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Habitat International Coalition



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## Cairo Court: Officials Guilty of Manslaughter in Housing Disaster

26 May 2010

Egyptian Center for Housing Rights

The Misdemeanor Court of Manshi'at Nasser issued a verdict today on the Duwiqa case by the imprisonment for five years for the first defendant, a deputy governor of Cairo Governorate, and three years for seven defendants who are also employees of the State.

The facts of the case go back to the year 2008, when a huge rock from al-Muqattam Mountain collapsed on Izbat Bakhit - Duwiqa (Cairo) and led to the death of 107 inhabitants and injured 57, according to the official statements. However, the survivors stated that the number of deaths is greater than the official statistics, as many of the dead bodies remain buried under the rubble and never been retrieved.

Despite the fact that the government had a project to build for Duwiqa's people under a grant from Abu Dhabi Fund, and despite the fact that 4,000 units of the project were available, the officials not delivered such units to the people who were at a high risk, which led to the above-mentioned disaster. The Egyptian Center for Housing Rights, who has been working on Duwiqa district for more than nine years, had received many complaints in the past before that reveal the corruption in distributing housing units in which they are given by officials who are not in need.

In addition, ECHR filed a complaint one month before the accident to the General Prosecutor (GP), Cairo governor, and the Chief of Munshi'at Nasser Municipality expressing its fear from expected rockslide and arguing them to deliver the housing units to the inhabitants, however; the GP reserve the complaint without investigation and neither the Cairo governor nor the Chief of Munshi'at Nasser replied or took action with regard to the complaint.

ECHR filed a case against the GP after the incident, and the GP opened an investigation according to which he charged eight officials with manslaughter. The Center's lawyers and other volunteer lawyers opposed the Misdemeanor Court jurisdiction



### A Pandemic of Violations

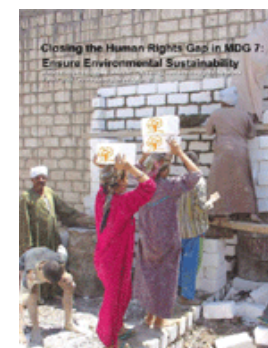
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and demanded to hold the jurisdiction for the Criminal Court as the charge should be amended to negligence of public servants in the discharge of their duties that led to deaths. Moreover, the lawyers demanded to add other defendants, including Cairo governor and the former and current Ministers of Housing. However, the Court refused that demands and held its jurisdiction.

Today, the Court made the above mentioned decision and it ordered a bond of 5,000 pounds for the first defendant and 3,000 pounds for the rest of defendants for pending the execution of the imprisonment until they appeal the verdict.

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