

منا
لحقوق
الإنسان



MENA
Rights
Group

Counter-terrorism and security as instruments of reprisals

A mapping of UN reprisals cases in the Middle East and North Africa

Report submitted to the UN Secretary-General in the context of the preparation of the annual report on intimidation and reprisals for cooperation with the UN in the field of human rights.

April 2025

Key findings

Counter-terrorism and security as instruments of reprisals: a mapping of UN reprisals cases in the Middle East & North Africa

The MENA region is a **global hotspot** for reprisals, making up nearly **one third** of all cases documented by the UN worldwide.



More than **6 in 10** cases of reprisals in the MENA region are connected to **counter-terrorism (CT) or security measures**.

Reprisals without a link to counter-terrorism or security measures

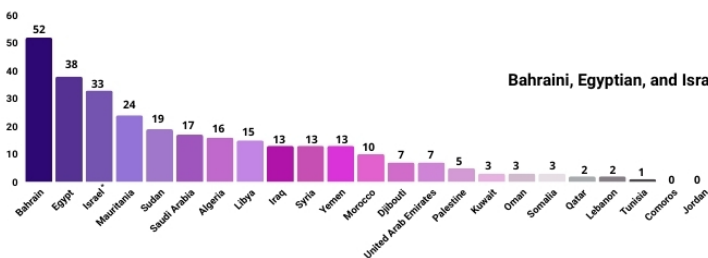
62%

Reprisals with a link to counter-terrorism or security measures

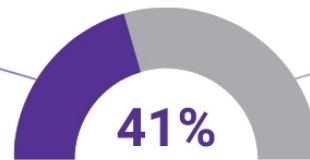
Out of all reprisals cases documented in UN Secretary-General reports since 2010, 28% occurred in the MENA region.

► Total cases of reprisals in the MENA

Bahrain, Egypt and Israel* record the most cases of reprisals in the region.



Reprisals at the hands of Bahraini, Egyptian and Israeli* authorities

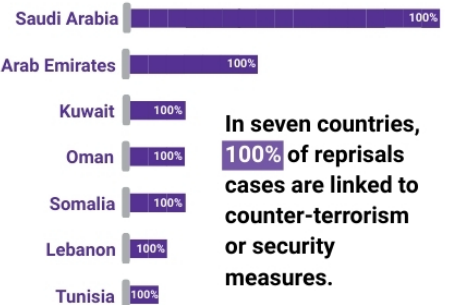
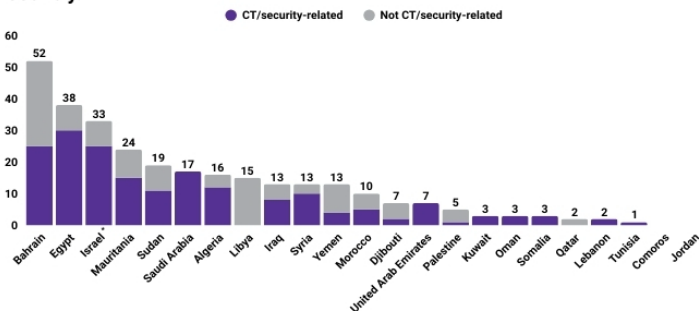


Reprisals at the hands of the 20 other MENA state authorities

Bahraini, Egyptian, and Israeli* authorities are together responsible for more than one-third of all reprisal cases in the region.

► Total counter-terrorism and security-related reprisals

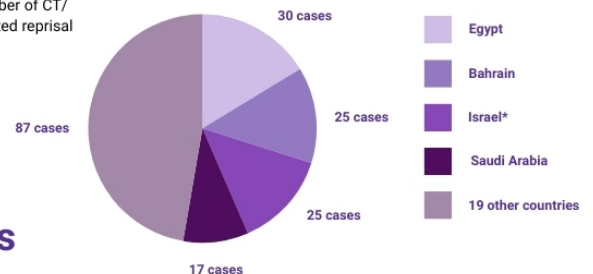
Proportion of counter-terrorism/security-related reprisals cases by MENA country.



In seven countries, **100%** of reprisals cases are linked to counter-terrorism or security measures.

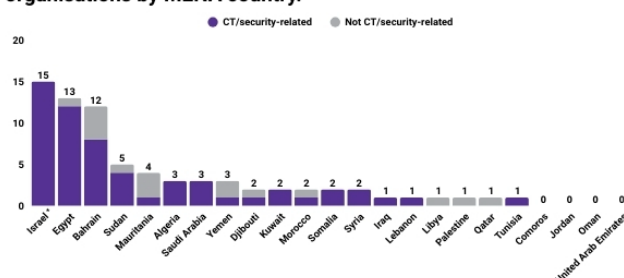
Four countries, half the problem: Egypt, Bahrain, Israel*, and Saudi Arabia record the most cases of reprisals linked to counter-terrorism or security frameworks.

By total number of CT/security-related reprisal cases:

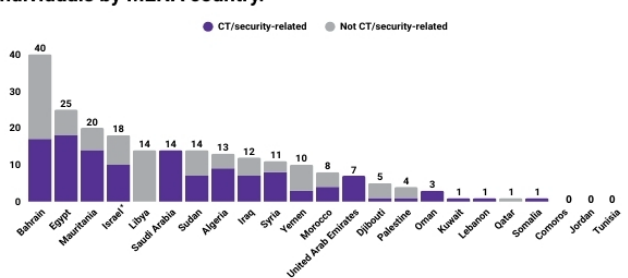


► Reprisals by target: organisations VS individuals

Proportion of counter-terrorism/security-related reprisals cases targeting organisations by MENA country.



Proportion of counter-terrorism/security-related reprisals cases targeting individuals by MENA country.



* All reprisals cases involving Israeli authorities concern actors who are Palestinian, based in Palestine, or working on Palestine.

Table of contents

1	INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY	4
2	COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY FINDINGS	5
2.1	ALGERIA	5
2.2	BAHRAIN	5
2.3	COMOROS	5
2.4	DJIBOUTI	5
2.5	EGYPT	6
2.6	IRAQ	6
2.7	ISRAEL	6
2.8	JORDAN	6
2.9	KUWAIT	6
2.10	LEBANON	6
2.11	LIBYA	7
2.12	MAURITANIA	7
2.13	MOROCCO	7
2.14	OMAN	7
2.15	PALESTINE	7
2.16	QATAR	7
2.17	SAUDI ARABIA	7
2.18	SOMALIA	8
2.19	SUDAN	8
2.20	SYRIA	8
2.21	TUNISIA	8
2.22	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)	8
2.23	YEMEN	8
3	FIGURES AND STATISTICS	9
3.1	TABLE 1 – REPRISALS BY COUNTRY: TOTAL CASES AND DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS	9
3.2	TABLE 2 – CT/SECURITY-RELATED REPRISALS BY COUNTRY: TOTAL CASES AND DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN DIRECT AND INDIRECT TARGETING	10
3.3	TABLE 3 – REPRISALS BY COUNTRY: PROPORTION OF CT/SECURITY-RELATED CASES AMONG TOTAL REPRISAL CASES	11

1 Introduction and methodology

This report maps and analyses documented cases of reprisals for cooperation with the UN in the MENA region over the past 15 years. It builds upon the cases contained in the UN Secretary-General's annual reports on reprisals for cooperation with the UN which have been published until the time of writing, *i.e.*, from 2010 to 2024 included.

The mapping is conducted on a country-by-country basis, identifying the total number of cases per country, and classifying each case based on its connection to the abuse of counter-terrorism (CT) and security frameworks. For the purposes of this report, and in light of MENA Rights Group (MRG)'s mandate, the 22 countries of the League of Arab States were taken into account, as well as Israel, as all reprisals cases involving Israeli authorities concern individuals or organisations who are Palestinian, based in Palestine, or whose work is related to Palestine.

Cases are categorised as having no link, an indirect link, or a direct link to CT/security abuse. A direct link applies when the reprisal itself involves a CT or security element. An indirect link refers to cases where a CT/security component exists but is not directly tied to the reprisal, but to other abuses the individual or organisation was subjected to. Cases with no link lack any identifiable CT/security dimension.

To determine whether a case is associated with a CT/security framework, the report considers several criteria. These include accusations or charges related to terrorism or national security, prosecution before exceptional jurisdictions such as specialised criminal courts or military tribunals, and targeting by state authorities with security or CT-related mandates, such as state security apparatuses or military forces.

Cases included in the mapping involve both individuals and organisations. Cases are assessed for CT/security links only if the individual or organisation is named. Anonymous cases are excluded from link assessments, and recorded in the same category as those having no CT/security link.

Each named individual and organisational case is treated as a distinct entry, even when grouped with others in the UN reprisals report. When a named individual is affiliated with an organisation, both the individual and the organisation are registered as separate cases. When an anonymous individual is affiliated with a named organisation, the organisation is recorded independently.

Organisations inherit the highest CT/security link classification among the individuals associated with them. For example, if one individual linked to an organisation has a direct link and another has only an indirect link, the organisation is marked as having a direct link.

Anonymous grouped cases, such as references to “a group of human rights defenders,” are counted as a single individual anonymous case. Relatives of individuals who cooperated with the UN are assessed as separate cases, if they themselves were directly subjected to reprisals. In instances where the UN reprisals report does not name the individual(s) concerned but references a communication from UN Special Procedures that does in the text (not in the footnotes), the named individuals are included and assessed accordingly.

Only “actual” instances of reprisals are included in this report. Cases involving fears of reprisals or pre-emptive measures intended to avoid reprisals, such as cancelled meetings or precautionary statements, are excluded entirely from the overall statistical mapping.

General legal measures or frameworks, such as new amendments to penal codes or national security laws, included in UN reprisals reports, are not included in this mapping.

2 Country-by-country findings

2.1 Algeria

In Algeria, a total of 16 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 13 individual cases and 3 organisations. Of these, 12 cases (including 9 individual and 3 organisational cases) were linked to CT or security measures. 7 cases (3 organisational and 4 individual) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while 5 individual cases had an indirect link. 4 individual cases were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.2 Bahrain

In Bahrain, a total of 52 cases of reprisals were documented, including 40 individual cases and 12 organisations. Among them, 24 cases (including 16 individual and 8 organisational cases) were linked to CT or security measures. 13 cases (4 organisational and 9 individual) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while 12 cases (4 organisational and 8 individual) had an indirect link. 27 cases (including 23 individual and 4 organisational cases) were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.3 Comoros

No reprisals cases were documented in Comoros.

2.4 Djibouti

In Djibouti, a total of 7 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 5 individual cases and 2 organisations. Of these, 2 cases (including 1 individual and 1 organisational case) were linked to CT or security measures. 2 cases (1 individual and 1 organisational) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while no cases were found to have an indirect link. 5

cases (including 4 individual and 1 organisational case) were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.5 Egypt

In Egypt, a total of 38 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 25 individual cases and 13 organisations. Of these, 30 cases (including 18 individual and 12 organisational cases) were linked to CT or security measures. 28 cases (11 organisational and 17 individual) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while 2 cases (1 individual and 1 organisational) had an indirect link. 8 cases (including 6 individual and 2 organisational cases) were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.6 Iraq

In Iraq, a total of 13 cases of reprisals were documented, including 1 organisation and 12 individual cases. Among them, 8 cases (including 7 individual and 1 organisational case) were linked to CT or security measures. 8 cases (7 individual and 1 organisational) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while no cases had an indirect link. 5 individual cases had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.7 Israel

In Israel, a total of 33 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 18 individual cases and 15 organisations. All cases involved Palestinian individuals or organisations, or reprisals linked to human rights work related to Palestine. Of these, 25 cases were linked to CT or security measures. 23 cases (9 individual and 14 organisational) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while 2 cases (1 individual and 1 organisational) had an indirect link. 8 cases (6 individual and 2 organisational) were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.8 Jordan

No reprisals cases were documented in Jordan.

2.9 Kuwait

In Kuwait, a total of 3 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 1 individual case and 2 organisations. Of these, 3 cases (including 1 individual and 2 organisational cases) were linked to CT or security measures. 2 cases (1 individual and 1 organisational) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while 1 organisational case had an indirect link. No cases were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.10 Lebanon

In Lebanon, a total of 2 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 1 individual case and 1 organisation. Of these, 2 cases were linked to CT or security measures. 2 cases (1 individual and 1 organisational) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while no cases had an indirect link. No cases were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.11 Libya

In Libya, a total of 15 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 14 individual cases and 1 organisation. All of them were unnamed and therefore excluded from the CT/security assessment.

2.12 Mauritania

In Mauritania, a total of 24 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 20 individual cases and 4 organisations. Of these, 15 cases (including 14 individual and 1 organisational case) were linked to CT or security measures. No cases had a direct link to cooperation with the UN. 15 cases (14 individual and 1 organisational) had an indirect link to the UN, while 9 cases (6 individual and 3 organisational) were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.13 Morocco

In Morocco, a total of 10 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 8 individual cases and 2 organisations. Of these, 5 cases were linked to CT or security measures. 2 cases (2 individual) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while 3 cases (2 individual and 1 organisational) had an indirect link. 5 cases (4 individual and 1 organisational) were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.14 Oman

In Oman, a total of 3 cases of reprisals were documented, all involving individual cases. All 3 cases had a direct link to cooperation with the UN.

2.15 Palestine

In Palestine, a total of 5 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 4 individual cases and 1 organisation. Among them, 1 individual case had a direct link to cooperation with the UN. No cases had an indirect link. 4 cases (3 individual and 1 organisational) were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.16 Qatar

In Qatar, a total of 2 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 1 individual case and 1 organisation. The 2 cases were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.17 Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, a total of 17 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 14 individual cases and 3 organisations. All 17 cases were linked to CT or security measures. 12 cases (11 individual and 1 organisational) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while 5 cases (3 individual and 1 organisational) had an indirect link. No cases were unnamed or had no identifiable connection to UN engagement.

2.18 Somalia

In Somalia, a total of 3 cases of reprisals were documented, involving 1 individual and 2 organisations. All 3 cases had a security component with an indirect link to cooperation with the UN.

2.19 Sudan

In Sudan, a total of 19 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 14 individual cases and 5 organisations. Among them, 11 cases (7 individual and 4 organisational) were linked to CT or security measures, all with a direct link to cooperation with the UN. No cases had an indirect link. 8 cases (7 individual and 1 organisational) were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.20 Syria

In Syria, a total of 13 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 11 individual cases and 2 organisations. Of these, 10 cases (8 individual and 2 organisational) were linked to CT or security measures. 8 cases (7 individual and 1 organisational) had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while 2 cases (1 individual and 1 organisational) had an indirect link. 3 individual cases were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

2.21 Tunisia

In Tunisia, a total of 1 case of reprisal was documented, involving 1 organisation. This case had a CT or security component directly linked to cooperation with the UN.

2.22 United Arab Emirates (UAE)

In the UAE, a total of 7 cases of reprisals were documented, all involving individual cases. All 7 cases were linked to CT or security measures and had a direct link to cooperation with the UN. There were no cases with an indirect link or with no identifiable CT/security link.

2.23 Yemen

In Yemen, a total of 13 cases of reprisals were documented, comprising 10 individual cases and 3 organisations. Of these, 4 cases (3 individual and 1 organisational) were linked to CT or security measures. 1 individual case had a direct link to cooperation with the UN, while 3 cases (2 individual and 1 organisational) had an indirect link. 9 cases (7 individual and 2 organisational) were unnamed or had no identifiable CT/security link.

3 Figures and statistics

3.1 Table 1 – Reprisals by country: total cases and distribution between individuals and organisations

Country	Total reprisals cases	Individual cases	Organisations
Algeria	16	13 (81.2%)	3 (18.8%)
Bahrain	52	40 (76.9%)	12 (23.1%)
Comoros	0	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Djibouti	7	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)
Egypt	38	25 (65.8%)	13 (34.2%)
Iraq	13	12 (92.3%)	1 (7.7%)
Israel	33	18 (54.5%)	15 (44.5%)
Jordan	0	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Kuwait	3	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)
Lebanon	2	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)
Libya	15	14 (93.3%)	1 (6.7%)
Mauritania	24	20 (83.3%)	4 (16.7%)
Morocco	10	8 (80.0%)	2 (20.0%)
Oman	3	3 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Palestine	5	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)
Qatar	2	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)
Saudi Arabia	17	14 (82.4%)	3 (17.6%)
Somalia	3	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)
Sudan	19	14 (73.7%)	5 (26.3%)
Syria	13	11 (84.6%)	2 (15.4%)
Tunisia	1	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)
United Arab Emirates	7	7 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Yemen	13	10 (76.9%)	3 (23.1%)
Total	296	222 (75.0%)	74 (25.0%)

3.2 Table 2 – CT/security-related reprisals by country: total cases and distribution between direct and indirect targeting

Country	Total CT/security-related cases	Of which direct	Of which indirect
Algeria	12	7 (58.3%)	5 (41.7%)
Bahrain	25	13 (52.0%)	12 (48.0%)
Comoros	0	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Djibouti	2	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Egypt	30	28 (93.3%)	2 (6.7%)
Iraq	8	8 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Israel	25	23 (92.0%)	2 (8.0%)
Jordan	0	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Kuwait	3	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)
Lebanon	2	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Libya	0	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Mauritania	15	0 (0.0%)	15 (100.0%)
Morocco	5	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)
Oman	3	3 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Palestine	1	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Qatar	0	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Saudi Arabia	17	12 (70.6%)	5 (29.4%)
Somalia	3	0 (0.0%)	3 (100.0%)
Sudan	11	11 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Syria	10	8 (80.0%)	2 (20.0%)
Tunisia	1	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
United Arab Emirates	7	7 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Yemen	4	1 (25.0%)	3 (75.0%)

Country	Total CT/security-related cases	Of which direct	Of which indirect
Total	184	131 (71.2%)	53 (28.8%)

3.3 Table 3 – Reprisals by country: proportion of CT/security-related cases among total reprisal cases

Country	Total reprisals cases	Of which CT/security-related reprisals cases
Algeria	16	12 (75.0%)
Bahrain	52	25 (48.1%)
Comoros	0	0 (N/A)
Djibouti	7	2 (28.6%)
Egypt	38	30 (78.9%)
Iraq	13	8 (61.5%)
Israel	33	25 (75.8%)
Jordan	0	0 (N/A)
Kuwait	3	3 (100.0%)
Lebanon	2	2 (100.0%)
Libya	15	0 (0.0%)
Mauritania	24	15 (62.5%)
Morocco	10	5 (50.0%)
Oman	3	3 (100.0%)
Palestine	5	1 (20.0%)
Qatar	2	0 (0.0%)
Saudi Arabia	17	17 (100.0%)
Somalia	3	3 (100.0%)
Sudan	19	11 (57.9%)
Syria	13	10 (76.9%)
Tunisia	1	1 (100.0%)

Country	Total reprisals cases	Of which CT/security-related reprisals cases
United Arab Emirates	7	7 (100.0%)
Yemen	13	4 (30.8%)
Total	296	184 (62.2%)

MENA Rights Group (MRG) is a Geneva-based legal advocacy NGO defending and promoting fundamental rights and freedoms in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Adopting a holistic approach, we work at both the individual and structural level. We represent victims of human rights violations before international law mechanisms. In order to ensure the non-repetition of these violations, we identify patterns and root causes of violations on the ground and bring key issues to the attention of relevant stakeholders to call for legal and policy reform.

One of MRG's thematic priorities revolves around the impact of security measures and counter-terrorism laws and policies on human rights. We document numerous cases of human rights violations, which fall under patterns of abuse of counter-terrorism frameworks at the national level as well as at the regional level. We represent victims of these violations before international human rights bodies, including United Nations Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures. We also conduct research and produce reports on the topic, including on the issue of transnational repression in the MENA, notably occurring under the guise of countering terrorism. We continue to bring our documentation and the findings of our research to the attention of relevant stakeholders to advocate for reform and non-repetition.

This report benefited from the generous support of the State of Geneva.



It was also supported by a grant provided by the Global Center on Cooperative Security, made possible thanks to the Kingdom of Norway and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.