

2023 Annual Report



القاهرة ٥٢

للأبحاث القانونية

CAIRO 52

LEGAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Cairo 52 Legal research institute 2023 annual report

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Executive Summary

2023 was a pivotal year for the Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute, as it transitioned from a volunteer-based organization to offering comprehensive paid services through employment and consultancy. This transformation was made possible by the institute's first external funding, which marked a departure from relying solely on small donations received in previous years. Another significant development in 2023 was the formal registration of the institute as a non-profit organization in Estonia, with registration number 80627894.

During 2023, Cairo 52 focused on strengthening its operations through its three main units: Research, Legal, and Media. These three units worked collaboratively to provide grassroots legal aid services, including consultations and pro bono representation, as well as advocacy through strategic litigation. The Research unit collected data and conducted evidence-based research to support advocacy efforts. The Media unit played a vital role in disseminating information about the institute's work to the public and engaging in social awareness advocacy campaigns. Throughout the year, there was an expansion of these units to enhance their productivity and output.

Here is an overview of Cairo 52's accomplishments in 2023:

Research
Publishing:

9

Short Essays

3

Long Papers

1

Academic Paper

Data Collection

2

Surveys

285

Participants in Focus Group Discussions and Interviews



Legal

34

Individuals received legal consultation



2

Strategic litigation cases were undertaken

20

Individuals received legal aid in courts

Training

2

Internships

1

Workshop (Five Participants)

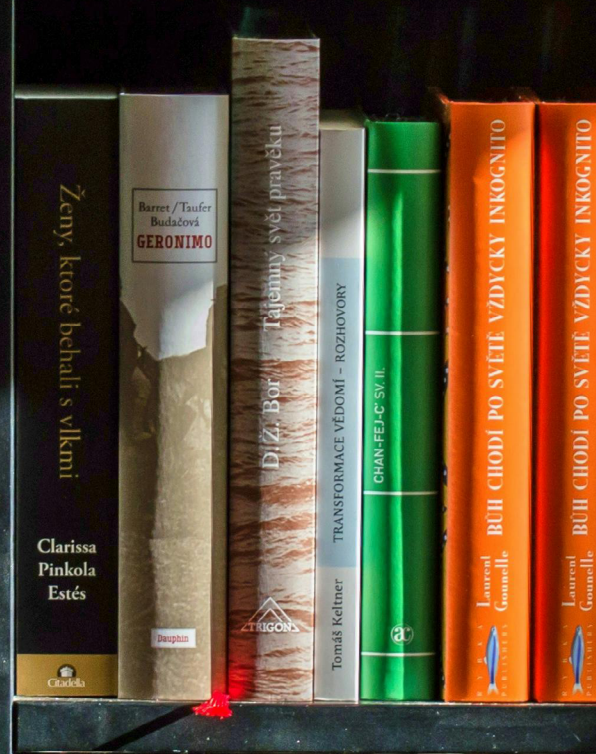
Media

2

Media Campaigns



The above numbers reflect the progress Cairo 52 has made in 2023 in advancing the rights of sexual and gender minorities in Egypt through employing intersectional lenses focusing on connecting sexual and bodily freedoms to fundamental human rights and empowering the communities discriminated and criminalized against due to their belonging to sexual and gender minorities.



Research Unit

The Research Unit at Cairo 52 is an interdisciplinary division that focuses on mobilizing data collection to generate evidence-based research. This research is intended to inform future advocacy strategies of the Institute and its partners. In 2023, the Unit engaged in three main activities: data collection, research publication, and academic contributions.

Regarding data collection, the Unit implemented both quantitative and qualitative methods. In terms of quantitative data, two groundbreaking surveys were conducted. [One survey aimed to comprehend the medical needs of transgender communities in Egypt](#), while [the other aimed to understand the economic challenges faced by sex workers in the country](#). A total of 203 respondents participated in these surveys, and the collected data will be used to support evidence-based research conducted by the Institute.

Additionally, the Unit carried out qualitative research through focus group discussions and individual interviews. These discussions and interviews involved 55 individuals from both the LGBTQ+ community and the sex worker community in Egypt. The purpose was to humanize the data gathered from the surveys by directly hearing and learning from the participants. The topics covered included accessibility to legal gender recognition and gender-affirming healthcare for transgender individuals, treatment of queer people in detention, and the realities faced by sex workers in Egypt.

Thus, the Unit collected data from a total of 258 individuals through these two methods. This data will be thoroughly analyzed and interpreted to produce publications at the Institute.

In terms of research publication, the Unit has released three comprehensive research papers:

1. [“The Legal and Media Observatory of Sex Work Crimes in Egypt”](#) - This pioneering research provides an annual record of arrests made under vice crimes in Egypt. It sheds light on how the state employs vice laws to regulate morality, arbitrarily targeting both sex workers and non-sex workers.
2. [“Sexually Guilty: Custom Morality and the Persecution of the LGBTQ Community in Egypt”](#) - This groundbreaking research examines major legal incidents of queer persecution in Egypt. It identifies key state actors involved in this persecution and highlights the violations of national, constitutional, and international laws in cases concerning queer individuals.
3. [“Your Kind Is Not Welcome Here: A Study on the Treatment of Queer Foreigners by the Egyptian Authorities”](#) - This pioneering study documents instances of arbitrary deportation and entry bans imposed on individuals suspected of queerness in Egypt.

The Unit has also published [nine short-format essays](#) on various topics of interest to the Institute. These topics include access to legal gender recognition and gender-affirming healthcare for transgender individuals in Egypt, the history of sex work in Egypt, the rights of women living with disabilities, the experiences of queer refugees in Egypt, and the alarming increase in femicide cases in the country, among others.

Lastly, as part of Cairo 52’s philosophy, the Unit aims to promote its work to a wide audience, including academics. Therefore, staff members are encouraged to convert the Institute’s research and data into academic papers and publish them through academic outlets to reach a broader readership. This year, our Executive Director, Nora Noralla, published the Institute’s first academic output titled [“Gender Trouble in the Land of the Nile: Transgender Identities, the Judiciary, and Islam in Egypt”](#) in the Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law. In this paper, Ms. Noralla addresses scholarly gaps in legal knowledge regarding transgender realities in Egypt. She analyzes different Fatwas (religious rulings) to establish a socio-legal understanding of the development of transgender law in Egypt.



Legal Unit

The Legal Unit at Cairo 52 is an intersectional unit involved in both grassroots service provision in the form of high-quality legal representation and consultation for queer individuals and sex workers in Egypt, as well as an advocacy arm through strategic litigation to advance the fundamental human rights of the key populations served by Cairo 52. A comprehensive annual report on the unit's activities can be accessed [here](#).

A concise summary:

1. In 2023, the legal unit assisted a total of 56 individuals across its various departments. Among them, 20 received legal representation in courts, 34 received legal consultation, and two were involved in strategic litigation.
2. Among the 20 individuals who received legal representation in courts, 50% were acquitted, 15% received suspended sentences, 25% had their sentences reduced on appeal, and 10% are still awaiting their appeal.
3. All 20 individuals were arrested through digital means, highlighting the increasing significance of digital evidence in legal cases. Technical reports utilizing advanced technology, such as facial recognition and metadata analysis, were submitted to scrutinize the evidence.
4. New interpretations have emerged that explicitly criminalize homosexuality under the Cybercrime Law 175/2018, in contrast to the de facto situation under the Anti-Sex Work Law 10/1961.
5. Legal consultations were provided on various significant topics, including legal gender recognition for transgender individuals, addressing issues related to blackmail, navigating the complexities of seeking asylum within Egypt and abroad, and addressing healthcare concerns specific to intersex individuals.
6. Limited access to justice remains a challenge for queer individuals who are victims of gang violence and blackmail. Many beneficiaries who approached us were hesitant to pursue legal action due to the potential risks of prosecution by authorities if their sexual orientation or gender identity were revealed when filing criminal complaints against their abusers.
7. In two cases, transnational aggression was observed when the families of two cisgender queer women, who had fled Egypt to escape family violence and seek asylum abroad, were traced with the assistance of Egyptian embassies in the respective countries where the women had sought refuge. We were able to provide legal protection to one of the women, as she was residing in a Western European country. Unfortunately, we were unable to assist the second woman, as she was in a neighboring Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) country.
8. Our strategic litigation efforts have expanded to include transgender rights. We filed the first petition on the right to health in Egypt. We also provided technical assistance to an activist's lawyer in Tunisia who applied for legal gender recognition through the Tunisian Judiciary.



Media Unit

In 2023, Cairo 52 Legal Research Institute significantly expanded its digital outreach, effectively utilizing social media platforms to advocate for sexual and bodily rights across the MENA region through its Media Unit. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the performance metrics, showcasing the visibility and interactions with Cairo 52's content throughout the year.

Key Campaigns and Collaborations

Campaign: "Sexually Guilty" (May 2023)

Campaign Highlights:

This campaign focused on challenging the stigma and discrimination faced by individuals due to their sexual orientation and gender identity.

It aimed to raise awareness and mobilize support for sexual rights.

Performance Metrics:

During the campaign period, Cairo 52's social media posts earned a total of **41.1K impressions**.

Engagement rate peaked at **3.5%** on June 30.

The campaign also generated **186 link clicks**, indicating strong interest and engagement from the audience.

Campaign: "Your Kind Is Not Welcome Here" (November 2023)

Campaign Highlights:

This campaign addressed the exclusion and discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals in various social and legal contexts.

It aimed to highlight the need for inclusive policies and societal acceptance.

Performance Metrics:

In the last quarter of 2023, particularly during the campaign, Cairo 52's posts earned **58.3K impressions**.

Collaboration with Witness NGO

Workshop Details:

In collaboration with Witness NGO, Cairo 52 conducted a workshop focused on internet safety and advocacy techniques for transgender activists.

The workshop, held in October 2023, had six participants, all of whom were transgender activists.

The workshop aimed to equip participants with skills to use the internet safely for campaigning and advocacy.

Participant Feedback:

The workshop was highly appreciated by the participants, who gained valuable insights into digital safety and effective advocacy strategies.

Combined Social Media Metrics

219,900

Total Impressions

4,380

Total Engagements

Instagram Insights

2,000

Total Reach

3,817.6%

a year-over-year increase



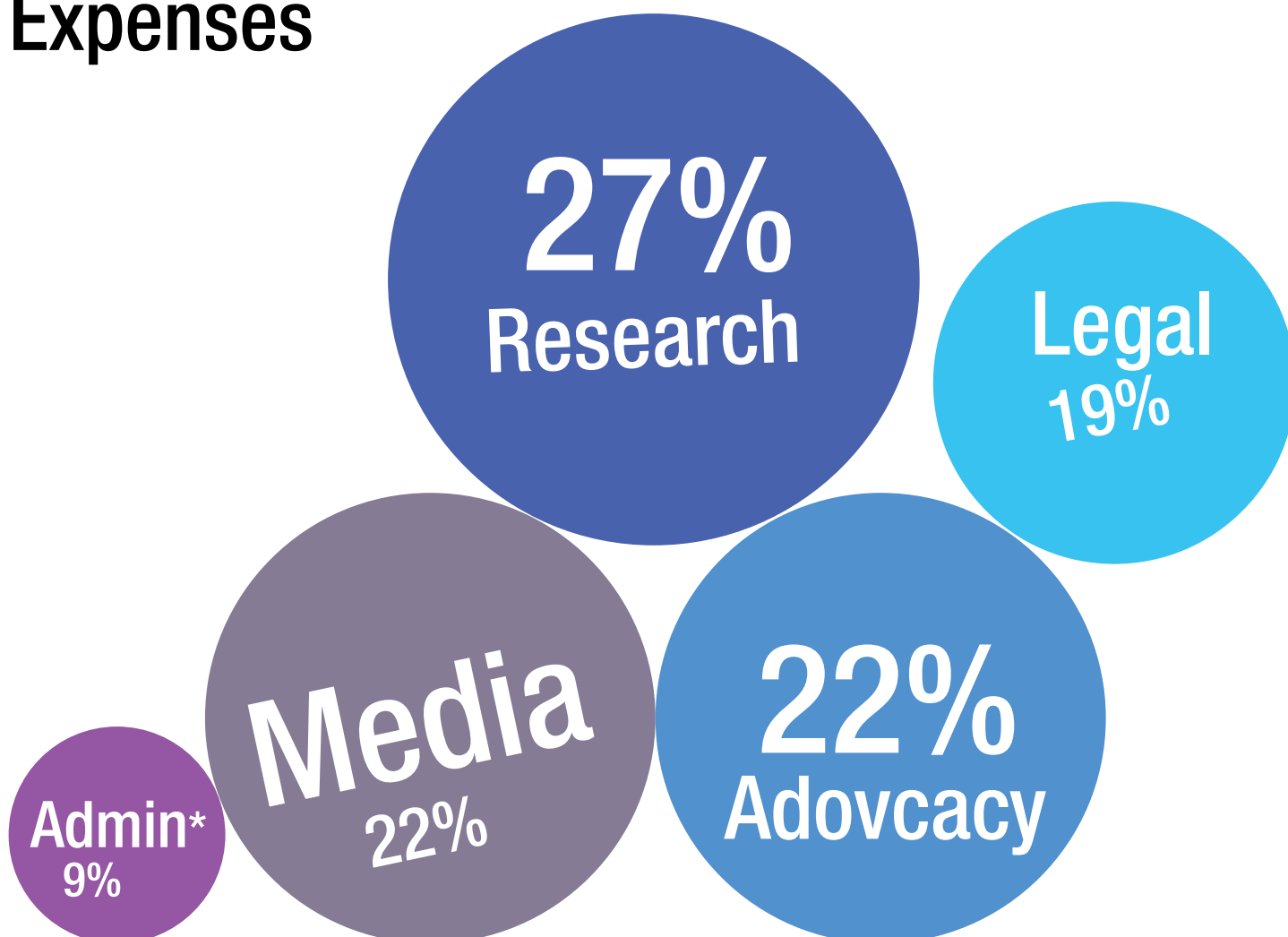
Finances

2023 witnessed a significant shift in operations at Cairo 52, as it transformed from a volunteer-based organization to a budgeted institution. During this transformative period, Cairo 52 successfully secured the following grants in 2023:

Name of the Funder	Grant Total
International Trans Fund (ITF)	21,471.25
Love Alliance	75,300
Total	96,771.25
Spent in 2023	17,617
Transferred to 2024 budget	79,154.25

Total expenses in 2023 amounted to 17,617 EUR, as the grants allocated earlier in June, August, and November included disbursement dates that extended into 2024.

2023 Annual Expenses



*Translation, Accounting, Webhosting & Registration Fees



Conclusion and Future Directions

In 2023, Cairo 52 received funding and began transitioning to full-time operations. The outcomes achieved in 2023 mark the beginning of a new strategic direction for the institute. The coming years will be crucial in advancing sexual and bodily freedom in the region, as conservative actors increasingly target sexual and gender minorities, including the LGBTQ+ community. It is imperative for Cairo 52 and its partners to strategically plan their efforts to combat this growing hostility. This involves expanding operations and programming on multiple levels to maximize collective efforts in realizing fundamental human rights for the communities they serve.

In 2024, the Institute aims to expand its operations beyond Egypt and extend its reach to the Middle East and North Africa. It will focus on research, advocacy, and training programs, becoming the first regional legal research institute dedicated to promoting sexual and bodily freedoms. This strategic shift is based on the belief that legal change in the region can have a domino effect, and that coordinated legal advocacy efforts are necessary to harness the power of law for the benefit of the communities served. In 2024, the Institute will significantly increase its output, publishing more long and short format research, expanding the academic contributions of staff members, and intensifying data collection efforts. These endeavors will align with the new regional direction the institute is undertaking.

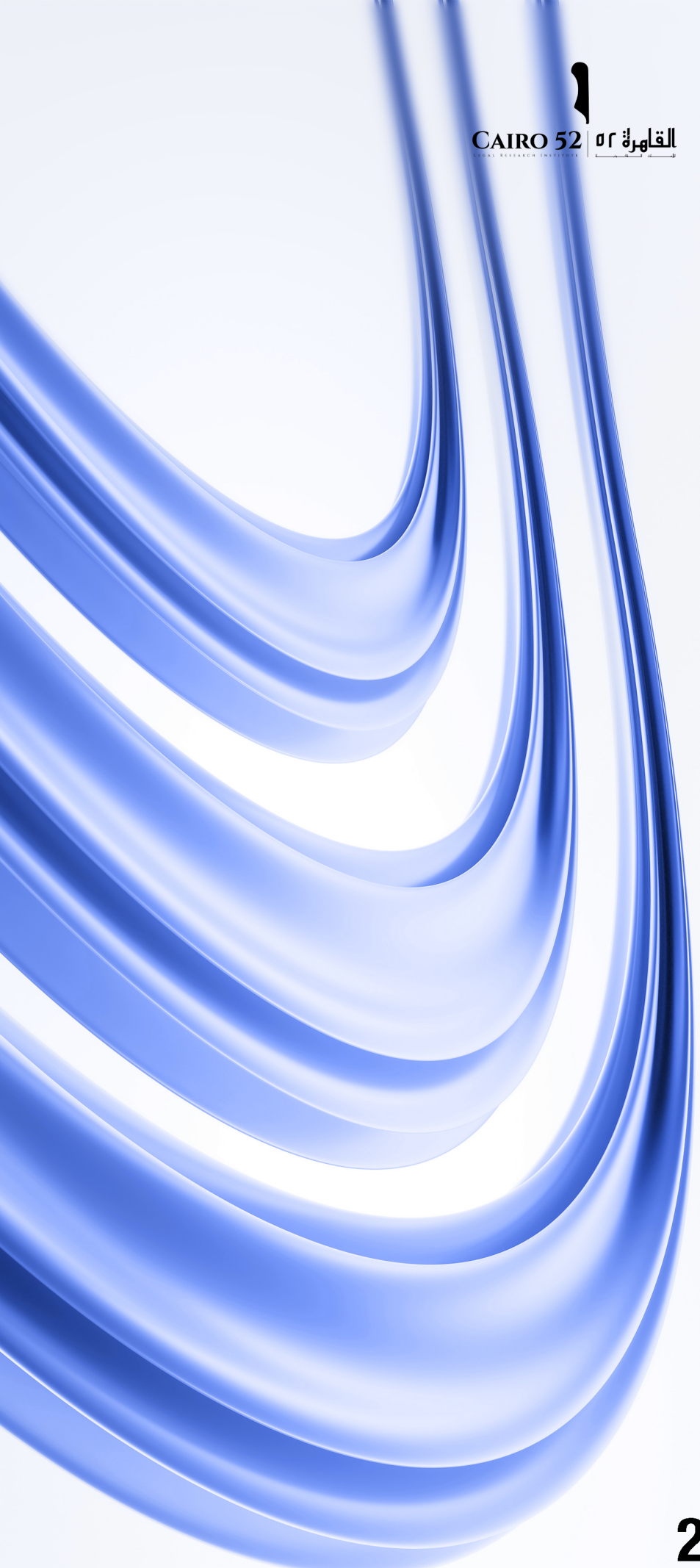
Furthermore, the legal unit will continue to provide services at the national level, while also engaging in strategic litigation at the regional level. Collaborating with partners in the region, the unit will identify and bring forward new cases that can be utilized for strategic litigation across the region. As Egypt approaches its UPR review, the Institute will engage in advocacy efforts, utilizing the data and evidence-based research conducted in previous years. This will inform advocacy and facilitate the submission of shadow reports on various topics before the July deadline. Additionally, the Institute's staff will continue to engage in advocacy networking and meetings with key partners at the national, regional, and international levels, ensuring that their advocacy efforts receive support across all levels.

To facilitate knowledge transfer among allies, community members, and emerging leaders, the Institute will introduce new training initiatives, including internship programs, workshops, and trainings. Lastly, the Media unit will persist in challenging conservative narratives surrounding sexual and gender minorities in the region. This will involve building on previous awareness and advocacy campaigns and laying the groundwork for future endeavors.

Moving forward, Cairo 52 aims to enhance its digital strategies to maximize reach, deepen impact, and foster a supportive community for its advocacy efforts. The inclusion of detailed campaign metrics and workshop outcomes underscores the comprehensive approach that Cairo 52 is adopting to drive social change and empower marginalized communities.



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