



**Egypt Non-Violent Event Catalogue  
2025  
Policy Brief**



## Policy Brief

# Non-Violent Protest Event Catalogue in Egypt 2025

*The Social Movement in the Context of an Unprecedented Economic Crisis: Evidence-based Numerical Analysis and Implications for Public Policies*

*April 2026*

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## First: Executive Summary

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The Open Data Tank (ODT) 2025 Egypt Protest Dataset records an exceptional **number of 1,849 protest events**, compared to 420 events in 2024, with a growth rate of **340%** in one year. This is the highest level measured in many years in Egypt, and is a direct reflection of the accumulation of unprecedented economic pressures during the period 2022-2025, and carries with it deeper structural indicators related to the buffer breakage Psychological factors in large sectors of society.

The structure of the protest in 2025 has shifted fundamentally on two simultaneous levels: first, the transition from the dominance of human rights demands (71% in 2024) to the dominance of economic demands (**64%** in 2025); second, the reversal of the ranking of the groups organizing the events, with **public sector employees leading with 481 events** (mostly driven by the massive mobilization of water sector workers), surpassing political prisoners (401), independent trade unions (383), and private sector workers (281). Forms of direct field protest also emerged Unprecedentedly: demonstrations (47 to 624) and sit-ins (13 to 73).

This paper recommends a range of legislative and institutional reforms related to freedom of assembly, workers' rights, the wage system, and security accountability, based on Egypt's international obligations and the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that have not been implemented.

## Second: Introduction

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This paper is published as part of the Open Data Tank (ODT) policy analysis series based on its field-observed datasets. The analysis examines the 2025 Dataset of Protest Events in Egypt, based on the same methodology adopted in the 2024 edition, which defines a protest event as: any "collective or individual movement or demand" aimed at obtaining rights or achieving rights, economic, or social demands.

The data revealed in this paper have a double meaning: on the one hand, it is a quantitative document that proves the scale of the ongoing social transformations, and on the other hand, it is a warning indicator of the state of societal tension accumulated in the absence of legitimate outlets for expression and addressing economic grievances.

In addition to the previous edition, a new variable, the "Sector of Activism", allows for a deeper reading of the nature of the economic and social sectors in which the protest movement was triggered, and reveals sectoral patterns that were not visible in traditional categorical analysis.

## Third: Context

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### 1. Unprecedented economic crisis

During the period 2022-2025, Egypt witnessed the most severe economic crisis in decades, manifested in three consecutive floats of the Egyptian pound, with which it lost more than two-thirds of its value against the dollar, as the exchange rate fell from about 16 pounds to the dollar in 2022 to more than 50 pounds in 2024. Inflation rates have risen to unprecedented levels, with commodity prices tripling to 4-fold in a short period of time, exhausting the purchasing power of large segments of society.

In this context, the minimum wage remained virtually unenforced in the private sector and in many public institutions, leading to a severe erosion of real wages that affected public sector employees as well. The working class and middle class are facing an existential challenge of not being able to meet basic needs at fixed wages in the face of soaring inflation.

### 2. Regional Context: Wars and Instability

This economic crisis coincided with a wave of severe regional unrest, as the ongoing Gaza war since October 2023 had a direct impact on tourism and the passage of goods, as well as the economic repercussions of the decline in Suez Canal revenues due to Houthi threats in the Red Sea. On the one hand, the Bar and Journalists' Syndicates raised their voices of solidarity with the Palestinian cause, and on the other hand, the intertwining of the regional situation with economic problems deepened the intensity of social demands.

### 3. National Dialogue 2022: Trying to build the home front

In the face of this escalating crisis, the government launched the National Dialogue in April 2022 as a mechanism to manage and contain social and political tensions within a controlled framework, rather than an approach to actual reform. However, the national dialogue has not yielded tangible results in economic policies or the release of political prisoners. Subsequent developments, particularly the 2025 data, have revealed that this formal assimilation was not enough to absorb the accumulated social pressure, which finally found its footing in the unprecedented wave of protests in 2025.

## Fourth: Review and Reading the Figures

This section reviews key figures from the two datasets (2024 and 2025) with quantitative comparison.

### A. Overall Size and Growth

Indicator	2024	2025	Ratio (2024 / 2025)
Total Events	420	1,849	— / ▲ 340%
First Quarter	88	301	21% / 16.3%
Second Quarter	71	686	16.9% / 37.1%
Third Quarter	130	268	31% / 14.5%
Fourth Quarter	131	594	31.2% / 32.1%

### B. Geographical distribution

Geographical Territory	2024	2025	Teams
Central Governorates (Cairo + Giza + Alexandria)	218	958	51.9% / 51.8%
Delta Governorates	165	486	39.3% / 26.3%
Upper Egypt Governorates	30	254	7.1% / 13.7%
Border Governorates	4	103	1% / 5.6%
Canal Cities	3	48	0.7% / 2.6%

A prominent geographical note: Beheira governorate jumped from 8 events in 2024 to 217 in 2025, mostly driven by hunger strikes inside correction and rehabilitation centers. Cairo alone recorded 420 events in the fourth quarter, the majority of which were related to field demonstrations by water sector workers.

### C. Types of Protest Act

Verb Type	2024	2025	Growth Rate
Strike	54	511	12.9% / 27.6%
Hunger strike inside a place of detention	199	400	47.4% / 21.6%
Hunger strike outside detention	93	202	22.1% / 10.9%
Field Demonstration	47	624	11.2% / 33.7%
Field sit-in	13	73	3.1% / 4%
Statement of demands and media distress	14	39	3.3% / 2.1%

## D. Classification of the Cause of the Protest Act

Cause Classification	2024	2025	Percentage per year
Economic demands	86	1,184	20.5% / 64%
Human Rights Demands	300	634	71.4% / 34.3%
Political demands	18	22	4.3% / 1.2%
Social demands	16	9	3.8% / 0.5%

## e. Classification of organized categories

Organized Category	2024	2025	Relative Attendance in 2025
Public Sector / Employees	18	481	— / 26%
Political prisoners	203	401	48.8% / 21.7%
Professional unions and independent community associations	0	383	— / 20.7%
Workers in the private sector and daily	65	281	15.6% / 15.2%
Human rights activist	96	214	23.1% / 11.6%
Journalists and media professionals	7	68	1.7% / 3.7%
Social, cultural and political activism	18	18	4.3% / 1%
Students	4	2	1% / 0.1%

## F. Suppressive Response

Response Type	2024	2025	Percentage per year
Events that witnessed repression	280	303	66.7% / 16.4%
Events without a repressive response	140	1,546	33.3% / 83.6%

## g. Event Sector (new variable in the 2025 version)

The "Sector of Activity" variable is a qualitative addition to the 2025 dataset, as it enables the monitoring of the economic and social sectors in which the protest movement was triggered with greater accuracy than the classification of individual organized groups. The following table shows the full distribution:

Event Sector	Number of Events	Percentage	The most common type of protest
Agriculture and Water (Water and Sanitation Services)	<b>447</b>	24.2%	Field Demonstration (428)
Correction, Rehabilitation and Detention Centers	<b>401</b>	21.7%	Hunger strike inside a detention center
Law Firm	<b>382</b>	20.7%	Strike (270), Demonstration (111)
Press, Culture and Civil Society	<b>289</b>	15.6%	Hunger strike outside detention (202)
Other Companies & Factories (Private Sector)	<b>152</b>	8.2%	Strike ( 126)
Construction & Real Estate	<b>60</b>	3.2%	Strike ( 50)
Energy & Mining	<b>52</b>	2.8%	Field Demonstration (33), Strike (11)
Officials and statutory and sovereign bodies	<b>28</b>	1.5%	Strike ( 27)
Health	<b>16</b>	0.9%	Strike (9), Demonstration (6)
Education and Scientific Research	<b>7</b>	0.4%	Field Event (6)
Transport and Ports	<b>4</b>	0.2%	Statement of demands, strike
Banking & Sports	<b>6</b>	0.3%	Field Demonstration

## Fifth: Numerical Analysis and Significance

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### 1. The change in the structure of the protest actor: the public sector is at the forefront:

Public sector employees accounted for 481 events (26% of the total), with this figure at its highest level in the water and services sector (445 out of 481 events). This suggests that the economic crisis has not only affected the private sector, but has penetrated government institutions themselves, with state-linked civil servants unable to afford the gap between their frozen wages and the doubling cost of living.

This phenomenon is doubly significant in political analysis: protest within the state institutions themselves, rather than in the face of them from the outside, suggests that the economic crisis undermines the rules of institutional loyalty within the government system itself. This is a more compelling indicator in political analysis than the usual protests of private sector workers.

### 2. Sectoral Reading: The Movement of Workers in the Water Sector as a Pivotal Phenomenon:

The "Sector of Event" variable reveals a pivotal phenomenon that was not apparent in the traditional analysis: the agriculture and water sector leads with 447 events (24.2%), most of which are field events (428 events), with 86% concentrated in Cairo (385 events), specifically in the fourth quarter, which witnessed 400 out of 481 events for public sector employees.

This paints a clear picture: a huge and organized wave of demonstrations by water and sewage workers in the streets of Cairo, protesting wages that do not keep pace with inflation and demanding the implementation of the minimum wage. The sectoral pattern here – high intensity, field demonstrations, geographical concentration in the capital, temporal positioning in the fourth quarter – does not indicate sporadic spontaneous movements, but rather a wave of protest that was launched in advance sectoral coordination.

### 3. Elite Professions in the Public Sphere: Lawyers and Journalists as Joint Protest Actors:

Together, lawyers and journalists form a distinct protest bloc in Mashhad 2025, which has one thing in common: both professions operate at the heart of the public space and have a direct impact on public opinion, politics, and the legal system. This gives their movement a different character from that of workers or activists.

Lawyers rank third in the sector with 382 events, which are concentrated in the second quarter specifically (381 out of 382 events), and are distributed between work strikes (270) and field demonstrations (111), and are classified as economic demands with 99.7%. This sharp temporal concentration – a well-organized wave that fills an entire quarter – proves that the lawyers' movement was a planned campaign, not a spontaneous reaction. This is explained by a combination of two factors: the economic deterioration that affects the professional earnings of middle-income lawyers due to inflation, and the accumulation of professional-institutional concerns related to the independence of the judiciary and the encroachment of the executive on the judicial system.

As for the journalists (68 events in the press sector), they represent a movement of various forms: 50 sit-ins, 14 demonstrations, and 4 statements of demands, which indicates regular and extended activity within the Journalists' Syndicate and in its direct space. What is important in reading both tracks together is that both work from the position of community mediation: the lawyer is the legal defender of rights, and the journalist is the public witness and the whistleblower. When these two groups protest this momentum, it heralds an erosion of the traditional distance between professional elites and the protest movement in Egypt.

#### **4. Protest against detention: Political prisoners and the human rights solidarity movement:**

The political detention movement constitutes an independent track in the 2025 dataset, which is distinct from the economic and professional movement in its motivations and forms, but parallels it in quantitative size: it includes a total of 634 human rights activists (34.3% of the total), distributed across three interrelated levels.

The first level: Inside the walls of detention, where political prisoners carried out 400 hunger strikes inside correction and rehabilitation centers, which were concentrated in Beheira (196), Sharqiya (91), Cairo (51), Alexandria (35), and the New Valley (25), which refers to the map of major correction and rehabilitation centers and their geographical distribution. These strikes are the only way for detainees to express their rejection of conditions of detention or to demand their release, in the absence of effective legal remedies.

The second level: Outside the walls of detention, the dataset documented 199 hunger strike activities carried out by human rights activist Leila Soueif, mother of political activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, at her residence in Giza in fulfillment of her pledge to continue the strike as long as her son is behind bars despite the expiration of his legal sentence. This strike lasted on a daily basis from January 2025 to July 2025 (about 199 days documented in the data), constituting the longest continuous individual protest recorded in the dataset, and embodying a model of human rights activism based on personal action and her international media visibility.

The third level: Collective solidarity activities, which consist of 19 collective statements and media demands issued by human rights organizations and activists collectively to demand the release of political detainees or to protest the conditions of detention. These data indicate that the civil rights system continues to operate despite the restrictions imposed on it.

Reading the three figures in their integrated context reveals a phenomenon of a special humanitarian and political nature: the protest against detention continues to generate a large-scale protest movement, both inside and outside the prison walls, in an indication that the issue of political detainees remains a living mobilization engine, even if its proportional share of economic mobility has declined.

#### **5. Wage Erosion in the Face of Inflation: Dynamics of Frozen Wages in the Public and Private Sectors:**

The wage and entitlement crisis is the deepest economic axis fueling the majority of protest activities in 2025. Economic demands, which have risen from 86 events in 2024 to 1,184 in 2025, have in essence a common characteristic: the widening gap between fixed nominal wages and Egypt's doubling price level during the period 2022-2025.

In the private sector, economic protests (273 events) are concentrated in the sectors of physical production: various companies and factories (149 events), construction and real estate (55), energy and mining (50), health (11), and transportation (3). The common demand in all these events is very clear: wages that do not keep pace with inflation, the payment of late dues, and the non-implementation of the minimum wage despite government decisions to update it.

In the public sector, the issue is more complex: workers in government institutions are subject to a different wage system, governed by job structures that rely on multiple components (basic wages, incentives, allowances) that are determined independently. Hyperinflation has produced a stark disparity between the nominal value of incentives and bonuses and their actual purchase value, which is clearly reflected in the demands of water and sewer workers: they enjoy relative job stability, but their real incomes have collapsed as the pound depreciated and the price of everything rose.

Analytically speaking, 2025 has proven that the wage crisis does not differentiate between the public and private sectors: both complain of the same ailment, and both resort to the same means. This intersection overrides the explanation that the labor movement in Egypt is exclusively linked to the conditions of the private sector and the lack of protection in it; here are state employees taking to the streets to demand what secures their lives, which makes the fundamental problem of the macro wage policy in Egypt, not labor relations in a particular sector.

## **6. A qualitative transition in the form of the Hirak: The rise of the field demonstration:**

The increase in field demonstrations from 47 to 624 (13 times) and sit-ins from 13 to 73 indicate a marked decline in the degree of reluctance to take direct action in the public space. In the Egyptian context, where on-ground protest has seen deterrent sanctions since 2013, this shift is structurally significant: it expresses a societal appreciation that the cost of silence is equal to or greater than the cost of protest in the calculations of large segments of society. These field events are concentrated in the governorates of Markazi, Beheira and Sharqiyah.

## **7. Reading in Security Response Dynamics: Structural Transformation or Recalibration?**

The stark disparity in repressive response rates between the two years raises fundamental analytical questions: the rate of events that have been subjected to a repressive response has fallen from 66.7% in 2024 to 16.4% in 2025. More importantly, this decline was not surprising, but rather an extension of a curve that had already begun in the fourth quarter of 2024 that recorded a relatively low suppression rate (17.6%).

When looking at the distribution of the repressive response across the 2025 quarters, a more nuanced picture emerges: the third quarter had the highest repression rate of the year (31.7%), a quarter in which the large number of lawyers' activities declined (after filling the second quarter) and mobility rose in other sectors. In contrast, the second quarter, despite being the highest in the number of events (686), recorded the lowest suppression rate (12.5%). This internal disparity suggests that the security response is not only about the size of the quantitative movement, but also about the nature and context of the protesting party.

This dynamic can be explained by a number of possibilities, some of which do not negate it: the decline in direct confrontation may reflect an appreciation of the sheer size of the movement and the breadth of its social and professional base, making direct and comprehensive confrontation more

costly than when protests were limited in scope and category. In the same vein, the social expansion of the movement – and its spillover into sectors that were historically closer to the regime such as lawyers and civil servants – may have narrowed the margin for comprehensive repressive responses. Regardless of the actual motives, what the data prove is a clear objective outcome: broad protest groups have learned that demand is possible, which is entrenching a gradual culture of protest that has a cumulative impact on the horizon of social mobility in the medium term.

## **8. Geographic concentration with marginal expansion and emerging patterns:**

The geographical weight continues in the central governorates (51.8%), but what is new in 2025 is the increase in the share of the border governorates (from 1% to 5.6%) and the governorates of Upper Egypt (from 7.1% to 13.7%), indicating a gradual geographical expansion. The phenomenon of the lake (8 to 217) is of a dual character: on the one hand, it is an observatory for correction and rehabilitation centers (196 hunger strikes inside detention facilities), and on the other hand, it is an arena for labor mobility in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Cairo's exceptional position in the fourth quarter (420 events) is mainly linked to the wave of demonstrations by water sector workers, making the capital's protest geography in 2025 bear a clear sectoral signature that is different from previous years.

## Sixth: Recommendations

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The following recommendations are based on the international legal framework for human rights, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Egypt ratified (1982), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1981), as well as the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for the third (2019) and fourth (2025) rounds, which have not been implemented.

### A. Legislative Reforms:

- Revision of the Law on Assemblies No. 10 of 1914 and its amendments: This law restricts the right to peaceful assembly guaranteed by Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil Rights in Articles 21 and 22. The current text contradicts international standards that turn the prior authorization system into a notification system. The UPR 2019 and 2025 recommendations explicitly called for "guaranteeing and restricting the right to peaceful assembly only when necessary and consistent with international standards."
- Repeal or substantially amend the Anti-Terrorism Law (2015): The law was used to criminalize peaceful protest, freedom of expression, and trade union activity, in contravention of the principle of the legality of the crime enshrined in article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil Rights.
- Amending the Labor Law to Ensure the Implementation of the Minimum Wage in the Public and Private Sectors: The 2025 Events embody a clear legal gap between the legislative approval of the minimum wage and the absence of executive mechanisms. This requires the activation of an independent labour inspection system, facilitated reporting mechanisms, and linking the minimum to the inflation index.
- Amendment of the Trade Union Law to Enable Independent Trade Unions: The presence of independent professional associations will increase in 2025 despite restrictions, reflecting a field overreach of the legal framework that requires legislative normalization in accordance with International Labor Organization Convention No. 87.

### B. Institutional and Judicial Reforms:

- Abolition of pretrial detention as a tool of control: Pretrial detention (article 143 of criminal procedure) has been used as a systematic tool to suppress activists, in explicit violation of article 9 of the ICCPR. The 2019 UPR recommendations called for a "maximum period of pretrial detention."
- Review of the jurisdiction of military justice over civilians: During the 2019 UPR session, 27 countries called for this jurisdiction to be restricted, and the demand was renewed in 2025.
- Establish an independent mechanism to grapple with abuses by security forces: While the rate of repression has declined to 16.4 percent in 2025, 303 actors remain subject to

a repressive response, which requires the establishment of an independent oversight body in accordance with the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force.

### **C. Recommendations on the Implementation of International Conventions:**

- Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil Rights (Freedom of Association): Enable independent trade union federations to operate without interference from the executive.
- Articles 6 and 7 of the International Covenant on Economic Rights (Right to Work and its Conditions): Linking the minimum wage to inflation indicators and making it mandatory for application in the public and private sectors.
- Unimplemented UPR 2019 and 2025 recommendations: In July 2025, Amnesty International expressed concern about Egypt's formal acceptance of 210 of the 343 recommendations from the fourth round with no signs of actual implementation.

### **D. Recommendations for Economic Policy as a Prerequisite for the Stability of the Civic Space:**

- Reform the public sector wage system and review government wage structures: The 2025 data reveals that the multi-component system of government wages (basic wage, incentives, allowances) has created a stark disparity between nominal value and actual purchasing value. This requires a comprehensive review that links wage components to inflation and cost-of-living indicators.
- Transparency in economic policies and the involvement of workers' representatives: Establishing tripartite negotiating bodies (government-employer-workers) on the ILO model that provides an institutional channel for dealing with grievances before they turn into field events.

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