Egypt to vote for president in December; Sisi expected to win](#), 25 September 2023.

⁵³ There is precedent for establishing such a body. United Nations mandated commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions are increasingly being used to respond to situations of serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and to promote accountability for such violations and counter impunity. For example, in 2016, the General Assembly established, through resolution the

Annex

REDRESS, [Torture in Egypt, A Crime Against Humanity](#), 2 October 2023

International Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. The UN Human Rights Council have established numerous similar fact-finding missions to respond to human rights violations in Belarus, Libya, Palestine/Israel, Yemen, and Myanmar.