

EGYPT



Governance issues, a heavy-handed counter-terror campaign, a slowing economy that has left more than one in three Egyptians living in poverty, and increasing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers from neighboring countries have left Egypt in crisis.

Country Context

Egypt struggles to rebuild its economy following years of unrest since the 2011 Arab Spring. Since that time, poverty in Egypt has continued to grow. In 2018, 32.5% of the population lived in poverty, up from 27.8% in 2015 and 16.7% in 2000. Current President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has cracked down on political dissent and placed a government ban on protests. Islamists, secular political activists, and political opponents have been jailed and faced pressure, all while the government's austerity measures have hurt the country's poor and middle classes.

How is the U.S. Involved?


Egypt is the second-largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance. In August 2018, the U.S. government released \$195 million in military aid to Egypt, which it then suspended in 2017 over human rights concerns. Over the past two decades, U.S. Economic Support Fund assistance to Egypt has been reduced by over 90%.

Key Figures

 **32.5%**
of Egyptians live in poverty

 **20%**
of the country's poorest children have never attended school

 **35%**
of women are illiterate

 **33%**
of Egyptians are under 15 years old

 **\$1.54 billion**
received annually in U.S. foreign assistance

On-the-Ground Perspective

- The Committee to Protect Journalists says Egypt is among the world's worst jailers of journalists. Human rights defenders and opponents have been arrested and jailed by the thousands.
- President Sisi's supporters recently proposed to amend the constitution to extend his presidency beyond the current term, for two additional six-year terms.

Responses and Actions

- The World Food Program supports government-run social protection systems that assist vulnerable members of the population. However, affordability, food quality, and food safety remain the most pressing challenges.
- Feed the Future programs in Egypt use a market-driven approach to strengthen fruit and vegetable value chains through innovative technologies in small-scale cold storage infrastructure and irrigation.
- In October of 2019, USAID inaugurated the Massara Water Treatment Plant in Assiut governorate, allowing for 370,00 residents of Assiut to have access to potable water and sanitation.

References available at [interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport](https://www.interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport).

