

Title: Property Market Deregulation and Informal Tenure in Egypt; A Diabolical Threat to Millions

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Abstract:

In the ambiguous legislative climate synonymous with authoritarianism, the Egyptian state has encouraged the commodification of land and property through a raft of different policies that have deregulated the market, driving up the prices in some places 16 fold over the last decade alone. State-led commodification in tandem with informal tenure for most Egyptians has meant the exploitation of many communities by a plethora of government and quasi-government agencies that claim their land as their own.

Through three different tenure cases lodged by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) over the last four years, this paper will show how a pattern exists between state-led commodification and informal/insecure tenure. The case studies show the official use of direct methods of eviction such as eviction orders, sequestration decrees and the falsifying of contracts. In addition, unofficial in-direct methods of forced-eviction have been used such as cutting off power and water supplies as well as the intimidation and torture of some residents.

The paper will also show how many of the forced evictions have happened, or been attempted, in the shadow of seemingly social motives like “upgrading unsafe areas”, “the public good”, or simply labelling the residents as “usurpers” and “squatters”.