Egyptians Abroad: Conflicts and Challenges



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Introduction

Migration has become a global phenomenon, affecting most countries of the world, and even encompassing most of the socio-economic groups of the populations of these countries. There is a group of countries in the world suffering from economic and demographic problems such as low rates of economic development, high rates of inflation, unemployment and population growth. These countries are sending migrants to other countries as a solution to these problems or to some of them. In contrast, there is another group of countries that suffer from various problems such as the low size of the working-age population and the lack of trained technical workers. These are receiving and recruiting immigrants as a solution to these problems.

Egypt belongs to the first group. It has suffered and continues to suffer from high population growth rates, unemployment and low rates of economic development. The emigration of Egyptians takes two basic patterns: permanent emigration and temporary emigration. Each of them differs from the other in terms of size, the countries that receive them, the characteristics of emigrants, the push and pull factors and their implications, and the problems of immigrants. Migration is a relatively recent phenomenon for the Egyptian society, which was known for its strong love for its land and its attachment to it. Rather, the Egyptian society has been the host country to many immigrants throughout its long history.

Egypt has known emigration since the mid-twentieth century, where it witnessed the migration of some Egyptians abroad during the fifties and sixties, most of them permanently. The emigration of Egyptian labour has been concentrated mainly in the Gulf labour market in oil-producing countries during the massive oil revolution that the region has witnessed since the seventies, in addition to emigration to some other Arab and European countries with the aim of temporary migration, and to America, Canada and Australia with the aim of permanent emigration.

It began to witness the migration of large groups since the first half of the seventies, specifically after the October 1973 war, which led to a rise in oil prices, an increase in oil revenues in the Arab oil countries, and the intensification of these countries' demand for Egyptian labor to implement the huge projects they adopted. This led to the migration of thousands of members of the Egyptian society to work in these countries, becoming a phenomenon in Egyptian society, spreading throughout all its professional and educational sectors.

Today, it has become rare nowadays to find an Egyptian family that does not have a current immigrant, a returning immigrant, or a relative who immigrated or is preparing to emigrate. Therefore, it was necessary to study the effects of this phenomenon on Egyptian immigrants abroad through several axes: defining migration, a brief history of the beginning of migration in Egypt, reasons for migration, presenting the problems faced by Egyptians and violations of their rights from Egyptian complaints, presenting some examples of the violation of the rights of Egyptians in foreign countries, clarifying the efforts of the Ministry of Emigration to preserve the rights of Egyptians abroad, and presenting some proposals to solve the problems of Egyptians abroad.

Definition of Migration:

Migration means the movement of an individual or group of individuals from one place to another place. Accordingly external migration means the movement of an individual or group of individuals from one country to another country with the intention of changing the place of permanent residence. This affects not only the distribution and density of the population but also their demographic and economic characteristics. The change in the qualitative composition and age is an important product of its results. Males often migrate from middle class in greater proportions than females. This causes the high percentage of males in attractive area and a decrease in expelling areas. This explains the high percentage of females in rural areas.

Individuals moving to a state other than their own are considered emigrants in relation to their state of origin and are considered to be immigrant in relation to the receiving state.

External migration is divided into permanent migration and temporary migration. The criterion of the duration of migration is the separation between the two types. The United Nations Statistical Office defined permanent migrants as those who enter countries other than their own with the intention of staying for more than a year, while temporary migrants as those who enter countries other than their own with the intention of staying for one year or less for the purpose of working in the immigrant community.

The Egyptian legislature added to this definition the criterion of nationality and amended the length of residence. Article 8 of Law No. 111 of 1983 stipulates that:

an Egyptian who obtained nationality or a permanent residence permit in a foreign country (requiring the approval of the receiving countries), remained abroad for at least ten years, or was in possession of an emigration permit from the Ministry of Emigration Affairs, shall be considered a permanent emigrant.

It should be noted that the agencies that circulate data on permanent emigration from Egypt do not take into account all the provisions of this article. For example, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) considers every person who has obtained permission to migrate permanently to any country of exile and the approval of the responsible authorities in Egypt as a permanent emigrant, regardless of the period for which he will stay or whether he will obtain the nationality of that country.

As for temporary emigration, Article 13 of the same law stipulates that an Egyptian citizen who was not a student or a seconded employee, and who lived and worked abroad for more than one continuous year but who had not applied for the permanent emigration procedure is considered a temporary emigrant. The period of the year referred to in the preceding paragraph shall be considered continuous even if it is interspersed with a time interval not exceeding thirty days. It should be noted that the CAPMAS considered the emigrant a temporary one in the two surveys it conducted in 1987 and 1999, individuals who moved to another country for a period of six consecutive months, not a year as stated in the previous article.

As for return migration, it means, according to the definition of the United Nations, "the group of individuals who have previously worked abroad for a period of more than one year." The returning Egyptian citizen is also meant as "the individual who traveled abroad for the purpose of working, whether independently or with others, and then returned after a period of no less than a year, provided that the aim of return is to re-practice economic activity and not merely visit, get treatment, marry, or otherwise." The study also studied the term brain migration or brains drain, which refers to the transfer of scientific, technical, artistic and intellectual energy from a developing country or even from a developed country and its gradual infiltration into advanced or more advanced and rich foreign countries. The term migration of scientific competencies was also mentioned, which refers to the migration of university graduates with bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.

A Brief History of the Beginning of Emigration in Egypt:

In the past, Egyptian society was known for its strong attachment to its land and its clear tendency to stability. Its members did not accept emigration except to flee from the oppression of the ruler. This happened in the days of Muhammad Ali, when six thousand Egyptian peasants fled to Syria. Other times they were forcibly displaced, as happened in the era of Selim I, who ordered the transfer of many Egyptian scholars and industrialists to Astana to contribute to its reconstruction and advancement. In the twentieth century, the leadership of the occupation forces decided to export some Egyptian workers, as 500 workers were deported to Iraq and 10,500 workers to France between 1915 and 1919.

Historically, Egypt was a host country and not a sending one. Egypt received the Nubian immigration from Sudan in 1880. The Egyptian censuses also included numbers of foreigners arriving in Egypt, whose number increased after the opening of the Suez Canal and foreign intervention, and the consequent increase in the effect of the privileges granted to foreigners. Their number reached its maximum in 1927, when it reached more than 225 thousand. It began to decline after that as a result of the abolition of foreign concessions and political and economic developments.

Cleland stressed in the thirties of the last century that the Egyptians are famous for their love for their land. They do not accept emigration except for the purpose of study or travel. They always return to their homeland. The Egyptians' attachment to their land and their unwillingness to migrate during those ancient historical periods may be attributed to several things. It could include that Egypt has a very rich environment when compared to the neighboring regions. The deserts that surround the valley and the delta did not encourage the people to migrate even if the factors were available locally. The Egyptians' association with the Mediterranean and the Red Sea remained limited.

The emigration of Egyptians in the nineteenth century was limited to sending students for the purpose of studying in foreign countries. With the beginning of the twentieth century, the government sent educational missions of teachers to Arab countries. The first of which was the mission that headed to Sudan in the second decade of the twentieth century, and was followed by the mission that headed to Bahrain at the end of the same decade. Some Egyptian teachers were seconded to Iraq in the thirties of the twentieth century at the request of the Iraqi government at that time. A delegation of Egyptian teachers also went to Kuwait at the end of the forties of the twentieth century to participate in the field of education. It is worth noting that the Egyptian government bore the costs of these missions to help the Arab countries.

It is clear from this that the emigration of Egyptians during the first half of the twentieth century did not have a clear importance, due to its small size, which was often represented in the secondment of teachers to Arab and African countries. However, with the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, the phenomenon began to grow gradually. Egyptians, since the seventies, and with the advent of oil, used to emigrate temporarily, for long periods with official work contracts that began with secondments. Egypt was known for the high rate of unemployment of graduates and the surplus of higher and middle qualifications. Some of them emigrated to the Gulf countries and Libya.

When Iraq opened its doors at the end of the seventies, nearly four million immigrated to Iraq. They worked and settled. However, with the second Gulf War, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and then the great blockade on Iraq, the Egyptians began to return. The biggest migration return was after the American invasion in 2003. returned. Millions of Egyptians have returned, especially after competing with Asian labour in the Gulf.

After that, Egyptians started thinking of illegal immigration to Europe. There were brokers tempting young men to travel and enter across the sea to Europe. They would sneak in and reside. Dozens succeeded in entering, which tempted hundreds. The phenomenon of emigration of Egyptians abroad during that period went through several different stages, each stage is characterized by certain characteristics, and therefore some of the main features are evident on the basis of which each stage was classified, and these features are represented in the following:

First: The government's policy towards the issue of emigration abroad, including decisions or political laws that encourage or prevent emigration, in addition to the agreements related to the exchange of labor between the Egyptian government and the countries receiving the labor.

Second: The volume of Egyptian emigration abroad during each stage and its trends.

Third: The duration and type of migration, is it permanent, temporary or return migration? Does one stage include more than one type of migration?

Fourth: The strong demand for Egyptian labor by the receiving countries during each stage.

According to the antecedent features, the stages through which Egyptians emigrated abroad went through during the second half of the twentieth century can be classified as follows:

- **1-** The restriction of emigration (mid-fifties 1966).
- **2-** The gradual growth of emigration (1973-1997).
- **3-** The emigration Boom (1974-1984).
- **4-** The decline and sudden return (1985-1990).
- **5-** The emigration regulation phase (1991-2000).

Reasons for Egyptian Emigration:

Egyptian history has not mentioned anything about emigration during the first half of the twentieth century. This can be attributed to the dependence of the vast majority of the Egyptian people on the agricultural profession, the strength of family ties between the population, the decline in population and the need for more labor to meet the requirements of agricultural and industrial development and urban projects. The most important factors that helped the migration of Egyptian workers abroad can be explained as follows:

- **1-** The state encourages the phenomenon of emigration, as it gives the right to permanent or temporary migration.
- **2-** The increasing number of family members to a degree that exceeds ability to meet their living requirements.
- **3-** The increasing supply of the labour force in comparison to the demand of the labour market, and thus increasing the unemployment rate, in addition to the insufficient wage offered.
- **4-** The increase in external demand for Egyptian labour by the Gulf oil-producing countries after 1974. This was translated into the response of Egyptian workers to emigrate to the Gulf countries, taking into account the relative wages, in terms of the comparison between the wage of the local worker in Egypt and the external wage in those countries.
- 5- The effect of the conditions of life in the western countries.

These reasons can be classified into:

• Economic reasons:

Individuals migrate in search of work opportunities with suitable wages and job stability. This makes it easier for them to obtain the basic living requirements of adequate food and live in a place that provides modern infrastructure. Differences in salaries and working conditions between different countries represent one of the important reasons for migration.

Developed countries have attractive advantages and incentives that interest emigrants from Egypt. In addition, many individuals may emigrate to escape high unemployment rates and the lack of available opportunities in Egypt.

• Social reasons:

Individuals migrate in order to live with their families and friends, and receive better social services such as social and cultural facilities and educational opportunities.

- Study and education:

This is one of the reasons why individuals emigrate from Egypt, especially younger people who seek to enroll in international universities or majors that are not available in the country, and then decide to settle in the new country permanently.

- Marriage:

Meeting face-to-face on the ground is no longer a condition for building a relationship. The development of communication networks and the Internet has made it easier to build transcontinental relationships. Many are migrating to other countries to live with and bond with their loved ones.

- Better standard of living:

This is not limited to the material aspect, as many migrate in search of a better standard of living in terms of environment and health.

- Change and Adventure:

Adventurers and backpackers spend only a few years in the countries they visit. Some may make the decision to settle permanently in one of those countries they pass through on their travels, making adventure and love of change one of the common reasons for migration.

Problems and Violations Faced by Egyptian emigrants abroad:

Many of the problems faced by Egyptians abroad result from their lack of knowledge of the laws of the countries in which they work The Egyptian communities are also the most exposed to problems, because the main purpose of their presence is work and earning a living, not tourism and entertainment.

Many of these problems are due to their lack of knowledge of the nature of the work. For example, some workers do not know that if they do not receive their salary for 3 months, they have the right to transfer sponsorship to another employer. In addition, a large number of problems are caused by formal and personal issues, such as when a worker speaks in an inappropriate manner or in a harsh tone with the employer.

There are obstacles facing Egyptian workers, including their lack of legal and labor education. Some Egyptian workers migrate illegally, such as by obtaining a Hajj or Umrah visa and then not returning to Egypt, thinking that they have the right to reside and work, and do not respect the laws of the state, such as sponsorship.

There are many problems that Egyptian workers are exposed to from the employers in the Arab countries. For example, they are stopped in the street or other places of work, or they are arrested, in the event of any crime, in the place of living and not the place of work. There are transgressions from business owners in many cases such as request work that is outside the scope of their formal contract. The new civil service law has also become an obstacle for Egyptians abroad, with regard to the failure to renew the secondment of employees seconded abroad after 4 years. These problems and violations can be summed up in:

• The sponsorship system in the Arab countries:

It is a system that reflects in its implementation mechanisms a violation of human rights. It creates many problems for the sponsored, especially with the restriction of freedom of movement, and the sponsor preventing the sponsored from keeping his passport. This represents an affront to his human dignity and threatens the right of the sponsored to privacy, if he wants to return to his homeland or carry out his electoral duty and exercise his right to vote without obstacles.

Related to this challenge is the arbitrariness of some in paying financial dues to the sponsored, which represents a basic source for obtaining the direct services he needs. This may endanger his physical safety and his right to life in general. This is in addition to being denied insurance in violation of the Labor Law, and not paying their salaries in the summer.

It is worth noting that there are Gulf countries that have recently canceled this system, such as Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

• Cultural and intellectual breakthrough:

"Gulfization" and "Americanization" are terms that began to be repeated after some Egyptians emigrated to work or reside in the Gulf states and the United States. With the expansion of globalization and the open communication and the difference and divergence of cultures between countries, it has been observed that some have assimilated into those cultures and adopted their dialects and language, and perhaps also their dress as an alternative to the national dialect, Arabic language and national dress. This is a distortion and a tangible threat to national identity. It is weakening any sense of belonging to the home country.

The policy of job localization:

One of the problems facing the Egyptian community in the Gulf states is the latter's turn to localization programs. These are based on the replacement of foreign labor in the Gulf countries. This implies a continuous decline in employment contracts, or at least their fluctuation, with an increasing rates of "return migration" coming from that region.

• Insurance for expatriates and returning workers:

The most important problems that Egyptians suffer from in Germany are dual citizenship and the lack of a pension authority.

There is no health insurance for Egyptian expatriates. There is no cadre to protect them when returning to Egypt, on top of the issues is the return of a large number of Egyptians permanently from the Gulf countries due to some reforms that those countries are going through.

On the most prominent problems of Egyptians in the Arab countries, the problems of education and universities, and the backwards of Umrah, visas and work for non-sponsors.

Repatriation of bodies and bank transfers:

An example is the closure of the National Bank of Egypt in London, for all accounts of Egyptians with a minimum of EGP 100,000, which led to the cancellation of bank transfers by Egyptians.

There are also problems related to death, and the return of the bodies of Egyptian expatriates to Egypt, due to high costs, and legal problems related to real estate,

inheritance and children. Thus, legal representation must be provided to Egyptians in the country where they reside.

• Abuse of Egyptians and violation of their rights:

Thousands of Egyptians abroad are subjected every day to the violation of their rights. They are assaulted, insulted, beaten, and sometimes even killed, kidnapped or disappeared in the countries to which they migrate to work, whether Arab or foreign countries.

Examples of Violations of the Rights of Egyptians Abroad:

- Cases of murder or death due to negligence or beatings:

Assaulting an Egyptian woman and dragging her in front of passers-by in Britain:

In 2018, journalist Wael al-Ibrashi showed a video showing the assault on an Egyptian student named Mariam Mostafa by 10 girls of African descent in Britain.

Mariam's mother said that her daughter was assaulted by 10 British girls. They dragged her for 20 meters in a street crowded with pedestrians. She added: My daughter was able to escape from the girls and hid in one of the buses, but the girls continued to beat her until she lost consciousness, and the driver called the ambulance. She explained that her daughter was subjected to another attack about 4 months before the incident at the hands of two of the ten girls, and that her daughter is held in a hospital grappling with death; due to the severity of her assault.

Mariam was punched several times during a confrontation with the accused girls, near a bus stop on Parliament Street, and then got on the bus. The group of girls caught up with her inside the bus, beat her up. She was immediately taken to Queen's Medical Center, and then to Nottingham City Hospital. The attack on Mariam, who was studying engineering in Nottingham, caused her to suffer a stroke and bleeding, as a result of which she fell into a coma, which lasted for nearly a month before she died.

Maria Fraser, 19, and Britannia Hunter, 18, and another 16-year-old girl, admitted to a Nottingham Magistrate's Court judge their role in the attack on the Egyptian girl. Earlier, the court charged 6 female students with committing the crime, but 3 of them denied the charge, then returned to confess. Hatem Mustafa, Maryam's father,

accused the authorities of "disrespect" for not informing him of the judicial session in which 3 girls confessed to attacking his daughter, which led to her death. Mustafa described what happened as "another failure in the course of the case. We were not informed in any way that there was a session that day." He added, "We have the right to know everything about our daughter's case beforehand, not afterward."

- Cases of assault by insults and beatings:

1- Assault on an Egyptian young man in the United States of America:

In 2020, an 18-year-old Egyptian-American fell victim to racism and hatred in the United States. He was assaulted with a baseball bat by his 41-year-old neighbor, after a dispute over car space. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) described the attack on the Egyptian-born Tarek al-Sayed as "an anti-immigrant, anti-Arab, and racially motivated attack." CAIR said in a statement that the attacker punctured Tariq's rear tire and hit him with a baseball bat when he got out of his car to examine the damage. The attacker threatened to kill Tarek al-Sayed and his friends while they waited for police, using several anti-Arab insults, repeating the phrase "go back to your country." Tarek's arm was broken in the incident and he sustained head injuries. The NYPD arrested Tarek's neighbor, Emilio Lopez, 41, and charged him with second-degree assault, possession of a fourth-degree gun and harassment.

2- An Egyptian woman is subjected to a racist attack in Florida:

In 2021, the American magazine "Newsweek" shed light on a racist attack the Egyptian-American Muslim, Nahla Obeid, was exposed to at the Walgreens store in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It described the video of the incident that Obeid published as "terrifying" on April 4. Obeid had published the video to urge those who are subjected to a similar attack to resort to the police. In the video, a blonde woman assaulted Nahla and her husband and insulted their clothes, nationality and religious beliefs before police were called. She angrily told off a store employee when she asked her to wear a mask, stating: "They are here in our country." Newsweek considered it somewhat ironic that the woman was wearing a T-shirt that read "Tokyo".

The blonde lady said to Obeid and her husband, "I wish I was from your country so I don't have to wear a mask." When they were frightened by her, she allegedly began to demean them and utter racial insults and slanders like the N word. She sarcastically said to Obeid "Ah, I love your clothes" before ordering her to "take it off dear". In another shot, she called Obeid "ugly" over and over again and asked, "Why are you dressed like this?". When the employee asked the woman again to

wear the mask, she refused and began to insult passers-by, saying "What a bunch of fools here." During her telephone conversation with the police, she repeatedly referred to the Obeid family as "Muslims" and accused them of threatening her with verbal and physical violence. However, her decision to call the police have backfired spectacularly. The final clip depicts the woman being handcuffed by several officers begging them to release her, saying, "Please, please don't do this. I didn't do anything". She claimed she wasn't discriminating because she had "Muslim friends."

In an April 6 post, Obeid said she uploaded the video to raise awareness of Islamophobia in the United States. She wrote a post on Facebook, "I am Nahla and this experience happened to me. I am the one who took the videos. I wanted to download this video to tell every Arab or Muslim or anyone who meets someone of this sick mentality, not to be afraid to call the police to get his right and not to curse."

3- Details of the attack on an Egyptian citizen in Turkey:

In 2022, the authorities in the Turkish city of Istanbul released an Egyptian young man who was assaulted by a group of Turkish youth inside a bus in the Turkish city of Istanbul. Social media users in Turkey circulated a video that showed a group of Turkish citizens brutally assaulting the Egyptian citizen on a bus in the Kadikoy area of Istanbul. A number of people appeared to assault the Egyptian young man continuously. One of the Turkish youths made an explicit threat to him by saying: "I will beat you as a sheep sacrifice, shut up, I will cut your tongue". No one on board the bus moved a finger. For his part, the young Egyptian tried to get rid of them, saying: "I am going to die, Please, for the sake of the Prophet", agreeing to whatever they asked of him by repeating 'yes/okay'

The Turkish media published the details of the incident after it was met with a wide state of anger on social media, and the reaction of Egyptians in Turkey. This prompted the question of how were Egyptians dealt with in Turkey during the past years. The media said that a group of Turkish citizens assaulted the Egyptian citizen, because they believed that he was filming the women in the bus Istanbul. They then beat him to get his personal phone.

The Turkish newspapers that reported the news said that the police forces were called, after the assault on the Egyptian citizen. They held him in custody, and examined the contents of his private phone. It was found that he did not film any woman or content that represents an attack on public morals, thus the police decided to release him.

The Ministry of Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates' Affairs Efforts to Protect Egyptians Abroad:

The Ministry was keen to provide several services to Egyptians abroad, including but not limited to:

- Following up on the conditions of Egyptian communities in various countries to provide full care for Egyptians residing in them.
- Activating the "one-window" system for the procedures of Egyptians abroad in the fields of recruitment, housing, investment and the passport authority at Tahrir Complex. This reduces the burden on their shoulders and provide them with quick services. They also allocated one window at the headquarters of the Industrial Development Authority to serve Egyptians abroad, as well as activated the role of commercial representation offices abroad in promoting industrial investment opportunities outside Egypt.
- Publishing 29 issues of the Ministry's monthly magazine "Egypt is with you/Misr Maak". It has become a modern tool to communicate with Egyptians abroad, convey what is happening on the homeland and review the Ministry's efforts on a monthly basis.
- Conducting negotiations with the Central Bank to facilitate the remittances of Egyptians abroad, within the framework of the ministry's endeavor to activate some proposals submitted by the General Union of Egyptians.
- Issuing the "Biladi Dollar" certificate in cooperation with the Central Bank and 3 government banks, to be directed to Egyptians working abroad starting from \$100 with return of up to 5.5%. The Central Bank of Egypt guarantees the owners of the certificates the right to transfer the amounts of refunds and interest in US dollars to the customer's account outside Egypt if requested, without a maximum limit for transfer, or any expenses on accounts or transfer commissions from the National Bank of Egypt. The certificates are purchased through electronic payment cards issued by Banks outside Egypt or by bank transfer.
- Establishing an office for Egyptians abroad at the Investors Service Center in cooperation with the Ministry of Investment, and conducting a promotional campaign to encourage them to invest in Egypt.
- Offering an "Aman" certificate for Egyptian workers abroad, similar to offering it at home, to provide insurance coverage in cases of death resulting from natural causes or an accident.

- Organizing forums and camps in its quest to care for the children of the second and third generations of Egyptians abroad. This aims to raise their awareness of the challenges facing their homeland and the requirements of Egyptian national security. It also shows them the achievements and development of Egypt.
- Launching the national strategy for Egyptian youth studying abroad, which came to create a major component for all events and activities organized by the ministry for the children of students abroad. It also established a single umbrella that brings together the children of Egyptian expatriates to increase their link to their homeland. The Ministry of Emigration Center for Dialogue was also launched for Egyptian youth studying abroad to act as a dialogue and knowledge umbrella for young people abroad, to follow up on their needs and confront any misconceptions about Egypt.
- Coordinating with the various authorities to facilitate the completion of the procedures for the transfer of the bodies of Egyptians who die abroad.
- Publishing the Al-Azhar Al-Sharif's website on the ministry's official platforms on social networking sites and official website to respond to the inquiries of Egyptians abroad. The ministry also cooperated with Al-Azhar to educate Egyptian families abroad and preserve Egyptian customs and traditions, within the "Good Offspring" initiative.
- Cooperating with the Ministry of Housing to announce the reservation of housing units for Egyptians working abroad, with a down payment of 25% of the total unit price, with 3 annual installments in US dollars loaded with interest.
- The Ministry launched the "NO PLACE LIKE HOME" campaign. This campaign has succeeded in reaching more than 20 million followers, on various social media pages and platforms (Facebook Instagram Twitter Tik Tok platform) of the ministry. It also launched the "Follow the Sun" initiative to promote tourism in Egypt, and select the ones who are sharing the most tourist attractions and support them with a trip to visit Egypt.

In November 2022:

Ambassador Suha Gendy, Minister of State for Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates Affairs, met with Minister Ahmed bin Suleiman Al-Rajhi, Saudi Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, in the presence of Ambassador Ahmed Farouk, Ambassador of Egypt to Saudi Arabia, and Ambassador Amr Abbas, Assistant to the Minister of Emigration for Communities Affairs. The Minister took the opportunity to propose a direct communication mechanism to solve any problems facing the two communities, by forming a working group from the two ministries,

embassies and the labor office in the two countries. This proposal was welcomed by the Saudi Minister of Human Resources and Social Development and immediately directed the formation of the working group to overcome any obstacles.

In the same context, the two ministers agreed to coordinate on the electronic link between the two sides with regard to the problems of Egyptian labor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with the aim of facilitating procedures for solving these problems. This includes the relationship between workers, employers and labor offices, matters related to salaries, working conditions, residence and law enforcement, filing labor complaints, dealing with health conditions, if approved medical reports are available without the need to return to the labor office, speeding up procedures regarding the return of bodies in the event of death, and ending the problem of malicious reports and restrictions on the phenomenon of labor brokers who trade in fake contracts for work and abuse of the visa.

They also discussed the possibility of establishing an Egyptian-Saudi center for migration, jobs and reintegration, similar to the Egyptian-German Center of the Ministry of Emigration, to qualify workers before they travel and train them on all the skills necessary to ensure the secondment of trained and equipped workers to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This would achieve the Egyptian goals for sustainable development and the objectives of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's strategy 2030.

- Lifeboats Initiative:

In 2019, the Lifeboats initiative was launched with the aim of raising community awareness and warning of the dangers of the phenomenon of illegal migration. It showcased ways to migrate safely, as well as provided positive alternatives of training, job opportunities and entrepreneurship for young people in the 14 governorates where the phenomenon of illegal immigration is widespread.

33 villages have been included in the first phase of the "Decent Life" initiative, and EGP 250 million has been allocated for the development of the targeted villages as part of the lifeboat initiative.

- Training Programs

15 training programs were organized and 700 trainers were accredited to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal immigration and ways of safe migration for youth and families.

150,000 visits were conducted in Fayoum Governorate, as part of the door-knocking campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal immigration, benefiting 361,000 beneficiaries, as well as 55,000 visits with a total of 104.5,000 beneficiaries in Minya Governorate.

5 short films were produced to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal immigration and introduce the efforts made by the state. The number of beneficiaries of the campaign reached more than 25 million beneficiaries.

5,000 promotional publications have been prepared for the initiative. There are more than 10 million users and followers of the initiative on social networking sites following the launch of pages entitled "Presidential Initiative ... lifeboats."

- Receiving complaints from Egyptians abroad and working to resolve them: The Ministry of Emigration is keen to receive any complaints or inquiries related to Egyptians working and residing abroad, by activating a large number of electronic services, through its official website and various means of communication, so that Egyptians working and residing abroad can communicate with the Ministry directly, in the event of any problem.

Complaints Mechanism:

Hotline

By communicating with the Ministry, through the hotline 19787, and through it a person could call, and submit their complaint.

Online

By visiting the official page of the Ministry of Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates Affairs via the social networking site «Facebook» and writing down the complaint and submitting it.

Recommendations:

- Conducting specific studies and specialized research on the current needs and future trends of foreign markets, in various specializations and professions, in a way that raises the efficiency of the competitiveness of Egyptian labour, and pays attention to the fact that scarcity in specialization is what generates value for the Egyptian working abroad.
- Allowing civil society organizations and institutions to dispatch fact-finding missions regarding the conditions of members of the Egyptian community abroad.
- Establishing a complete database on the Egyptian community abroad, so that they can be contacted and provided with the necessary aid. This base should be closer to a guide, raising awareness of the problems facing Egyptian workers abroad, and warning against allowing the Egyptian worker to travel unless he presents a documented and approved work contract while raising awareness of the of his rights.
- Closing and holding accountable the offices of what were called in the media "fake employment offices" in Egypt, which lie and defraud the young generations looking for a job opportunity, and sell them illusions, instead of employment contracts.
- Providing legal advisors by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Egyptian international that can be used quickly to defend Egyptians in case they are exposed to legal crises outside the country.
- Establishing a National Council for Migration or for the Welfare of Egyptians Abroad, so that it gives increased attention to the Egyptian community abroad. This Council should include some personalities with extensive experience such as former diplomats, coordinating directors of migration, former immigrants, and those who have returned and are interested in immigration issues.
- Activating communication between Egyptians and embassies abroad.
- Increasing the number of consulates abroad and increasing the number of employees in consulates.
- Conducting periodic tours by Missions affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign
 Affairs to know the conditions of the gatherings of Egyptians residing abroad,
 listen to them, and understand the nature of their conditions, pursuant to the
 principle of preventive diplomacy that aims to stave off problems, before they
 escalate, and remove psychological barriers between the embassy and members
 of the community.

Conclusion

The establishment of close relations between Egyptians abroad and their homeland is one of the important things that benefit the country. The problems of Egyptians abroad are considered a matter of national security for Egypt. The continuation of bridges of communication with entities and Egyptians abroad is important to meet their needs and listen to their ideas and suggestions. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the problems of Egyptians abroad by the relevant ministries. This is to help Egyptians abroad obtain the largest possible number of rights, live a decent life as if they were in their own country, protect them from any racism or aggression they are exposed to, preserve their rights and lives abroad, and listen to their complaints and problems and solve them as soon as possible. Egyptians abroad also have a major role in development inside the country. We are all supposed to search for all possible means that make them aware of the importance of their role and status. It is necessary to work institutionally and link Egyptian communities living abroad to the homeland to benefit from their experiences.