

# KEY JUDGEMENTS JULY 2023

**Title:** Organ Trafficking in Egypt

**Location:** Egypt

**Issue Number:** 001

**Date:** 24.07.2023

**Disclaimer:** *Please note that this assessment is based on a combination of open-source research, input from subject matter experts on the ground, survivor accounts, and data analysis.*

## INTRODUCTION

Egypt is a global centre for the trafficking of human beings for the purpose of organ removal (THBOR), especially kidneys. Over 1,000 kidney transplants are conducted in Egypt every year, the majority of which are likely based on commercial transactions. Criminal networks recruit victim-donors from vulnerable communities in Egypt, including irregular migrant and refugee communities, using online platforms and local recruiters. The organ trade is also often connected to OCGs involved in smuggling, sex trafficking, and kidnapping for ransom.

*Thank you to Seán Columb for his research and insights, which helped inform this assessment. For further information, his research can be found [here](#) and [here](#).*

## WE ASSESS AS FOLLOWS

### RECRUITMENT

**a)** Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are smuggled into Egypt from Sub-Saharan countries. They are regularly lured or forced into exploitation, including sex trafficking and THBOR, to finance onward movement to Europe. People smugglers refer migrants to organ brokers in Cairo. OCGs kidnap migrants for ransom. Victim donors recruited in Egypt are generally impoverished Egyptian nationals or Sudanese, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Somali, Nigerian, Yemeni, Jordanian, Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers.

**b)** Recruitment hotspots include Cairo and the Sinai region of Egypt. Sudanese nationals are recruited around informal Sudanese street markets in Cairo and hotels hosting newly arrived asylum seekers. Victim donors are also recruited in Sudan and Darfur and brought to Egypt for organ removal.

## RECRUITMENT CONT.

c) Victim-donors include men, women and children. Women and girls are often simultaneously trafficked for sex and THBOR. Victim donors are deceived, harassed, and coerced into giving consent. Sometimes they are forced to undergo the procedure against their will. In some cases, they are unaware that their kidney will be removed.

d) Recruitment occurs face-to-face locally as well as through social media (*Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Email, Haraj, 4Sales, Twitter and Telegram*).

## DEMAND

a) Egypt is a destination country for kidney transplantation. A single OCG in Egypt allegedly arranged 20-30 illegal kidney transplants every week in 2020.

b) Recipients of illicitly obtained organs include US, Saudi, Sudanese, Jordan and Libyan nationals. Recipients are recruited in dialysis centres around the world and online.

c) Commercial transplantation of organs obtained through THBOR occurs in public and private hospitals where legal transplants are conducted in Egypt. There are 42 centres for transplanting organs in Egypt.

d) THBOR in Egypt is usually organised by an informal network of intermediaries rather than centralised networks or OCGs. The typical process is as follows:

1) Local recruiters double as brokers or connect donor victims to the broker. Brokers have close connections to the medical sector, including tissue-typing laboratories.

2) Brokers negotiate the price with the donor-victim.

3) Brokers take the donor-victim to analytic laboratories for tissue typing and health tests, including ultrasounds and blood and urine tests. Testing takes approximately 2 weeks. The analytic laboratories match the donor-victim with the organ recipient.

4) The analytic laboratory refers the donor-victim to the hospital or transplant centre. Documentation (often falsified) includes a consent form signed by the donor indicating informed consent and the donor-victim's passport and medical records.

5) The transplantation is approved by the Egyptian Medical Syndicate. The official documentation is either forged or the paperwork is submitted for approval by the analytic laboratory. Documentation includes:

- i) Paperwork specifying the altruistic nature of the donation
- ii) The donor victim's age, nationality and sex
- iii) The health status of the donor victim and the recipient

## DEMAND CONT.

iv) Evidence that the donor-victim has given consent, including an affidavit signed by the donor-victim before a special committee. This usually takes place under the instruction of the broker.

6) Before transplantation, the donor-victim also signs a consent form at the clinic where the procedure will be performed.

7) Due to this process (during which the donor-victim is usually under duress), the transplantation appears to be legitimate on paper. Hospital staff and doctors involved rarely question whether the transplantation is illicit.

## MONEY (REVENUE)

a) Victim-donors are offered different prices for their kidneys, dependent on their knowledge and negotiation skills. Often, they receive much less than offered, in part due to 'hidden costs linked to the accommodation offered for recovery after the operation.

1) Victim donors usually receive approximately \$3,000 USD. Known payments range between \$1,600 to \$20,000 USD.

b) Organ recipients pay between \$40,000 to \$100,000 USD to the hospital or transplant centre.

c) The hospital pays the tissue-typing lab around \$6,000 USD.

d) The broker or group of brokers receive \$3,000 USD from the lab plus a further \$2,000 USD commission from the donor. Other reports indicate that brokers receive \$6,000 - \$9,500 USD for each sale.

## INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

1) Information on any cases of illicit organ transplantation activity in Egypt or elsewhere.

2) Details of any illicit brokers offering organ transplantation services in Egypt or elsewhere.

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