

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#) > [Research Program](#) > [Responses to Information Requests](#)

## Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

16 May 2013

### EGY104413.E

EGY104413.E

Egypt: Whether the government in Egypt has made head covering mandatory for women (2012-May 2013)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the government in Egypt making head covering mandatory for women could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, the following information may be of interest.

*Al-Hayat*, a Lebanese newspaper reporting on the Middle East (Factiva n.d.), reports that "as soon as" the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidential election in Egypt, "several women reported that they were harassed by bearded men and veiled women calling on them to wear the hijab ... [a]lthough there is no evidence to corroborate such claims" (29 July 2012). *The Miami Herald* reports that, since the Muslim Brotherhood came into power, there has been a "new trend...of harassment against women who do not wear the hijab" (5 July 2012). *The Miami Herald* adds that, according to women, men in the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as radical Salafis ["ultraconservative Sunni Muslims" (*The New York Times* 19 Aug. 2012)], and some conservative Egyptian women "confront them in public, yelling their calls for them to dress differently" (5 July 2012).

Sources report on the establishment of "morality police" (Ahramonline 13 Jan. 2012; openDemocracy 24 Jan. 2012). Ahramonline, an Egyptian English-language news website (n.d.), reports that the morality police declared its existence on social media in December 2011, and is an anonymous group, named the "'Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice in Egypt'," which does not have official authority to enforce or implement Islamic law (Ahramonline 13 Jan. 2012). According to Ahramonline, "some of the morality enforcers that ... hit the streets are said to be adamant about persuading women to wear the face veil, or Niqab" (ibid.). openDemocracy, an "independent, public interest, not-for-profit" news source (n.d.), reports that, according to "[t]he press," Egyptian men are paid by the morality police to "impose morality on the public, including forcing un-veiled or rather improperly veiled women off the streets" (openDemocracy 24 Jan. 2012). openDemocracy adds that "these attempts were foiled thanks to media and public outrage" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

*Egypt Independent*, an Egyptian English-language newspaper (n.d.), reported that, in October 2012, a primary school teacher cut the hair of two students because they were not wearing hijabs (*Egypt Independent* 17 Oct. 2012). The newspaper later indicated that the Luxor Misdemeanor Court sentenced the teacher to six months in prison and suspended her for three years (ibid. 6 Nov. 2012).

*Al-Masry Al-Youm*, a newspaper described by *Egypt Independent* as its "sister organization" (*Egypt Independent* n.d.), reports that, according to the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, four students in sixth grade in Bulaq al-Dakrur, Giza Governorate, were beaten by their religion teacher for not wearing hijabs (11 April 2013). Corroborating or further information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The BBC reports that, clerics on television tell men that they can touch girls that are not "'properly'" covered (4 May 2013). Reuters reports that a preacher appeared on television and said that women "must cover up for their own protection" (9 Jan. 2013).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this

Information Request.

## References

- Ahramonline. 13 January 2012. Sherif Tarek. "Egypt's Morality Police: Islamic Fanaticism or Elaborate Hoax?" <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/31484/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt%E2%80%99s-morality-police-Islamic-fanaticism-or-elab.aspx>> [Accessed 7 May 2013]
- \_\_\_\_\_. N.d. "About Ahramonline." <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/UI/Front/Aboutus.aspx>> [Accessed 14 May 2013]
- Al-Hayat. 29 July 2012. "Many Egyptian Women Fear for Future Under Morsi Government." Translated by Al-Monitor. <<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2012/07/the-egyptian-woman-after-the-rev.html>> [Accessed 7 May 2013]
- Al-Masry Al-Youm*. 11 April 2013. "Sixth-graders Allegedly Beaten by Teacher for Not Wearing Hijab." Translated by *Egypt Independent*. <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/sixth-graders-allegedly-beaten-teacher-not-wearing-hijab>> [Accessed 7 May 2013]
- British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). 4 May 2013. Aleem Maqbool. "Egypt Minister's Remarks Fuel Sexual Harassment Debate." <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22402053>> [Accessed 7 May 2013]
- Egypt Independent*. 6 November 2012. "Teacher Who Cut Students' Hair Sentenced to Six Months." <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/teacher-who-cut-students-hair-sentenced-six-months>> [Accessed 7 May 2013]
- \_\_\_\_\_. 17 October 2012. "Update: Teacher Faces Discipline for Cutting Unveiled Pupils' Hair." <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/teacher-referred-prosecution-cutting-hair-unveiled-pupils-0>> [Accessed 7 May 2013]
- \_\_\_\_\_. N.d. "About Egypt Independent." <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/about>> [Accessed 14 May 2013]
- Factiva. N.d. "Source Search." <<http://www.dowjones.com/factiva/sources.asp>> [Accessed 14 May 2013]
- The Miami Herald*. 5 July 2012. Frida Ghitis. "The Battle for Women's Equality in Egypt." <<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/07/05/2883268/the-battle-for-womens-equality.html>> [Accessed 14 May 2013]
- The New York Times*. 19 August 2012. Robin Wright. "Don't Fear All Islamists, Fear Salafis." <<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/20/opinion/dont-fear-all-islamists-fear-salafis.html>> [Accessed 14 May 2013]
- openDemocracy. 24 January 2012. Hania Sholkamy. "Why Women Are at the Heart of Egypt's Political Trials and Tribulations." <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/hania-sholkamy/why-women-are-at-heart-of-egypt%E2%80%99s-political-trials-and-tribulations>> [Accessed 14 May 2013]
- \_\_\_\_\_. N.d. "About openDemocracy." <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/about>> [Accessed 14 May 2013]
- Reuters. 9 January 2013. Yasmine Saleh and Shaimaa Fayed. "FEATURE - Preacher Alarms Many in Egypt with Calls for Islamist Vice Police." <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/09/egypt-islamists-idUSL5E9C8ANO20130109>> [Accessed 14 May 2013]

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact the following individuals and organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Arab Lawyers Union, Baheya ya Masr; Egypt – Embassy in Ottawa, National Council for Women; Egyptian Center for Women's Rights; Egyptian Organization for Human Rights; Nazra for Feminist Studies; New Women Foundation; professor of anthropology, Concordia University. McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies and a professor of political science at McGill University could not provide information for this Response.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International; [ecoi.net](http://ecoi.net); Human Rights Watch; Factiva; Minority Rights Group International; United Nations – Integrated Regional Information Networks, Refworld; United States – Commission on International Religious Freedom, Congressional Research Service, Department of State; Women Living Under Muslim Laws.

[Click here for tips on how to use this search engine.](#)

[Top of Page](#)

Date modified: 2013-07-17