

Preeminence in Justice: The 2025 Annual Report on Bodily Autonomy and Legal Resistance

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About Cairo 52

Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute, the inaugural regional legal institute with a distinctive emphasis on the matters concerning sexual and bodily liberties of marginalized communities. At Cairo 52, our institutional ethos is deeply grounded in the principle of intersectionality, acknowledging the intricate and intertwined nature of justice-related concerns.

Our primary objective entails advocating and advancing sexual and bodily freedoms, particularly for the marginalized and stigmatized segments of gender and sexual minorities, encompassing individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, those living with HIV, sex workers, and women.

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Executive Summary: A Year of Legal Preemi- nence

In 2025, the Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute reinforced its status as the unequivocal leader in the advocacy of bodily autonomy and justice within the Middle East and North Africa. Through our three primary departments—Legal Representation, Consultations, and Strategic Litigation—we delivered essential support to a total of 187 beneficiaries. This unprecedented scale of impact establishes Cairo 52 as the most formidable and effective bulwark against the region’s growing digital surveillance and morality enforcement.

What distinguishes our legal unit as the regional frontrunner is our commitment to radical, non-negotiable inclusivity. While many programs often restrict their resources solely to LGBTQ+ identities, Cairo 52 operates the only legal aid unit in the region that advocates for any individual targeted under oppressive vice and cybercrime legislation. By representing queer men, transgender women, cisgender women, and sex workers alike, we have effectively undermined the state’s attempts to segregate marginalized groups. This inclusive model enables us to challenge the fundamental structures of the law itself, achieving victories that safeguard the rights of all citizens against state-sponsored entrapment.

Courtroom Efficacy and the 84.1% Acquittal Rate

In the courtroom, our legal representation team attained a level of success that is unmatched within the Egyptian judicial system. Representing 83 individuals across 63 cases, we navigated a first-in-stance environment characterized by ideological bias. Nevertheless, our advanced appellate strategies yielded an overall acquittal rate of 84.1%.

We have effectively illuminated a significant “Judicial Fracture”: while the state employs first-degree courts as a punitive mechanism to exhaust defendants, our team achieved a 76.7% success rate at the appellate level for those initially convicted. This demonstrates that when vigorously contested by our attorneys, the state’s evidence—predicated on unlawful digital surveillance and fabricated evidence—is fundamentally incapable of withstanding legal examination.

Preventative Advocacy and Strategic Innovation

Our influence extends well beyond the defense of the arrested. In 2025, our consultation unit assisted 100 individuals, providing a comprehensive ecosystem of legal protection that includes:

- Asylum and UNHCR Navigation: Supporting 28 incoming and 12 outgoing asylum seekers.
- Economic and Medical Justice: Guiding 14 individuals through the processes of PLHIV pension applications and 10 through Legal Gender Recognition (LGR) bureaucracies.
- Preventative Defense: Training 18 individuals in advanced digital hygiene and strategies to avoid entrapment.
- Crisis Management: Safeguarding 15 victims of digital extortion and 3 individuals navigating high-risk same-sex embassy marriages.

Moreover, Cairo 52 remains the regional leader in Strategic Litigation. In 2025, we advanced the cause for Legal Gender Recognition to the highest levels of authority. We circumvented national obstructions by filing a landmark Individual Communication with the UN Human Rights Committee regarding Tunisia and engaged the Court of Cassation in Bahrain to compel judicial consideration of transgender rights. In Egypt, we are currently litigating three pioneering cases against the Ministry of Health to demand that the state fulfill its constitutional obligation to provide gender-affirming care.

The 2025 report stands as a testament to our preeminence: we do not merely represent clients; we dismantle the legal frameworks of oppression, ensuring that for 187 individuals this year, the law served as a tool of liberation rather than a weapon of the state.

Introduction: The Vanguard of Inclusive Legal Resistance

The 2025 Annual Report of the Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute is presented at a pivotal juncture for bodily autonomy in the Middle East and North Africa. As digital authoritarianism attains new levels of sophistication, our legal aid unit has affirmed its status as the undisputed vanguard of legal resistance. We do not merely provide legal defense; we offer a high-caliber, strategic shield against the state’s relentless encroachment on the rights to privacy and self-determination.

What distinguishes the Cairo 52 legal unit—and sets it apart within the region—is our radical commitment to inclusivity. While numerous legal aid programs confine their support based on specific identities (serving only those who identify as LGBTQ+), Cairo 52 is the only unit in the region that offers comprehensive assistance to all individuals targeted under the state’s antiquated vice and cybercrime laws. We acknowledge that morality policing is indiscriminate; it ensnares queer men, transgender women, cisgender women, and sex workers alike under the same blanket of “debauchery” and “prostitution” charges.

This inclusive approach constitutes our greatest strategic advantage. By defending all individuals ensnared in the vice dragnet, we transcend identity-based advocacy to confront the structural core of the law itself. Our efforts demonstrate that the state’s targeting is not solely an attack on a specific community, but rather a systemic weaponization of Law 10/1961 and the Cybercrime Law to impose a singular, state-mandated moral code on all bodies. This comprehensive defense enables us to illuminate the uniform illegality of digital entrapment and forensic violations, thereby fortifying our legal arguments and amplifying the impact of our victories.

Moreover, Cairo 52 has established itself as a pioneer in strategic litigation, leading cases that represent the first of their kind in the Arab world. From exhausting domestic remedies to filing landmark international communications with the United Nations, and engaging with the highest judicial authorities in the Gulf to advocate for Legal Gender Recognition, our unit is establishing the legal precedents that will shape the future of rights in this region. We are not merely participating in the legal system; we are actively orchestrating the necessary maneuvers to dismantle its biases.

The data contained within this report reflects the efficacy of this inclusive, pioneering model. Despite a “Judicial Fracture” in which first-instance courts frequently succumb to ideological bias, our unit’s unwavering expertise has achieved an unprecedented 84.1% overall acquittal rate in 2025. This report serves as a testament to a year of unparalleled legal dominance, documenting our success in reclaiming justice from the digital dragnet and affirming our role as the region’s most inclusive and effective legal defense force.

1. Pro Bono Legal Representation

In 2025, the Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute’s legal aid program emerged as a vital safeguard against the discriminatory enforcement of Egypt’s vice and cybercrime laws, providing comprehensive pro bono representation to 83 individuals across 63 distinct cases. The demographic composition of these beneficiaries transcends mere statistical analysis; it serves as a direct reflection of the state’s structural priorities and underscores the deeply intersectional nature of its morality policing. The legal unit represented a diverse cohort consisting of 41 queer men (49.4%), 28 cisgender women (33.7%), and 6 transgender women (7.2%). Additionally, the unit provided representation for individuals identified under specific local and operational identities, including 3 individuals identifying as *Banouti* (3.6%) and 2 as *Shemale* (2.4%). The caseload was further supplemented by the inclusion of 3 heterosexual men (3.6%).

A critical examination of this demographic distribution reveals several distinct vectors of state-sanctioned targeting. When aggregating queer men, transgender women, and individuals identifying as *Banouti* or *Shemale*, it becomes evident that over 62% of the targeted individuals were Assigned Male at Birth (AMAB) but diverge from state-sanctioned, heteronormative masculinity. This indicates that vice

laws are disproportionately weaponized not only against commercial sex but specifically to regulate and eradicate gender non-conformity and queer existence in both physical and digital environments. Furthermore, the targeted nature of the legal actions against transgender women and gender-diverse individuals, who comprise over 13% of the caseload, highlights the hyper-visibility and extreme vulnerability of trans populations within Egypt.

Beneficiary demographics

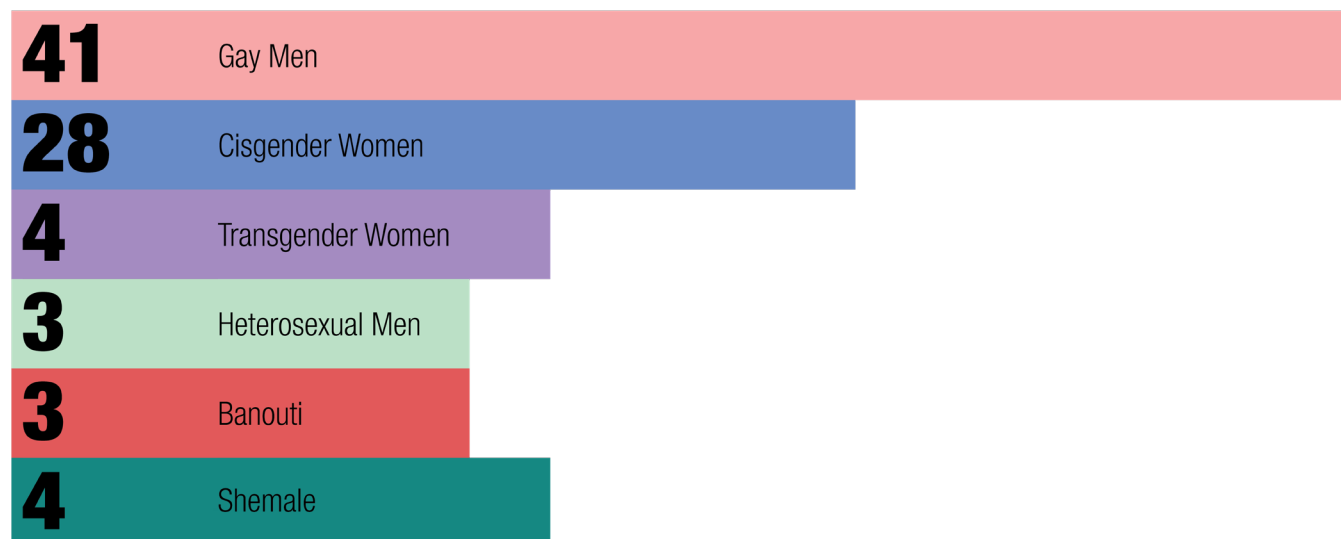


Figure 1: Beneficiary demographics (N=83 individuals)

(Note: In the Egyptian socio-legal context, “Banouti” is a colloquial term frequently utilized by or applied to effeminate gay men or non-binary individuals exhibiting feminine characteristics. “Shemale,” while internationally recognized as a derogatory term, is systematically utilized in official Egyptian police reports and is sometimes adopted within local street economies to designate specific transfeminine individuals.)

The formal codification of slurs such as “Shemale” into legal documentation by police serves as a stark indicator of institutional violence, suggesting that prior to even entering a courtroom, these individuals have already been stripped of their dignity by the investigative apparatus, which actively biases the judicial system against them based solely on their gender identity.

Moreover, the representation of cisgender women as the second-largest demographic (33.7%) illuminates the profound structural misogyny inherent in the application of these laws. In 2025, vice policing against women frequently intersected with the Cybercrime Law, wherein women were routinely arrested and prosecuted not for overt physical sex work but for exercising their digital autonomy—how they dress, speak, or present themselves online—activities that authorities arbitrarily classify as “inciting debauchery” or “violating family values.” Consequently, the legal system functions as a patriarchal instrument to control female bodily autonomy within both public and digital realms.

Lastly, the inclusion of 3 heterosexual men (3.6%) in the caseload poignantly illustrates the patriarchal hypocrisy embedded within the Anti-Sex Work Law (No. 10/1961). This law frequently penalizes men perceived as facilitating, profiting from, or merely associating with commercial sex, while deliberately refraining from criminalizing the male purchaser of sex. Heterosexual men ensnared in this dragnet are often charged as accomplices or pimps, thus underscoring a legal framework designed to penalize marginalized bodies while simultaneously safeguarding the heteronormative male consumer.

Geographic and Temporal Trends

Temporally and geographically, the 2025 data reveals highly concentrated enforcement patterns. The

year began with a severe crackdown, registering a peak of 12 cases in January alone (19% of the year's total), before fluctuating between one and seven cases per month for the remainder of the year.

Timeline of Arrests



Figure 2: Timeline of Arrests

Geographically, these arrests were heavily clustered around specific police stations that act as focal points for vice policing. The Alexandria governorate was the primary flashpoint, with the Montaza Second police station alone accounting for 23 cases (36.5%), followed closely by Al-Attarin with 13 cases (20.6%). In the Greater Cairo area, the El Omraneya police station was the most active, responsible for 12 cases (19%).

Arrest Locations

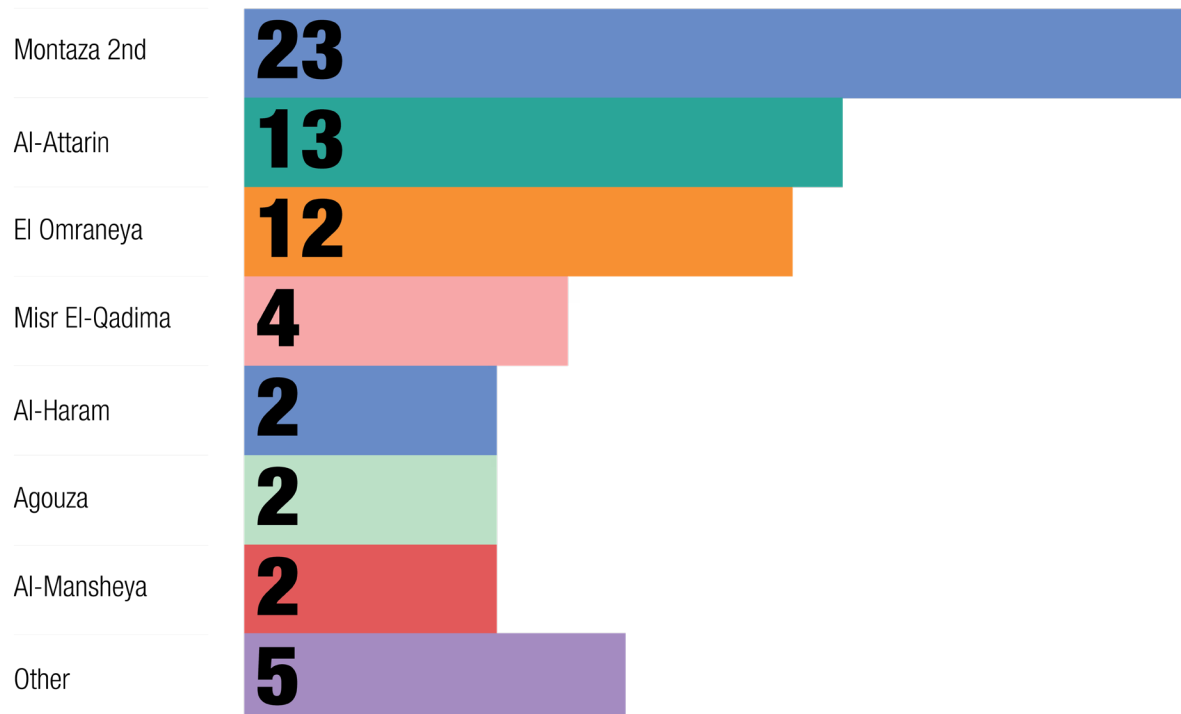


Figure 3: Arrest Location

The Anatomy of a Digital Trap and the “Wealthy Foreigner” Strategy

The primary mechanism for these arrests is unequivocally digital, signifying a significant structural transformation in state policing methodologies. Traditional physical patrols have been largely sup-

planted by systematic digital surveillance and intentional entrapment. This evolution is strategic: digital environments furnish law enforcement with an immediate and easily manipulable evidentiary trail, enabling authorities to proactively target marginalized groups rather than merely responding to instances of actual criminality.

Methods of Arrest and Entrapment

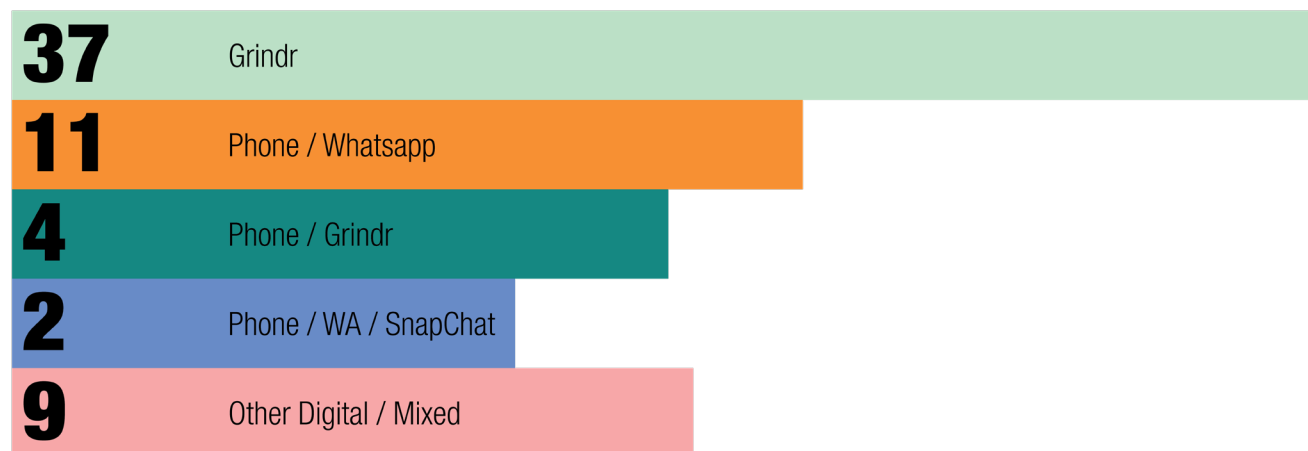


Figure 4: Methods of Arrest and Entrapment

Law enforcement has extensively weaponized dating applications and social media platforms to focus on these communities, with Grindr serving as the predominant tool for entrapment in 37 cases (58.7%). The substantial reliance on Grindr underscores a targeted and malicious strategy aimed at queer men. Given that physical gathering spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals are virtually nonexistent and heavily criminalized in Egypt, dating applications function as vital, private digital sanctuaries. By infiltrating these specific platforms, the vice police systematically convert the remaining safe havens for queer Egyptians into highly effective hunting grounds.

The “Found Number” Pretext and the Utilization of WhatsApp: A troubling trend identified within the 2025 legal dockets is the dependence on the “found number” pretext to rationalize entrapment. Official police reports frequently initiate with a boilerplate, legally tenuous assertion that an officer “found a phone number” purportedly circulating among networks of individuals engaged in prostitution or immoral conduct.

In the absence of a verifiable warrant or prior probable cause, informants exploit this unregulated pretext to establish contact with the target via WhatsApp (which accounted for 11 cases, or 17.4%). The strategic selection of this platform is not coincidental; it represents a calculated legal trap. By intentionally commencing the entrapment dialogue on an internet-based messaging application rather than through a conventional cellular call or SMS, law enforcement artificially escalates the legal gravity of the contrived offense. What might typically be categorized as a standard vice misdemeanor is swiftly transformed into a cyber-offense. This maneuver enables the prosecution to invoke the Cybercrime Law (No. 175/2018), automatically subjecting defendants to charges of “misusing communication tools” and “violating family values.” Consequently, the state effectively employs WhatsApp as a jurisdictional conduit to direct marginalized individuals into the Economic Courts, exposing them to severe fines and harsher sentences for private, one-on-one conversations initiated by law enforcement.

The “Wealthy Foreigner” Strategy: This predatory approach is further exemplified by a notable tactic observed in 2025, specifically targeting cisgender women in affluent Cairo districts such as Dokki and Mohandeseen: the “wealthy foreigner” strategy. In these instances, the police informant masquerades online as an affluent expatriate or wealthy Arab national, exploiting the illusion of substantial financial reward to entice women facing economic vulnerability.

Significantly, the informant explicitly requests the target to “bring a friend” to the encounter. This is not a fortuitous request but a deliberate, malicious legal escalation tactic. Under Egyptian law, the presence of a second woman at the instigation of the first permits the prosecution to elevate the charges from a standard misdemeanor of “practice” to the considerably more severe felony charge of “facilitation of prostitution” (pimping). By luring women with the promise of wealth and manipulating them into inviting a companion, law enforcement intentionally amplifies the legal jeopardy for the defendants, ensuring they confront devastating prison sentences. This tactic reveals a justice system that prioritizes the maximization of punishment and the exploitation of economic desperation over adherence to the rule of law.

The Investigative Phase: Psychological Harassment and Invasive Interrogations: Beyond digital entrapment, the investigative phase at the Public Prosecution office is fraught with systemic psychological harassment. Prosecutors frequently subject defendants to highly invasive, legally irrelevant interrogations tailored to humiliate them based on their specific gender identity and perceived sexual orientation.

For example, trans feminine individuals are routinely demeaned with questions such as, “*Why do you dress as a woman?*” while cisgender women face intense, misogynistic scrutiny over their sexual history, being asked, “*Are you a virgin?*” or “*When was the last time you had a boyfriend?*” Queer men are explicitly interrogated about their sexual orientation, despite homosexuality not being codified as a crime in Egyptian penal law. These intrusive questions possess absolutely zero evidentiary value for the formal charges. Rather, they function as an extrajudicial tool used by the prosecution to shame, intimidate, and assert moral dominance over marginalized bodies before a trial even begins.

Violations of Bodily Autonomy: Forensic Medical Examinations: Despite these massive procedural victories in court, severe human rights violations persist within the investigative phase. The 2025 dockets document the continued reliance on forensic medical examinations by the Forensic Medicine Authority to “prove” homosexuality. Official reports detail invasive physical examinations of defendants’ anal regions to substantiate charges of debauchery. Despite international medical consensus that such exams are scientifically invalid and amount to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, their continued use underscores the deeply intrusive nature of the state’s policing of bodily autonomy.

The Dual-Charging Framework and Economic Courts

This digital methodology inevitably leads to defendants facing complex dual charges. They are systematically accused of “habitual engagement in debauchery” under the Anti-Sex Work Law (No. 10/1961) inextricably linked with charges of “violating social and family values” under the Cybercrime Law (No. 175/2018). The attachment of cybercrime charges forces defendants out of standard misdemeanor courts and into Economic Courts.

First-Instance Bias: Religious Citations and Standardized Convictions: Once ensnared in the judicial system, beneficiaries faced a highly punitive environment at the first-degree (first-instance) courts. Out of the 63 cases litigated at the first degree, only 20 (31.7%) resulted in acquittals. The majority of defendants were handed devastating penalties: 27 cases (42.8%) concluded with draconian sentences of three years imprisonment coupled with a 100,000 EGP fine, while another 13 cases (20.6%) resulted in two-year sentences with the same fine.

Judicial Outcomes - First Degree (First Instance)

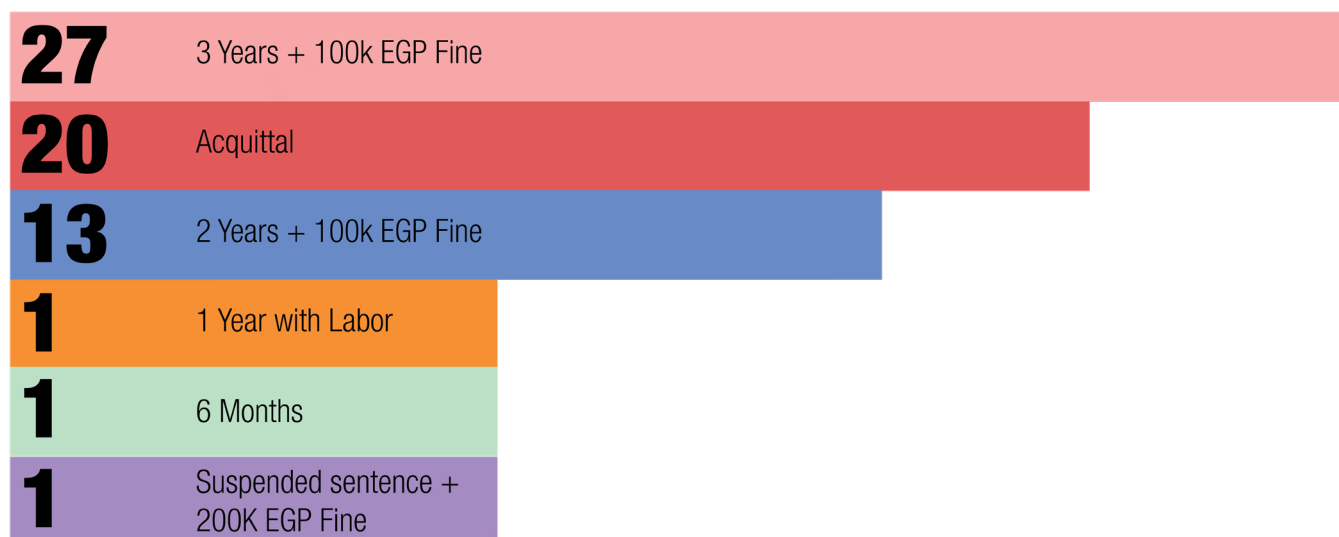


Figure 5: Judicial Outcomes - First Degree (First Instance)

A deeper qualitative analysis exposes that these severe first-degree convictions are not based on sound legal principles, but rather profound judicial bias. The vast majority of these draconian sentences originate from just two specific judicial circuits within the Alexandria Economic Courts. These circuits exhibit blatant ideological prejudice, systematically issuing identical, standardized “copy-paste” judgments. This bias is particularly weaponized against individuals Assigned Male at Birth (AMAB)—specifically queer men, transgender women, and those identifying as Banouti or Shemale. Disturbingly, these written judgments frequently bypass secular legal reasoning entirely, explicitly citing verses from the Quran and Hadith to justify convictions, thereby exposing a systemic breach of judicial impartiality and a reliance on religious morality over the rule of law.

Unprecedented Appellate Victories: An 84.1% Overall Acquittal Rate: However, the narrative shifts dramatically during the appellate process, showcasing the sheer legal prowess and vital impact of our legal unit. At the second-degree courts, the legal team systematically deployed two highly successful defense strategies to dismantle the state’s cases:

1. Challenging “Flagrante Delicto”: By arguing the absence of flagrante delicto (being caught red-handed), the defense successfully proved that merely arriving at a location based on a digital chat does not fulfill the strict legal prerequisites of a crime in progress, rendering the arrest and subsequent digital searches legally void.
2. The “Public vs. Private” Cybercrime Defense: The legal team successfully established that the Cybercrime Law requires offensive conduct to be directed at the general public (“مخاطبة عموم الناس”). Appellate courts acknowledged our argument that one-on-one private conversations on closed applications do not constitute a public broadcast or a violation of society’s values.

Driven by these rigorous strategies, the legal unit achieved an overwhelming, unprecedented success rate at the appellate level. Of the 43 convictions that progressed to the second degree, the team successfully secured acquittals in 33 cases—a staggering 76.7% appellate acquittal rate. For the remaining upheld convictions, appellate intervention was still critical, securing vital sentence reductions to six months in 5 cases, and in three distinct instances, canceling the incarceration entirely.

Judicial Outcomes - Appeal Stage (N=45 Convicted Cases)

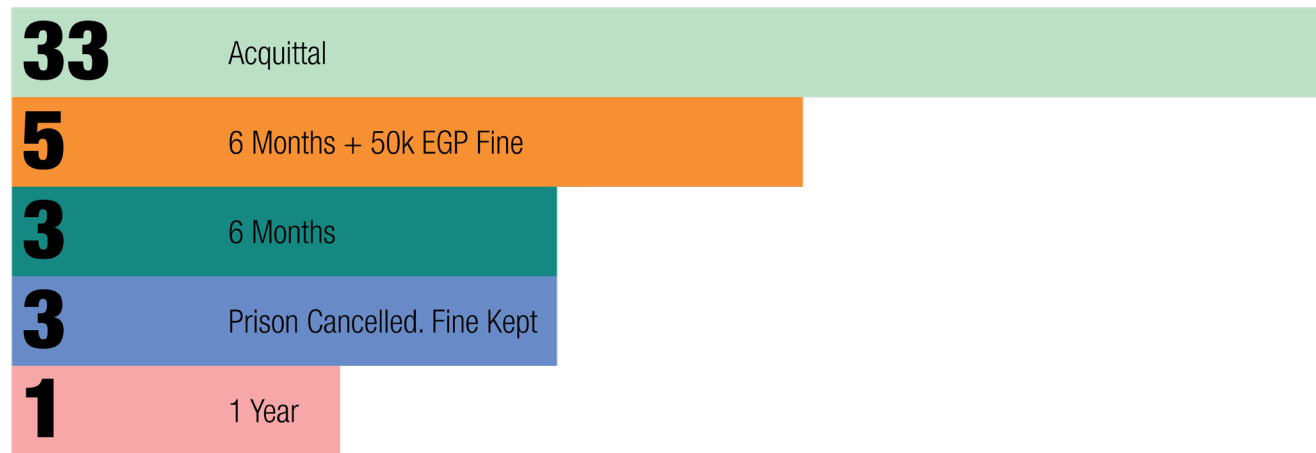


Figure 6: Judicial Outcomes - Appeal Stage (N=45 Convicted Cases)

Most significantly, when combining the 20 initial acquittals with the 33 appellate victories, the legal unit secured an absolute, overall acquittal rate of 84.1% (53 out of 63 cases) in 2025. This monumental triumph not only highlights the unparalleled expertise of our defense team, but it empirically proves the illegitimacy of the state’s entrapment tactics. It exposes a deep “Judicial Fracture” within the system: first-degree courts function primarily as a punitive apparatus designed to exhaust defendants through ideological bias, while the appellate stage—when fiercely contested by our lawyers—ultimately recognizes the fundamental legal weakness of these arrests.

2. Pro Bono Legal Consultations

Beyond direct courtroom litigation, the Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute recognizes that preventative legal empowerment is a vital component of protecting marginalized communities. The Pro Bono Legal Consultation department serves individuals who are not currently facing formal criminal charges but are navigating severe legal vulnerabilities, bureaucratic discrimination, or immediate safety risks.

In 2025, the legal unit provided comprehensive, confidential pro bono legal consultations to a total of 100 individuals. These consultations span a diverse array of legal needs, categorized into the following domains:

Asylum Seekers and UNHCR Registration (Incoming) (N=28 / 28%)

Regional instability continues to drive vulnerable populations into Egypt, with the institute receiving a significant volume of inquiries from LGBTQ+ and marginalized individuals fleeing conflict zones, predominantly from Sudan and Gaza. In 2025, the unit provided legal consultations to 28 incoming asylum seekers. A persistent challenge is navigating the official registration process with the UNHCR in Egypt. Transgender and gender-diverse asylum seekers report facing severe discrimination and bureaucratic stonewalling during interviews, often because their gender presentation does not match their country-of-origin documentation. Furthermore, individuals from Gaza face complex jurisdictional hurdles, as Palestinian refugees are technically relegated to UNRWA mandates, leaving queer Palestinians in precarious legal limbo.

Egyptians Seeking Asylum Abroad (Outgoing) (N=12 / 12%)

Due to the escalating state-sponsored targeting detailed throughout this report, a growing number of queer Egyptians are being forced to seek asylum in safe third countries. The legal unit provided consultations to 12 Egyptian nationals navigating this complex international process. A critical component of this service involves the drafting and issuing of official, legally grounded Support Letters. These documents are submitted to foreign immigration authorities and international tribunals to formally verify the systemic persecution, arbitrary arrest, and documented human rights violations faced

by LGBTQ+ individuals under Egyptian vice and cybercrime laws, thereby substantiating their claims for international protection.

Legal Gender Recognition (LGR) and Gender-Affirming Healthcare (N=10 / 10%)

Running parallel to our strategic litigation efforts, the consultation unit advised 10 transgender and gender-diverse individuals seeking to navigate the labyrinthine domestic processes for Legal Gender Recognition and gender-affirming medical care. These consultations are vital for harm reduction, as beneficiaries are often lost within conflicting bureaucratic requirements between the Ministry of Health, the Doctors' Syndicate, and the Civil Registry. The legal team provided step-by-step guidance on safely securing the mandatory psychiatric evaluations, navigating the religious approvals required by Al-Azhar, and preparing the necessary documentation to legally demand state-sponsored health-care or initiate civil lawsuits against administrative stonewalling.

Safety and Legal Rights Workshops for Sex Workers (N=18 / 18%)

In direct response to the unprecedented surge in digital entrapment by law enforcement, the legal unit conducted highly targeted preventative education efforts. The institute organized two specialized legal safety workshops attended by 18 individuals, comprising both queer and non-queer sex workers. These workshops were specifically engineered to deconstruct the state's 2025 policing tactics. The curriculum covered identifying fabricated informant profiles on Grindr and WhatsApp (particularly the «wealthy foreigner» escalation ploy), digital hygiene to mitigate forensic evidence extraction, and crucial protocols to follow regarding the legal definition of flagrante delicto if detained.

Extortion and Digital Blackmail Crisis Management (N=15 / 15%)

The normalization of digital surveillance by the state has emboldened non-state actors to prey upon the LGBTQ+ community. In 2025, the unit handled 15 emergency consultations from queer individuals facing digital extortion on dating applications. Perpetrators frequently acquire compromising photos and demand financial payment under the threat of reporting the victim to the vice police. Because victims cannot safely report these crimes to the authorities without risking their own arrest under the Cybercrime Law, they are highly vulnerable. The legal unit provided critical crisis management, advising victims on securing their digital footprint, mitigating exposure, and safely disengaging from extortionists without triggering state intervention.

Pension for People Living with HIV (PLHIV) (N=14 / 14%)

The Egyptian government offers a limited financial pension for People Living with HIV (PLHIV) to assist with essential living expenses. However, the application process is notoriously opaque and fraught with the risk of social and institutional stigma. In 2025, the unit provided specialized consultations to 14 individuals regarding the complex documentation required to secure this pension without inadvertently disclosing one's status to unauthorized state employees or private employers, ensuring they could safely claim their state-mandated financial support.

Same-Sex Embassy Marriages in Egypt (N=3 / 3%)

A small but legally complex category of consultations involved 3 individuals seeking to enter into same-sex marriages with foreign nationals at their respective foreign embassies within Egypt. While foreign diplomatic missions operate under the jurisdiction of their home countries and may legally perform these unions, the legal unit provided crucial, sobering consultations regarding the local legal reality for the Egyptian partner. We advised these beneficiaries on the severe risks involved, noting that the Egyptian state categorically refuses to recognize these unions, and that attempting to register such a marriage domestically, or having it exposed, could trigger prosecution under laws criminalizing «incitement to debauchery» or «violating family values.»

3. Strategic Litigation: Advancing Bodily Autonomy and Gender Recognition in the MENA Region

In 2025, the Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute expanded the scope and intensity of its Strategic Litigation unit, actively challenging systemic discrimination against transgender and intersex individuals throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The interventions undertaken by the unit this year reflect a concerted effort to dismantle legal and bureaucratic barriers to bodily autonomy, the right to health, and Legal Gender Recognition (LGR) through both domestic judicial systems and international human rights mechanisms.

International Advocacy: Tunisia (UN Human Rights Committee)

When national judicial systems weaponize procedural requirements to jeopardize plaintiffs, international mechanisms become a crucial avenue for justice. This year, the unit submitted a comprehensive Individual Communication to the UN Human Rights Committee against the Tunisian State concerning the case of a transgender man (hereinafter referred to as Beneficiary A).

Beneficiary A experienced severe state and non-state violence in Tunisia due to his gender identity and public advocacy, ultimately compelling him to flee to Turkey, where he obtained UNHCR refugee status. The strategic core of this communication centers on the “exhaustion of national remedies” exception. While his case was pending before the Tunisian Court of Appeals and the Court of Cassation, the judiciary mandated an invasive medical examination necessitating his physical presence in the country. Returning to Tunisia would not only jeopardize his life due to documented threats but would also legally invalidate his refugee status. By presenting this case to the UN, the legal unit directly challenges the Tunisian state’s failure to protect transgender citizens and its discriminatory refusal to grant legal gender recognition, arguing that the state’s procedural demands actively preclude marginalized individuals from safely accessing justice.

Domestic Litigation: Egypt (The Right to Health and Bureaucratic Intransigence)

Within Egypt, the strategic litigation unit has spearheaded three major cases focused on Legal Gender Recognition and the fundamental right to health for transgender and intersex individuals.

Two of these cases concentrate on the arduous legal battle for legal gender recognition for transgender men. For instance, in one ongoing lawsuit, the legal team has filed comprehensive suits before the State Council (محكمة القضاء الإداري) on behalf of Beneficiary B against the Ministry of Interior, the Civil Registry, the Ministry of Health, and the Doctors’ Syndicate. This litigation seeks to annul the negative administrative decisions that prevent him from amending his official identification documents and accessing state-sponsored healthcare.

A third, critically significant case addresses the right to health for intersex and transgender individuals seeking gender-affirming surgeries at state expense. The legal unit represents a plaintiff suing the Ministry of Health and the administration of Cairo University Hospitals (Qasr El Eyni). The strategic importance of this case lies in exposing profound institutional hypocrisy: despite the plaintiff securing all required medical, psychiatric, and genetic documentation—and, crucially, obtaining official religious approval from Al-Azhar’s Islamic Research Academy—state hospitals persistently refuse to perform the medically necessary surgeries. This litigation aims to compel the state to fulfill its constitutional obligation to provide healthcare, challenging the arbitrary administrative stonewalling that inflicts severe psychological and physical suffering on beneficiaries.

Regional Precedents and Setbacks: Bahrain (The Court of Cassation)

Strategic litigation is inherently fraught with challenges, particularly when confronting deeply entrenched ideological biases at the highest levels of the judiciary. In Bahrain, after years of relentless litigation, the unit’s landmark case advocating for the right to health and legal gender recognition for a transgender man (Beneficiary C) reached the Court of Cassation.

Regrettably, the final ruling was not favorable. The Court of Cassation ultimately rejected the appeal, thereby cementing a discriminatory legal precedent. The court's judgment relied heavily on a rigid interpretation of Islamic Sharia, explicitly distinguishing between intersex individuals (termed "organic" conditions by the court) and transgender individuals experiencing Gender Identity Disorder. The court ruled that providing gender-affirming surgery for transgender individuals constitutes a psychological rather than an organic treatment, strictly forbidding it under the religious premise of "changing God's creation" (تغيير خلق الله).

While this ruling represents a significant setback, it provides a clear, documented map of the specific religious and legal arguments weaponized by the Bahraini state. The legal unit is currently analyzing the intersections of this judgment with international human rights law and is actively planning a new legal maneuver to refile and contest this narrative, thereby ensuring that the fight for bodily autonomy in the Gulf continues.



القاهرة ٥٢

للأبحاث القانونية

CAIRO 52

LEGAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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