GUIDING QUESTIONS

• Without ever attending school, do you think it would be possible to live well in a large modern city, such as Cairo?
• What do you think about the officers response that cases like Yasmin’s are hard, and the belief that no real justice will be served?

GENERAL INFORMATION

Capital City: Cairo

Population of Egypt: 96.6 million (2016 est.)

Population of Cairo: 18.8 million

Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 94.016 million

Egypt is famous for being the birthplace – about 5,000 years ago – of one of the world’s first civilizations. The Nile valley allowed for farming and the development of permanent settlements. Up until the 1900s, a majority of Egyptians lived in rural areas. Today, almost half of Egypt’s population lives in large cities. Cairo, Alexandria and Giza face the same issues that challenge many large cities: poverty, traffic, and a lack of available and affordable housing. In January 2011, Egyptians protested a lack of social spending in light of the country’s economic success. These protests led to a change in government structure and a more democratic process. While Cairo is a large modern city, a majority of Egyptians still live in rural areas and rely on agriculture.

Egypt is bordered by Israel, Libya and Sudan on land, as well as both the Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea.
GOVERNMENT

Egypt is a Republic. In 1971, Egypt became a democratic and socialist society, adopting a constitution that remained in force for four decades, although during those years there were only two presidents: Anwar Sadat, who was assassinated, and Hosni Mubarak, who served for the next 30 years. A turning point came in 2011. Inspired by the Tunisian revolution the previous year, Egyptian opposition groups led demonstrations and labor strikes countrywide, culminating in Mubarak’s ouster. In June 2012, Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed Morsi was sworn in as Egypt’s first democratically elected president. Only months later, after often violent protests directed against his government, the military removed him from power. In 2014, a new constitution was approved by referendum. Egypt currently has a president, a prime minister, a People’s Assembly, and a judicial branch. Egypt elected a new legislature in December 2015, the first parliament since 2012.

THE ECONOMY

A majority of Egypt’s economic activity takes place in the fertile Nile valley. The country had been building relationships with foreign investors and creating economic growth. Unfortunately, this growth did not have a positive impact on a majority of Egypt’s population, especially the poor. In January 2011, public unrest broke out over the need for more spending on social programs. While the government did change policies and agree to invest more money into social programs, the unrest caused a severe drop in tourism and economic advancement. This weak growth and limited foreign exchange earnings have made public finances unsustainable, leading to extensive borrowing from allied countries. Some growth was seen in 2015, due to higher levels of foreign investment.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in US$: 330 billion
Currency Exchange Rate: 1 US$ = 9.71 Egyptian Pounds (2016 est.)

Imports and Exports
- Egypt imported $50.07 billion in machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, wood products and fuels in 2016.
- Egypt exported $14.73 billion in crude oil and petroleum products, cotton, textiles, metal products, chemicals and processed foods in 2016.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos, lead, rare earth elements, zinc

RESOURCES

- Egypt State Information Service at www.sis.gov.eg/En/Default.aspx
- Khan Academy at www.khanacademy.org
- World Bank’s website at www.worldbank.org

All data was reported in 2015 unless otherwise noted.