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The International Day of Happiness is celebrated worldwide every 20 March, accompanied by a series of reports and statistics that show the rate of happiness in each country, and ranking countries according to these rates. In July 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 65/309 Happiness: Towards a Holistic Definition of Development, inviting UN Member States to measure the happiness of their people and to use the data to help guide public policy.

The UN General Assembly called on member states to undertake steps that give more importance to happiness and well-being in determining how to achieve and measure social and economic development. In a resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly invited countries "to pursue the elaboration of additional measures that better capture the importance of the pursuit of happiness and well-being in development with a view to guiding their public policies." The resolution said, "the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human goal" and embodies the spirit of the globally agreed targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

On April 2, 2012, the first UN High Level Meeting called Wellbeing and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm, which was chaired by UN Secretary General and Prime Minister of Bhutan, the nation that adopted gross national happiness instead of gross domestic product as their main development indicator, which was welcomed by UN member states.

The first World Happiness Report was released on April 1, 2012 as a foundational text for the UN High Level Meeting: Well-being and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm, drawing international attention. The report outlined the state of world happiness, causes of happiness and misery, and policy implications highlighted by case studies.

### Egypt and International Happiness Index (2019)

In 2019, Finland was crowned the happiest country in the world for the second year in a row, leading a top ten that is made up of five Nordic nations (Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland). However, South Sudan came at the bottom of the happiness index (156).

## What about Egypt?

Since the language of numbers does not lie, it is necessary to know Egypt's position among world countries. The World Happiness Report of 2019 showed that Egypt is ranking 137<sup>th</sup>. out of (156) countries. Among Arab countries, Egypt came in the 15<sup>th</sup>. position after the UAE (21), KSA (28), Qatar (29), Bahrain (37), Kuwait (51), Libya (72), Algeria (88), Morocco (89), Lebanon (91), Jordan (101), Palestinian Territories (110), Somalia (112), Tunisia (124), Iraq (126); and followed only by Syria (149) and Yemen (151).

Remarkably, Egypt came after Somalia and ranked very low compared to other countries, including Lebanon and Jordan, and even countries suffering civil wars such as Libya and Yemen. Egypt's bureaucracy, financial corruption, lack of government transparency, poor fair competition, and a decline in all economic indicators, despite repeated government statements on improvement of the economic situation, were among the reasons why Egypt fell far below the global happiness rate, amid high rates of unemployment, suicide, immigration, etc.

The report, which is issued in March of each year, cites six significant factors which contribute to happiness, namely:

- 1- GDP per capita (in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) adjusted to constant 2011 international dollars, taken from the World Development Indicators (WDI) released by the World Bank on November 14, 2018);
- 2- Social support (the national average of the binary responses (either 0 or 1) to the Gallup World Poll (GWP) question "If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?");
- 3- Healthy life expectancy (based on data from the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Health Observatory data repository),
- 4- Freedom to make life choices (the national average of binary responses to the GWP question "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?"),
- 5- Generosity (the residual of regressing the national average of GWP responses to the question "Have you donated money to a charity in the past month?" on GDP per capita), and

6- Freedom from corruption (the average of binary answers to two GWP questions: "Is corruption widespread throughout the government or not?" and "Is corruption widespread within businesses or not?" Where data for government corruption are missing, the perception of business corruption is used as the overall corruption-perception measure).

However, Egypt came at rank 118 in social support, 129 in freedom, 89 in corruption levels, 132 in generosity, 85 in GDP, and 101 in healthy life expectancy.

Egypt usually ranks extremely low on the International Happiness Index since its inception. Also, Egypt has witnessed a decline in local, regional and international indicators in all areas, given continued deterioration of living conditions; and the economic, social, political situation, and even in informatics. The quality of life is declining in all its forms, as evidenced by the increase in inflation rate above 20%, the unjustified price rise, the deterioration of basic services such as education, health and others, in addition to the spread of corruption in all sectors of the State.

Meanwhile, Egypt came on top of the list of the poor living conditions, increasing poverty, illiteracy, divorce, HIV infection, air pollution and road accidents; as well as harassment and trafficking in human beings and women; to become one of the most miserable countries on the International Happiness Index.

## Manifestations of unhappiness in Egypt

We will look at Egypt's position in the International Happiness Report through addressing several key elements: public health, mental health, corruption, and per capita Gross National Income (GNI).

### First: Public Health Rate

When the term "public health rate" is mentioned in Egypt, feelings of discontent or at least feelings of dissatisfaction arise, both to recipients of the service (citizens) and the providers (bodies and hospitals), not due to poor potential, but rather poor organization and planning.

### Second: Psychological state of population

Egyptians cannot feel happy while experiencing an unprecedented state of gloom and despair, especially over the last few years amid suppression and human rights violations, including humiliation, lack of freedoms, and marginalization, which has led to emergence of strange phenomena in the

Egyptian society, including: suicide, divorce, spinsterhood, addiction, crime, and violence. The latest statistics available on the WHO website reveal that there are 88 suicides per 100,000 Egyptians, with a population of 100 million, and nearly 88,000 people attempting suicide each year.

### Third: Prevalence of Corruption

The 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) revealed that Egypt ranked 105 among 180 countries, with a score of 35 points. The CPI ranks 180 countries by their perceived "levels of public sector corruption" using a scale of 0 to 100 points, where 0 is given to the countries which witness highest corruption and 100 to the countries which witness the highest transparency. Most notably, Egypt continues to arrest the former head of the Central Accounting Agency (CAA), Hesham Genena, against the backdrop of reporting about corruption in state agencies exceeding LE 600 billion (about 50 billion dollars) in 2015.

### Fourth: Per capita GDP

The World Bank classifies the world's economies into four income groups — high, upper-middle, lower-middle, and low, based on Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (current US\$) which is updated each year on July 1st. Egypt is classified as one of the lowest income countries in the middle tier. The Central Bank of Egypt announced that the country's external debt increased by 15.2% year-on-year at the end of the first quarter of FY2018/2019 to exceed \$ 93 billion, while the per capita debt amounted to 837%. Analysts considered this as an indicator of likely negative conditions awaiting citizens.

### Egyptians, where to?

Developed and democratic countries often come on top of the list of happy countries according to the International Happiness Index, demonstrating that there is a close relationship between progress, freedom, and democracy on the one hand, and happiness on the other. Egypt lacks freedom as evidenced by the numbers of detainees in Egypt's prisons, amid a military control of political life and tightening their grip on the three powers after the recent constitutional amendments, in addition to a steady decline in economic indicators; therefore, it seems that the Egyptians are likely to move from bad to worse with respect to the nation's position on the International Happiness Index unless they rise for defending their interests, just like other free peoples that fought for restoration of their dignity either from the occupation or from the corrupt dictatorial regimes.