

# RESULTS SUMMARY

## Proposal Draft Law on Confronting Hate Speech in Egypt

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### PROJECT

<i>Title:</i>	Promoting Intercultural Dialogue for Development, Capacity Building for Peaceful Coexistence and Cooperation, Phase VI
<i>Partner:</i>	Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS)
<i>Country:</i>	Egypt
<i>Period:</i>	January 2022 – ongoing till December 2024

### CHANGE

In collaboration with CEOSS, The National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) in Egypt succeeded in proposing a draft law on criminalising hate speech to the Human Rights Committee in the Egyptian Parliament in late 2022 with the support of 50 Egyptian lawmakers, senators, and politicians. The proposal entails a criminalisation of hate speech and a proposal to underscore and activate existing constitutional articles related to non-discrimination. The existing law on “Disrespect of Religions” does not protect against discrimination from a wider perspective that includes stigmatisation, stereotyping, and polarisation.

### CONTEXT

Sectarian hate speech has, in recent decades, escalated in Egyptian society because of the spread of fundamentalism, irrespective of religious, political, or cultural differences. Fighting hate speech is crucial for peaceful coexistence and prevention of violent extremism among the communities Danmission and its partner work in. Even though non-discrimination is stipulated in the Egyptian Constitution of 2014, no law criminalises hate speech as such in its broader concept - specifically not on religious grounds.

### CONTRIBUTION

This change was made possible through Danmission’s continuous programmatic and financial support to CEOSS. Throughout the long-standing partnership, Danmission has provided CEOSS with technical capacity development in project design, advocacy, the Human Rights-Based Approach, gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation, and the exchange of best practices. The contribution was made in collaboration with the German development organisation Bread for the World.

### IMAGES



“A Legislative Vision for Criminalising Hate Speech” round table meeting in Cairo.



“Together Against Hate Speech” round table discussion in Upper Egypt.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### ACTIVITIES

The draft law on combating hate speech resulted from four years of dialogue and advocacy efforts by Danmission's partner CEOSS. Firstly, in 2019, based on consultations and previous programmes, hate speech was identified as an advocacy issue. Secondly, the newly established Forum conducted meetings with lawmakers, governmental representatives, religious leaders, and intellectuals, in addition to representatives from universities, media leaders, national councils, and civil society, to discuss how to tackle hate speech. Thirdly, a national-level advocacy campaign involving key influential figures was carried out by having panels, round tables, and conferences discussing the hate speech problems and calling for the need for laws combating hate speech. Fourthly, collaboration was established between CEOSS and NCHR through the influence of the forum members. Lastly, NCHR and legal experts within the Forum prepared a draft law and submitted it to the Human Rights Committee in the Parliament in late 2022.

### LESSONS

The advocacy work focused on two pathways: 1) Engaging leaders and intellectuals who can influence the decisions and policymakers, and 2) empowering young leaders (religious, media, and academic) to carry out local advocacy initiatives. This can be used as a replicable model through community-led prioritisation of issues and implementation of community-led advocacy initiatives. The media coverage and interviews contributed to shedding light on the advocacy issue. Peace-tech, through social media, was an innovative advocacy approach that engaged communities. Furthermore, the advocacy campaign had a positive ripple effect on institutions under the Ministry of Culture. The NCHR submitted the legislative proposal to avoid any potential violation of other human rights (such as freedom of expression).

### EVIDENCE

The journey towards a legislative proposal on criminalising hate speech in Egypt reflects years of advocacy efforts from issue identification to community mobilisation and submission to the Parliament. This change is, to a great extent, a result of the improved capacity of the CEOSS Forum members and partners who played a crucial role in conducting community-led advocacy initiatives and facilitating dialogue with key stakeholders, including religious leaders, policymakers and the National Council of Human Rights. The change was made possible by the support of the NCHR, which included lawmakers. The legislative proposal submission to the Parliament signifies a milestone in evidence-based advocacy, and continuation advocacy efforts are still in place to pass the law. Following the advocacy campaigns and public engagements, media monitoring demonstrates increased coverage of the advocacy issue especially through social media, and increased support for the draft law.

### DOMAINS

*Development strategy priorities:*

*Fragility and Migration*

*Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability*

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*Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights*

x

*Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights*

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*Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights*

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*Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability*

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*Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work*

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