

Waves of Resistance and the Call for Fundamental Change: What's Habitat Got to Do with It?

Findings from the HIC-HLRN Violation Database, 2008–2011



Since the last International Housing and Land Rights Day (World Habitat Day) in 2010, the world has become a different place. Not only has it been revealed that the polar ice cap is melting at a far more-rapid rate than previously estimated,¹ but a most-unlikely uprising in a region of entrenched despotism has uprooted long-standing dictators and their brutal regimes. For long a repressive bulwark reassuring Western interests as the preferable alternative to equitable democratization, authentic national self-determination and allegedly radical Islam, those regimes now are toppling as so many dominos, teetering on the brink of collapse and/or reforming frantically to salvage their control over the state: land, people and institutions. The political map has transformed dramatically since last year. In this transitional light, one might well paraphrase the sultry Tina Turner to ask the musical question, “What’s habitat got to do with it?”

The social-movement landscape—from Algiers² to Zawiya³—also has replicated itself in some form beyond the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), where mass demonstrations even in more-privileged societies have called for fundamental change: an end to avaricious neoliberalism, accountability for the looting of national resources, more jobs and affordable housing. As every year, Habitat International Coalition’s Housing and Land Rights Network (HIC-HLRN) commemorates this occasion with an

review of its monitoring efforts—especially the findings from the HLRN Violation Database—to analyze the current trends in housing and land rights violations in relation to the issues of the day—Habitat Day.

Tunisia

Let us begin where it all started: Tunisia. Here erupted the common citizens' demand for dignity, democracy, equality, human rights and a definitive end to corruption. As of 17 December 2010, when the police-abused vegetable vendor Muhammad Bū Āzīzī immolated himself in remote Sidi Būzīd, countrymen and -women from all walks of life rose up and called for change. The target was a regime headed by a corrupt family that imposed control over, and exacted tribute from every sector of Tunisian society and economy. Among its repressive tools were, among others, the political police, a propagandistic press and the systematic use of torture. Parallel to these were widespread corruption in real estate, favoring the ruling family and its supporters with sweet land deals and dispossession of public and private properties for personal enrichment at the people's expense. A tour of the HLRN Violation Database⁴ informs the user about the dimensions of this form of corruption in Ben `Ali's defunct regime, and so many others.

After the deposed president fled Tunisia on 14 January 2011, a list of names came to light of families close to the regime who benefited from extraordinary land deals in which the government turned over vast properties, some valued at tens of millions of dollars.⁵ The rural poor across Tunisia have since sought reparations for their dispossession.⁶ In February 2011, a story broke about the residents of Jumna, in the southwestern Qabaly Governorate, protesting for the return of their agricultural lands confiscated for the benefit of an industrialist close to the deposed president. Other cases have come to light in which torture and land seizure combined as tandem measures to repress critics of the decayed former regime.⁷ In one report, a witness of prime land grabbing by the former Tunisian first lady's family characterized the practice by analogy: "They took the people's lands," she said. "The Trabelsis are like cockroaches. They fed on everything."⁸ When the people eventually rose up against the larcenous clique, some even sought immediate vengeance against their privatizations, looting and burning ill-gotten properties of the newly fallen elites.⁹

Egypt

Egypt, under former President Husni Mubarak, also underwent massive land fraud at the expense of public and private land and habitat. The dispossession of the peasantry and the forced eviction of the urban poor were two prominent features of the Mubarak era, which deprivations now require reparations for its victims.¹⁰ Commercial interests were often the beneficiaries of the unlawful dispossession of poor from the Nile Delta, in the north,¹¹ to Nuba, in the far south of the country. In the context of the Egyptian Revolution, a collective response with demands from HLRN Members articulated the nexus between habitat rights violations and the thunderous call for fundamental change.¹²

As HLRN's MENA Program has reported previously, the implementation of Egypt's notorious neoliberal Law 96, cancelling all protected rural land tenure contracts, enabled a wave of concentrated land privatization that consequently deprived peasants of their lands and livelihoods, despite a (false) promise in the law of adequate replacement lands. In addition to this and other administrative weapons to dispossess small farmers of their lands,¹³ the Mubarak regime also used violence to enforce arbitrary evictions against those poor Egyptians. The process is explained in the 2010 report of HLRN's MENA Program on "How People Face Evictions."¹⁴ After the revolutionary downfall of Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) government, measures began to restore some level of justice for the dispossessed. Even in the former president's home territory of Manūfiyya, members of his hated NDP reportedly subjected villages to attacks by hired thugs, who forcibly seized agricultural land owned by the peasants under the threat of firearms and bladed weapons.¹⁵

During Mubarak's three-decade-long regime, loyal politicians lavished upon themselves vast tracts of state lands at fictitiously low prices. Those responsible for the land grabs and resulting real estate profiteering included members of the People's Assembly and Shūra Council (parliament),¹⁶ ministers and members of the Mubarak family. Some of those self-interested persons illicitly obtained public goods, some also falling in the hands of corrupt businessmen, are now gradually being restored.¹⁷

The Ministers of Tourism, Agriculture and Housing were particularly implicated in these nepotistic crimes of crony capitalism. For instance, investigations this year revealed that former Egyptian ministers of agriculture had allocated many thousands of *feddans*¹⁸ of land—ostensibly allocated for young graduates—to 160 senior officials, ministers, members of both houses of parliament and their relatives.¹⁹

Forced eviction of the urban poor from a corollary of rural dispossession, as displaced citizens have sought alternative livelihoods in those population centers favored by public and private investment. In the current review period, the HLRN Violation Database has recorded major urban forced evictions conducted without alternative housing in Abū Ragaila (Cairo),²⁰ Qal'at Kabsh (Cairo),²¹ Alexandria,²² Qursaya Island²³ and Mahala,²⁴ while HLRN notes also many more small-scale and incremental evictions in neighborhoods elsewhere.²⁵



Pre-25 January 2011 vision of the Cairo 2050 Plan

Many of the Egyptian capital's mass and incremental evictions in this review period are understood as pre-emptive strikes against the poor to make way for the infamous "Cairo 2050 Plan." This innovation in urban-planning cruelty is purportedly implemented at the instigation of the former president, inspired by a visit to Beijing—another capital scene of engineered inequity and exclusion. Although much of the forward-looking Cairo 2050 Plan remains vague, its central feature involves the exclusion of the poor—Cairo's fastest-growing population—to the periphery of a capitalist- and tourism-friendly dream town. The Plan calls for many thousands of poor Egyptians to be evicted forcibly without viable housing alternatives provided or planned, without their participation, and without sufficient information so far for current inhabitants to know or understand the fate that is being imperiously engineered for them. The Plan effectively would depopulate historic centers whose inhabitants long have resided there, some for over two centuries. They are to be replaced with luxuriously spaced towers of steel and glass. In a sense, the Cairo 2050 Plan embodies the Arabic wisdom saying: "A heaven without people is not to worth treading in."²⁶

During this review period, HIC-HLRN joined with Amnesty International and the Egyptian Center for Housing Rights (ECHR) to address Egypt's then-minister of housing (currently serving a prison sentence for corruption and graft) on the importance of participation of the affected communities in the emerging plans for Cairo 2050.²⁷ H.E. Ahmed Maghrabi did not respond.

The ministry continued its promotion of the Plan, claiming international legitimacy with the support of UNDP and UN HABITAT. In a further query, Amnesty International and ECHR separately issued formal letters to UN HABITAT's executive director to ask for clarification as to the agency's actual involvement in this, Cairo's massive forced-eviction plan. UN HABITAT also never responded in any form, nor did its technical officers working on Cairo 2050 conspicuously relate with civil society or the affected communities. Upon arrival of the people's revolution, the UN "cities agency" remained on record as siding with the Mubarak government's large-scale gross violation of human rights.²⁸



Former Egyptian Minister of Housing and Urban Development
Ahmed Maghrabi in pretrial detention

Bahrain

UN HABITAT and the Kingdom of Bahrain have made much publicity of the repeatedly bestowed a Special Citation of its Scroll of Honour Award to that country's Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa since 2007 "in recognition of his visionary leadership in effectively pursuing the Millennium Development Goals...through participatory governance, [thus] the Kingdom of Bahrain has been able to reduce poverty and to bring about social justice through socially inclusive housing policy, housing finance systems and good urban governance."²⁹ The 2011 uprising against His Highness' award-winning dictatorship has roots in habitat issues as well.

For a few years preceding the mass demonstrations at Bahrain's Pearl Roundabout and the Al Khalifa monarchy's violent suppression of them, Bahraini youth had been demonstrating for reform amid the demand for jobs and housing.³⁰ Adequate housing is in critically short supply in the kingdom, especially owing to multiple factors of institutionalized discrimination and an extreme land shortage, both exacerbated by the royal family's looting of the archipelago's natural resources.

Among the issues of discrimination in Bahrain is the administrative favoritism extended to Sunni citizens of foreign countries recruited into the security forces. That minority has become automatic beneficiaries of state housing and fast-track nationalization, while Bahraini citizens—in particular, the Shi`a majority—do not similarly benefit. For those Bahrainis who benefit from public housing and ultimately pay off its full price through regular installments, their title deeds nonetheless recognize that their housing remains the freehold property of the monarch. Even public property such as school buildings are registered in the name of a member of the royal family.³¹

While the usual residents of the squalid slums in the capital al-Manama are Bahraini Shi`a, discrimination on a sectarian basis is also evident in the villages. Sunni villages boast all possible forms of planning, resources and facilities, while neighboring Shi`a

villages are conspicuously unserved, including those lacking paved roads, sanitation services and adequate water infrastructure.

Although detailed maps indicating actual land distribution in the island country are not publicly available, the estimated allotments draw a dramatic picture of exclusion. Over 40% of the total 665 sq. km. of the country's land area (Southern Province) is occupied by a constant foreign military presence, hosting the bases of the United States Navy's 5th Fleet. Only 2.82% of the islands' land is arable.³² Of the remaining land base, only 28% is suitable for housing construction. As a function of various forms and pretexts of royal-family land grabbing, the terrain left for Bahrain's population to live on is reduced to only 10% of the total (ca. 66.5 km²).³³ At 2010, Bahrain's population totaled 1,214,705, including 235,108 non-nationals.³⁴ At 1,062.01 persons per km², the general land shortage, exacerbated by an inequitable formula of land distribution in favor of the royal family and its supporters, makes Bahrain the seventh most-densely population country on the planet.³⁵

For an overview of the land and housing issues related to the democratic uprising in Bahrain, as well as satellite images of the Al Khalifa's royal land grabs, go to HLRN's MENA News at: <http://www.hic-mena.org/pNewsId.asp?Id=1145>.

Yemen

The popular movement for change still rages in Yemen, where land theft and corruption by the ruling elite figure also on the long list of public grievances. Land and housing dispossession, as well as the use of force have been common implements for intimidating the weak.³⁶ This year's uprising has revealed direct links between land grabbing by Yemeni politicians and the loud cries for change.³⁷

Meanwhile, severe land disparities mark the legacy of the embattled `Ali Abdullah Salih regime.³⁸ Reports have revealed, for example, that as much as 63% of the arable land in the Hudaida Province has been taken over by influential persons close to the regime.³⁹ Thus, land grabbing is not a new feature of popular dissatisfaction with the 33-year-old Salih rule, which led to the formation of a commission to investigate such violations as early as 2007.⁴⁰

Syria

Also ongoing on this Habitat Day is the democratic uprising in Syria against the brutal regime headed by President Bashar al-Asad, culminating two generations of repressive state ideology and governance (succeeding the presidency of his father Hafidh al-Asad, 1971–2000). In the context of the current uprising, corruption and land grabbing also has become a subject of scrutiny and opposition in Syria.

In the urban context, reports from the Province of Damascus have revealed that Syrian businessman Rāmi Makhlūf (a cousin of President al-Asad) has conspired to take over large areas of Old Damascus, containing priceless relics in the form of historic homes,

monuments and other real estate, in order to construct a new center of the Syrian capital in the style of Beirut's controversial *Solidere* enterprise.⁴¹ As the Syrian people's uprising began, the country's Attorney General in Homs referred to 91 people as implicated in a case known as "theft of state property and private real estate."⁴²



Young Syrian Demonstrator. Source: Sham News Network

Although the grievances against the Bashar al-Asad regime are broader and diverse in nature, emblematic of the Ba`th Party regime is the practice of dispossessing Syrian citizens and a governance of material discrimination. Among the long-standing factors of dissent in Syria has been the state's institutional disadvantaging of ethnic Kurdish Syrians and other minorities, especially since its single-party transition in the early 1960s. However, discrimination against Kurds in Syria has deeper roots. The first decree that restricted the

constitutional right to own property is the Legislative Decree No. 193 of 1952. Inspired by the ultranationalist Muhammad Talib Hilal,⁴³ the decree identified "the risks that arise from suspected people having property adjacent to the border."

In the period between the September 1961 collapse of the Egyptian-Syrian union (United Arab Republic) and the first Ba`th Party coup (March 1963), the conservative interim government issued Decree No. 93, calling for a census to be carried out in largely rural and Kurdish-populated al-Hasaka Province "in one single day." That hasty exercise took place under the ethnocentric Arab Nationalist vision of Governor Sa'id al-Sayyid, whose partisans characterized small-holding Kurdish farmers as "invaders." Anyone who could not produce family records on the census day would be denied entry into the registry, and all entries and appeals were reviewed ultimately by an Arab Nationalist "Supreme Committee" (Article 7 of Decree No. 93). Those in the area not registered as an "Arab Syrian" would be considered as "foreigners" (*ajānib*). That single process stripped more than 120,000 Kurds of their Syrian citizenship,⁴⁴ disqualifying them for land ownership under current law. Thus, shortly after the entry into force of the Statelessness Convention in international law, Syria created an entire class of stateless persons. With few exceptions, Kurds were the only non-Arab citizens treated in this way.

All categories of stateless Kurds in Syria are subject to systematic persecution by Syrian governments, which situation has escalated in recent years. Their constructed status—outside of citizenship—makes them subject to a range of economic, social and cultural rights violations. Premised on their putative status as noncitizens, Syrian Kurds are unable to own land, housing or businesses, impeding their rights to an adequate standard of living.⁴⁵

In our review period, on 10 September 2008, President Bashar al-Asad issued Decree No.49 to amend Law No.41 as it related to wide expropriation of private property in the border areas. In its application, Decree No. 49 has led both directly and indirectly to the deprivation of Kurdish citizens' rights to adequate housing and to property, especially land as a source of livelihood and culture.⁴⁶

In its first article, Decree No. 49 prohibits the trade of property, mortgages, insurance, concessions, other franchises, or lending arrangements of a duration longer than three years, or that affect any legal rights to lands in the border area (including all of al-Hasaka Province) without central government permission, whether they are within or outside of a city plan, with or without a building on it, agricultural or nonagricultural land. The process remains prohibitively burdensome, and contracts outside these rules are deemed invalid. Decree 49 prevents the Courts from accepting any application to ratify a real estate sales contract, unless accompanied by the required license. Contravening Article 30 of the Syrian Constitution, the decree is *retroactive* and forces the dismissal of all pending cases in which the plaintiff (buyer) has failed to produce the necessary license. Any current real estate sales without a license could be sent to auction, as if no owner existed. Decree No. 49 applies the licensing requirement also to rental properties for leases of more than three years. It also prevents local councils from arranging municipal contracts for three years or more for shops, housing and agricultural property without obtaining a license in advance.

Kurds in Syria are effectively prevented from obtaining the requisite permits. Therefore, Decree 49 has derogated further their rights to housing, equitable land access and agricultural, as well as many other forms of livelihood. The access to subsidized food is further proscribed (without citizenship rights) and particularly crucial in light of the recent land losses by administrative means, as well as the loss of food security and food sovereignty due to drought apparently brought about as a function of climate change.

As a further result of repeated droughts, a feature of advanced climate change, many families have migrated from rural Syria to urban centers. In 2009, some 29–30,000 families migrated, and estimates project that number to have increased to 50,000, or higher, already in 2010. As a result, some 160 ultimately depopulated villages have ceased to exist.⁴⁷ Those Syrians who have moved from the drought-affected regions are mostly small-scale farmers from al-Hasaka Governorate; the overwhelming majority of them are Kurds.

Deepening this deprivation with more administrative sadism, the Syrian government's subsequent Decree 2715 of 16 December 2010, through the Ministry of Local Administration, has prohibited any officials from ratifying sales or rental contracts for persons residing outside of their "designated domicile." This measure, ostensibly not specific to any ethnic groups, further complicates and forecloses housing options—and housing rights—for those most vulnerable to the present wave of displacements. Kurdish would-be "citizens" are destined to suffer the first and the most from such official cruelty.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, hundreds of migrant families face demolition in the Qāsiūn neighborhood of the capital. Although the Constitution protects the right of a Syrian citizen in his home.⁴⁹ Customary and humanitarian norms prevent displacement of people in the winter and school year. As affirmed in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,⁵⁰ such persons have a right to state support to ensure their welfare and housing,⁵¹ return and rehabilitation⁵² without negative discrimination.⁵³ However, Syria has not manifested the necessary political will to uphold those rights and entitlements.

Israel/Palestine

Across the artificial border and occupied territory of the Golan Heights, Israel practices an even-older form of institutional discrimination. Since the beginning of the Zionist movement at the eugenic ending of the 19th Century, the World Zionist Organization and its subsequent affiliated (Jewish Agency and Jewish National Fund) insisted on a privileged “Jewish nationality” status as the basis for benefitting from their activities in the colonization of Palestine. With the 1948 proclamation of the State of Israel, those institutions ultimately inherited the public functions of the state⁵⁴ to implement “Jewish nationality” benefits to land (mostly acquired from expelled Palestinian refugees) and housing. The same services and benefits do not accrue to holders of mere “citizenship” (*ezrahūt*) in the State of Israel, in particular the indigenous Palestinian people who make up some 20% of Israel’s citizenry.

Notably, this patterns of discrimination, with its legal and material consequences, is distinct from the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. There, Israeli laws and discriminatory institutions are “imported” across the Green Line (1948–49 Armistice Line). In the oPt, the most prominent feature of discrimination—in addition to the application of separate legal norms applied to Israelis and indigenous Palestinian residents—are the snaking Separation Wall and the strategically punctual settler colonies throughout the West Bank and Jerusalem⁵⁵ that, together, form a population transfer scenario that violates international humanitarian law and criminal law prohibitions.⁵⁶

Among the most dramatic violations against indigenous citizens of Israel in the review period has been the repeated demolition and forced eviction of Palestinian villages in the Naqab (*Negev*) region in the south of Israel. HIC-HLRN’s published report of a high-level international fact-finding mission in the review period lays out the human rights issues involved and the statecraft values at stake in this regionally relevant pattern of housing and land rights violations during the “Revolutionary Spring” this year. Emblematic of the state’s destruction of homes and livelihoods of the “unrecognized” villages in the Naqab is the demolition of al-`Araqīb village for at least the 21st time by Habitat Day 2011.⁵⁷ On 11 September 2011, the Israeli Cabinet has approved the recommendations of the Ehud Praver Report, which calls for the forced removal and dispossession of at least 30,000 Bedouin Arab citizens from their villages for concentration into planned “townships” devoid of land tenure or equal rights of citizenship to vital services and sustainable livelihood.⁵⁸

For more information on this manifestation of institutionalized discrimination and the mechanisms that enforce it, see HIC-HLRN's international fact-finding mission report: *The Goldberg Opportunity: A Change for Human Rights Statecraft in Israel* (2010), at: <http://www.hlrn.org/img/publications/Naqab%20FFM%20report%202010.zip>.

Conclusion

With the case of Israel, as with the case of Syria, the lack of democracy is ensured by a denial of citizenship as the basis for the equal enjoyment of rights and responsibilities within the state. In all these cases from the region, effective material discrimination has been carried out by various iterations of failed governance that generates conflict and, more recently, mass resistance that aspires to be transformational. As a function of HLRN's monitoring efforts, the Violation Database and other tools chart that process from the perspective of habitat rights and corresponding state obligations.

In the autumn of this year, indeed a resistance for all seasons, HIC-HLRN and its Members—not least in the MENA region—reflect on the common issues and values that bind all of who share common habitat. The violations of the people's rights to habitat are motivating social movements and popular resistance wherever such violations are found. Our colleagues in Luanda, Angola⁵⁹; Dale Farms, England;⁶⁰ Sulukule (Istanbul), Turkey⁶¹; Nuba Mountains in the Sudan⁶²; or Boeng Kak Lake, Cambodia⁶³ stand as sterling examples of the struggles against tyranny and for their human rights to adequate housing, equitable access to land, food sovereignty and sustainable environment. In light of this wave, even the monarchies of the Arabian Peninsula are getting into the act of appeasing the housing demands of their "subjects."⁶⁴

As inspired by the first HLRN Land Forum in the Middle East/North Africa, the Network's "Landpedia" (in Arabic⁶⁵ and English⁶⁶) captures many of these struggles in an interactive tool for HIC Members and the general public. In this season of popular resistance to corruption, neoliberalism and failed governance, these struggles and the cumulative cases entered in the HLRN Violation Database demonstrate what habitat's got to do with it. It's physical; it's logical.

Endnotes:

- ¹ "New Report: Arctic Melt, Sea Rise Far Greater," *HLRN News* (5 May 2011), at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/newsdetails.asp?id=1398>.
- ² "Algeria's Housing Riots in Context," *HIC-MENA News* (24 March 2011), at: <http://www.hic-mena.org/pNewsId.asp?Id=1143>.
- ³ "Gaddafi Forces Attack Homes in Zawiyah," *HIC-MENA News* (9 March 2011), at: <http://www.hic-mena.org/pNewsId.asp?Id=1132>.
- ⁴ At: http://www.hlrn.org/English/welcome_violation.asp.
- ⁵ "Ben Ali's 'Beneficiaries'," من فترة الرئيس زين العابدين بن علي، "مستفيدة" عائلات [Families of the "beneficiaries" of the President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali], in VDB, at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=1064>.
- ⁶ "Tracking Stolen Fortune," in VDB, at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=1063>; also "Rural poor rally in Tunis, seeking change," *Reuters* (23 January 2011), at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/23/us-tunisia-idUSTRE70J0IG20110123>.
- ⁷ تونس .. مبنى قديم يخفي 23 عاما من الآلام والاستيلاء على الأراضي [Tunisia .. Old building hides the 23 years of pain and the acquisition of territory], *al-Iqtisādīyya* (2 July 2011), http://www.aleqt.com/2011/02/07/article_501162.html
- ⁸ "Cockroach Trabelsis," in VDB, at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=1062>.
- ⁹ "Tunisia on the brink of revolution," *Vast Majority* (blogspot) (13 January 2011), at: <http://vastminority.blogspot.com/2011/01/tunisia-on-brink-of-revolution.html>.
- ¹⁰ In accordance with the "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law," A/RES/60/147, UNGA 60th session, 21 March 2006, adopted at the GA's 64th plenary meeting, 19 December 2005.
- ¹¹ محلى دمياط" يطالب بالتحقيق فى بيع أراضي مصنعى الألبان والغزل ["Damietta Local Calls for Investigation of Land Sales to Yarn and Dairy Products Manufacturers"], in VDB at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=1061>.
- ¹² HLRN, "A New Dawn in Our Region: Revolution against Tyranny and Corruption, and for Restoring Rights and Liberties," 17 February 2011 (in English), at: <http://www.hic-mena.org/pNewsId.asp?Id=1145>; and "الثورة على الاستبداد: جر جديد في منطقتنا." 17 فبراير 2011 (in Arabic), at: <http://www.hic-mena.org/pNewsIda.asp?Id=1115>. "من أجل استعادة الحقوق والحريات الفساد"
- ¹³ For example, see "The Expropriation of 650 Feddans of Agricultural Owners in Minya without Compensation", (7 April 2011), at: <http://www.elkhamis.com/News-55607685.html>.
- ¹⁴ HLRN, "How People Face Eviction," 28 February 2010, at: www.hlrn.org/img/documents/HPFE%20report%20EN.pdf; and, "كيف يواجه الناس الإخلاء القسرية؟ حالات من مصر" (in Arabic) at: <http://www.hic-mena.org/documents/HPFE%20report%20Ar.pdf>.
- ¹⁵ "Investigation of the Martyrs Village Supports the Acquisition of Land Farmers", in VDB, at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=1059>.
- ¹⁶ "Former Deputies Return 400 Feddans of State Land after Seizing It with the Former Minister of Agriculture's Consent", in VDB at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=1056>.
- ¹⁷ For example, see: "Indicted Egyptian businessmen offer financial reparations for land grabs," *al-Ahram Weekly* (20 March 2011), at: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/8156/Business/Economy/Indicted-Egyptian-businessmen-offer-financial-repa.aspx>; "Egypt's Mansour brothers debut on Forbes list, as one of them faces profiteering charges," *ahramonline* (10 March 2011), at: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentPrint/3/0/7402/Business/0/Egypt's-Mansour-brothers-debut-on-Forbes-list.-as-o.aspx>; "Post-Mubarak Egypt Probes Public Land Contracts," *IPS News* (30 March 2011), at: <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=55069>; and "Egypt Corruption Probes Rattle Moguls As Land Deal Creates Whistle Blower," *Bloomberg* (19 May 2011), at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-05-18/land-deal-turned-one-egyptian-into-a-corruption-buster.html>.
- ¹⁸ In Egypt, a *feddan* is a unit of land measurement (consisting of 24 *kirats*) equivalent to 4,200 square metres (m²), or 1.038 acres.
- ¹⁹ "Investigations Reveal the Distribution Territory of Amin Abaza Graduates Officials and House of Representatives", *Shurūq News* (3 June 2011), at: <http://www.shorouknews.com/contentData.aspx?id=402764>; and "التحقيق مع الغول في "أراضي الخريجين" [Investigation into al-Ghoul (Affair) of 'Land for Graduates']" *al-Wafd* (25 May 2011), at: http://www.alwafd.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49069&catid=102&Itemid=89#axzz1OPkQnSP6; and "بلاغ للنائب العام بتهمة "يوسف والى" بالاستيلاء على 42 فدان من الفلاحين بالفيوم" ["Communication to the Public Prosecutor Accused Yusuf Wali of seizing 42 acres of farmers in Fayūm"], in VDB, at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=1060>.
- ²⁰ "Families in Abu Rugaila Face Eviction as Army Prepares to Move in," in VDB, at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=720>.
- ²¹ "Security Forces Attack and Evict Residents during and after Blaze," in VDB, at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=298>.

- 22 تعديلات على حقوق السكن في الإسكندرية إخلاء قسري دون تقديم بديل at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=567>.
- 23 انتهاكات الحق في السكن وأحلام الأطفال في جزيرة قرصايه في مصر at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=568>.
- 24 أسرة من عمال المحلة يتعرضون للإخلاء القسري 650 at: <http://www.hlrn.org/english/violation.asp?id=570>.
- 25 As in the case of individual households evicted from *Muthalath Maspéro* district in central Cairo, to make way for unknown “development” plans to be carried out by silent partners.
- 26 “جنة بدون ناس لا تنداس”.
- 27 “Threat of Forced Eviction for Greater Cairo’s `Shack’ Dwellers,” at: <http://www.hic-mena.org/documents/Cairo%20Shacks.pdf>; see also HIC Open Letter to H.E. Minister of Housing and Local Development Ahmed Maghrabi: Egypt’s intended 2050 master plan for Cairo threatens habitat and human rights of millions of impoverished citizens,” in Urgent Action database, at: <http://www.hlrn.org/img/cases/EGY-FE-020709-gazirat%20al-dhahab.pdf>.
- 28 UN Commission on Human Rights has affirmed that “the practice of forced evictions constitutes a gross violation of human rights, in particular the right to adequate housing.” UN Commission on Human Rights, Forced eviction, 10 March 1993, resolution 1993/77, para. 1.
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- (4) deny Kurds employment opportunities, (5) conduct anti-Kurdish propaganda, (6) deport Kurdish 'ulama' (clerics) to be replaced by Arabs, (7) implement a divide-and-rule policy against the Kurds, (8) Arab colonization of Kurdish lands (9) militarize "northern Arab belt" and deport Kurds from the area, (10) create "collective farms" for the new Arab settlers, (11) deny rights to vote or public office to nonarabophones and (12) deny citizenship to any non-Arab wishing to live in the target area. The Syrian Ba`thi regional leadership and government formally adopted Hilal's plan in 1965. See Haitham Mana', "Adīmū al-Jinsīyya fī Sūriya" [Arabic] "Stateless Persons in Syria," (Geneva: Arab Commission for Human Rights, 2004), at: <http://hem.bredband.net/dccls2/r1.htm>.
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- ⁵² Ibid., Principles 29 and 30.
- ⁵³ Ibid., Principles 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- ⁵⁴ Under the "Status Law" of 1952.
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