

Egypt's Soap Opera Clampdown Extends El-Sisi's Iron Grip to TV | New York Times

By Declan Walsh

April 3, 2019

In his desire to wield sweeping power, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt has suppressed politics, cowed the media and jailed legions of opponents.

Now he is extending his iron grip to a new corner of Egyptian society: the country's cherished soap operas.

Every year during the holy month of Ramadan, Egyptians crowd around their televisions to gorge on big-budget mini-series starring the country's top actors, including weepy melodramas, police procedurals and sweeping historical epics. The best are exported across the Middle East.

But the crop of shows currently in production for Ramadan are being subjected to suffocating controls. Mr. el-Sisi's officials are dictating scripts and capping wages, directors and actors say. A military-linked production company has taken charge of some of the biggest shows.

[...]

[Egypt's Soap Opera Clampdown Extends el-Sisi's Iron Grip to TV - The New York Times](#)