



Hankorab Beach... The End of a Crisis or Its Beginning?

**Ecoris Team Report on the
Hankorab Beach Crisis**



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April 2025

Introduction

Over the past few months, starting in February 2025, newspapers, media outlets, environmental activists, and advocacy groups have reported on violations at Ras Hankorab Beach, located within the **Wadi El Gemal – Hamata Protected Area** in the Red Sea Governorate, south of Marsa Alam. This area was declared a natural reserve under Prime Ministerial Decree No. 143 of 2003, issued on January 20, 2003, and published in the Official Gazette (Issue No. 25). The decree designates Wadi El Gemal – Hamata as a protected area under Law No. 102 of 1983, with boundaries defined by specific geographic coordinates.

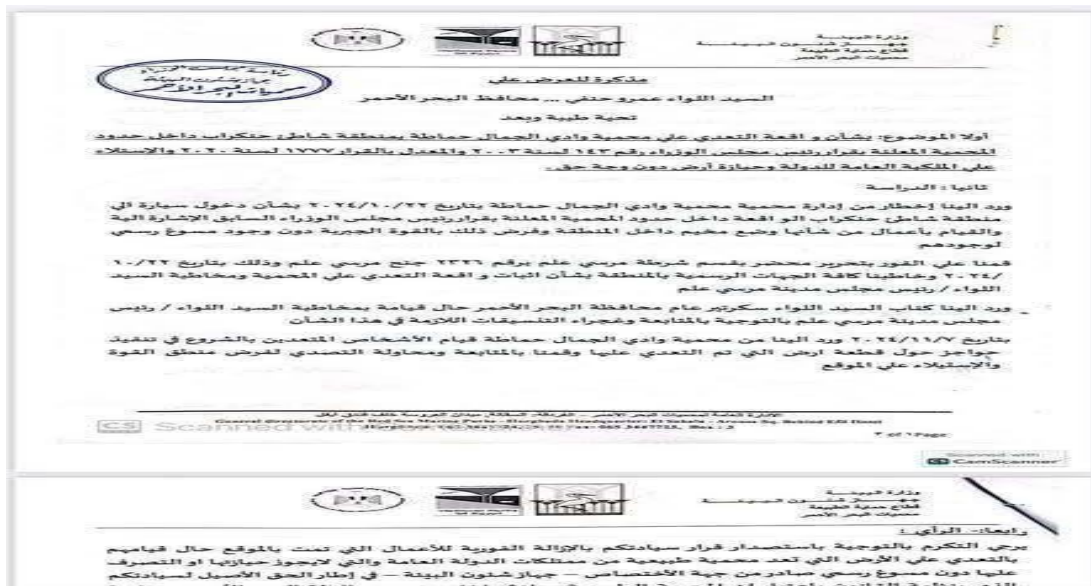
Article 3 of the decree prohibits any actions that could damage the natural environment, harm wildlife or marine life, or degrade the aesthetic value of the reserve. Prohibited activities include:

- Hunting, transporting, killing, or disturbing wildlife or marine organisms.
- Destroying or relocating plants within the reserve.
- Damaging geological formations, historical artifacts, or inscriptions.
- Introducing non-native species of animals, plants, or microorganisms.
- Polluting the soil, water, or air within or near the reserve.
- Dumping chemicals, oils, waste, or radioactive materials.
- Constructing buildings, roads, or conducting agricultural, industrial, commercial, or tourist activities without a permit from the Environmental Affairs Agency.

The decree was amended by Prime Ministerial Decree No. 1777 of 2020, issued on September 7, 2020, which modified the boundaries of the reserve.

Recent reports and social media posts (e.g., [Sahih Masr](#), [Al-Mawqef Al-Masry](#)) highlighted encroachments at Ras Hankorab, involving heavy machinery and concrete constructions. These actions threaten endangered species like sea turtles, rare coral reefs, and the ecological balance of the area, which is a globally recognized ecotourism destination.

In November 2024, a similar violation occurred, resulting in Case No. 2326 of 2024. The defendants were fined EGP 5,000 and ordered to remove the illegal structures.



[illegible]

محكمة القصور الجزئية بجلستها العلنية المنعقدة بسراي المحكمة يوم السبت الموافق ٢٠٢٤ / ١١ / ٣٠
رئيسة المحكمة
بمجلس السيد الأستاذ /
وحضور السيد الأستاذ /

صدر الأمر الجنائي الآتي في قضية النيابة العامة رقم ٦٧٤ ج لسنة ٢٠٢٤ م جنح

ضد /
.....
.....

المحكمة

بعد الاطلاع على الأوراق:
حيث أن النيابة العامة أبلغت إلى المتهم أنه في يوم / ٢٠٢٢ بدائرة
- قاموا مشنقات في منطقة المحمية دون الحصول على تصريح من الجهة الإدارية المختصة وفقا للشروط والتواعد والإجراءات التي يصدر بتحديدها قرار من رئيس فرار من رئيس مجلس الوزراء.

ومن ثم يكون قد ارتكبت الجريمة المزمومة بنصوص المواد ١٩، ١٨، ١٧، ١٦، ١٥، ١٤ مكرر/ ٢٠٢٢، ١٩، ١٨، ١٧، ١٦، ١٥، ١٤ لسنة ١٩٩٤ المعدل بالقانون رقم لسنة ٢٠٠٩.

ومن حيث أن المتهم لم يحضر رغم إعلانه قانوناً ومن ثم يجوز الحكم في غيبته عملاً بالمادة ١/٢٣٨ من قانون الإجراءات الجنائية.
وحيث أنه وصلنا بنص المادة رقم ٢٢٢ مكرراً من قانون الإجراءات الجنائية المتعلقة بالقانون رقم ٧٤ لسنة ٢٠٠٧ التي نصت على أن " للقاضي، من تلقاء نفسه، عدم نظره لإحدى الجنب المبينة بالمادة رقم ٢٢٢ من ذات القانون (التي لا يوجب التقدير الحكم فيها بمقتضى الحبس.....) أن يصدر فيها أمراً جنايتها، وذلك إذا تغيب المتهم عن الحضور رغم إعلانها، ولم تكن النيابة العامة قد طلبت توقيع أقصى العقوبة....."
ولما كانت سلة الجاسة الأمانة مما لا يجب الحكم فيها بالحبس إلا بالنص المادة ٢٢٢ إجراءات جنائية. تلم تطلب النيابة العامة توقيع أقصى العقوبة. الأمر الذي تصدر معه المحكمة فيها أمراً جنايتها عملاً بالحقوق المخول لها بنص المادتين ٣٢٣، ٢٢٢ مكرر من قانون الإجراءات الجنائية.

ومن حيث أنه وعن المساريف فالخمس تلم بها المتهم عملاً بنص المادة ٢١٢ من قانون الإجراءات الجنائية.

لهذه الأسباب

أمرت المحكمة : بخلافه تعزيم كل منهم خمسة آلاف جنيه والأزالة على نفقته والمصاريف .

أمين السر

هذا صورة طبق الأصل من
رقم ج جنح لسنة
بعد سداد الرسوم المقررة بالتصديق رقم
شمارية
من جهة النيابة العامة
باسم النيابة العامة
القسم الثاني والثلث

المحكمة

Parliamentary Action, Legal Measures, and Complaints to Relevant Authorities:

- On March 8, 2025, MP Samira El-Jazzar submitted an urgent statement to the Counselor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, regarding the violation of Wadi El Gemal Protected Area. She described it as *"a deplorable and rapid assault using full-scale contracting equipment to construct a hotel for an investor, forcibly imposing a fait accompli in defiance of Egyptian state laws."* She demanded swift action and coordination with executive authorities to halt the encroachment on the reserve.
- On March 10, 2025, MP Eng. Maha Abdel Nasser filed an information request addressed to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, and the Minister of Environment concerning this issue. She called for an immediate halt to all violations within the reserve and requested a comprehensive explanation of the events in Wadi El Gemal, the measures taken, and future steps to prevent recurrence, urging that the matter be discussed in the House of Representatives.
- On March 22, 2025, lawyers from the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR) filed a formal complaint (No. 21625 of 2025) with the Counselor, Prosecutor General, demanding an investigation into reported attempts to violate the protected area and ensure its protection.
- On March 24, 2025, ECESR lawyers submitted three telegraphic complaints (Nos. 249500736, 249500737, 249500738) to the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Environment, and the Red Sea Governorate, calling for an immediate end to the violations, removal of all illegal constructions, and compensation to the state for damages.

Urgent and Intensive Mobilization by Environmental and Civil Society Organizations:

- Emergency appeals to save Hankorab Beach were launched across social media platforms by numerous environmental institutions, initiatives, and individuals concerned with environmental conservation and natural reserves, including the [Ecoris](#) . A coalition of these organizations was formed under the name "[Save](#)

[Hankorab Alliance](#)" , and an online petition was initiated to demand the protection of Ras Hankorab. Additionally, a media campaign was launched to raise awareness about the significance of this unique ecological treasure.

Community Dialogue with the Minister of Environment

A [public dialogue](#), hosted by the Arab Network for Environment and Development and the Arab Office for Youth and Environment, was held with the Minister of Environment. She clarified that Hankorab Beach is not a highly sensitive ecological zone but a heavily visited ecotourism site. Development plans include eco-friendly facilities like snorkeling areas, equipment rental services, and a Bedouin-style café, all subject to environmental impact assessments.

Mysterious Management of Hankorab Beach

Reports emerged of unauthorized personnel collecting EGP 200 per visitor (plus EGP 200 per vehicle) without clarity on which entity they represented. A letter attributed to the Red Sea Protectorates Administration (No. 25, dated February 27, 2025) announced a temporary halt to visits pending a review of the reserve's management plan.



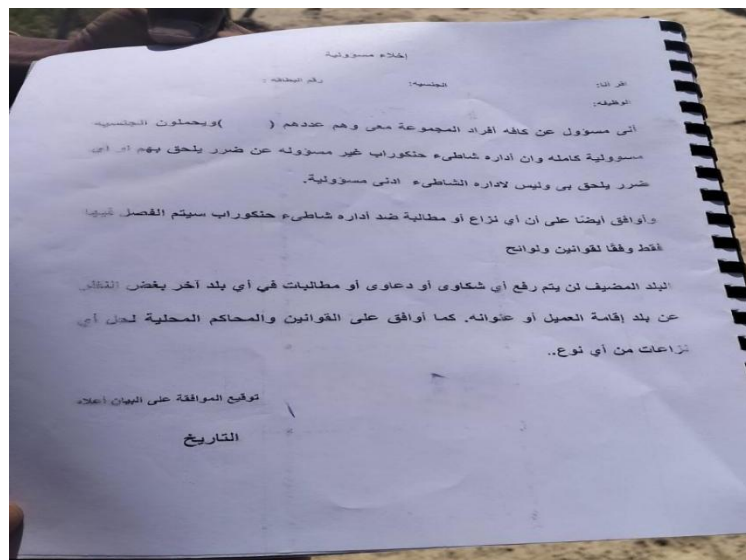
Ras Hankorab - Zero Distance

Ecoris team proceeded to Wadi El Gemal Protected Area, first to find the visitor center completely devoid of staff or guides.

Headed to Hankorab Bay, where they were met with an unexpected sight: a newly constructed stone gate at the beach entrance, manned by security personnel of unclear affiliation. These individuals were collecting an entrance fee of 200 EGP per person for Egyptian visitors, plus 200 EGP per vehicle, issuing tickets with no identifiable authority or beneficiary listed.

To the team's relief, the beach entrance and surrounding area were free of construction equipment or materials, except for a few discarded metal sheets by the roadside. The lime markings previously photographed during reports of encroachment attempts had also vanished. The beach itself had no permanent structures—only a fabric tent, a metal caravan, restroom facilities, and a well-built wooden beach shack operated by a local offering drinks to visitors. A few wooden tables displayed handmade jewelry and goods sold by locals.

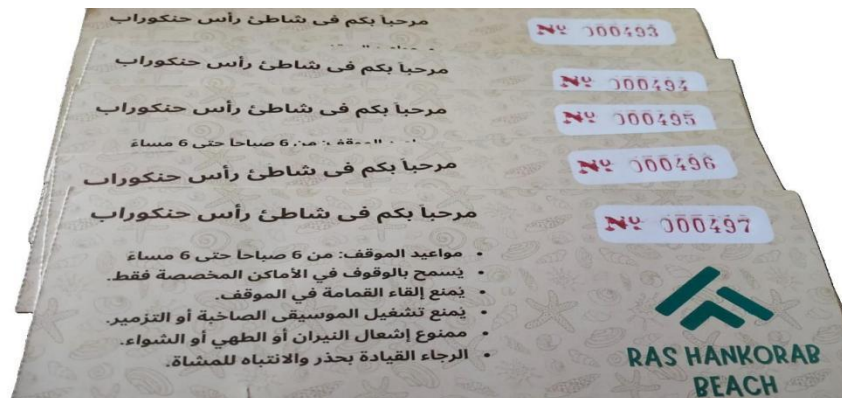
Notably, a group of workers—whose employer or institutional affiliation remained undisclosed—assisted visitors but refused to disclose their ties to any company or entity. They also required visitors to sign a liability waiver, absolving "beach management" of responsibility for any harm incurred during their stay.



Through discussions with workers and local residents at the beach, the EcoRIS team learned that a **prefabricated restaurant and café** were being prepared at a specialized factory for installation on-site to serve visitors, as construction is prohibited in the area (according to their claims).

The team attempted to locate a **representative from the Ministry of Environment or any relevant government oversight body** but only encountered a **paramedic** who refused to disclose his institutional affiliation.

The visit concluded on **April 30, 2025**, with the team photographer documenting the beach's condition through photos and videos, which confirmed **the absence of visible violations at the time of inspection.**



Qulaan Beach: A Unique Model of Community-Led Management

After concluding their visit to Hankorab Beach, the EcoRIS team headed to Qulaan Beach, located approximately 60 kilometers from Hankorab. There, the team encountered a distinctive model of community-based natural reserve management. The beach is run by a group of locals from the Ababda region, with no entry fees imposed—except for charges on select beverages or food served at a simple wooden restaurant situated away

from the shoreline. Additionally, a dedicated tent displays and sells local handmade crafts to visitors.

The place boasts breathtaking natural beauty, with sprawling mangrove trees as far as the eye can see and flocks of local birds soaring across the horizon. The beach exudes absolute tranquility and exceptional serenity. It was evident how keen the local caretakers were on maintaining the area's cleanliness, ensuring visitor comfort and privacy, as well as safeguarding the site's security and long-term sustainability



During the team's meeting with the local community, they explained that they have lived in this area for hundreds of years and consider it both their livelihood and their home. Most rely on fishing or herding, while women participate in cooking, baking bread, and producing handmade crafts to sell to visitors. They affirmed their deep attachment to their land and heritage, rejecting any attempts to displace them.

The locals also demonstrated an innate environmental awareness rooted in their traditions, prohibiting the hunting or harming of any living creature without necessity or justification. This awareness was reflected in the cleanliness of the beach, which was nearly free of waste—despite the presence of a residential area, a restaurant, and a designated camping site within the reserve.

However, upon reaching the large mangrove tree in the middle of the water, the team observed solid plastic waste surrounding the island and the mangroves. This prompted

the EcoRIS team to intervene and remove significant amounts of plastic debris. The incident highlights the lack of adequate support and oversight from official reserve authorities, despite the local community's dedicated efforts to preserve the area.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Following the field visit to Wadi El Gemal Protected Area—which included the visitor center, Ras Baghdadi, Hankorab Beach, and Qulaan Beach—we have compiled this report documenting the initial crisis at Hankorab Beach and our field observations two months after its emergence. These observations, supported by photo and video evidence, confirm that the violations previously documented in social media posts and email exchanges among conservationists have been resolved—a development EcoRIS welcomes and appreciates. However, several concerns and questions remain, which we outline below:

Key Findings and Recommendations:

1. Transparency in Management

Wadi El Gemal is a unique ecological treasure and public property under strict

constitutional and legal protection. However, the presence of an unidentified company managing Hankorab Beach, collecting unaccounted fees (distinct from the official Ministry of Environment tickets, which clearly state their purpose, issuing authority, and serial numbers), raises serious concerns. We urge the Ministry of Environment to disclose:

- The identity and affiliation of the entity managing the beach.
- Its legal responsibilities and oversight mechanisms.

2. Strengthening Oversight

Given the total absence of reserve staff or inspectors, we recommend:

- Permanent deployment of Ministry of Environment inspectors to monitor compliance with conservation laws.
- Regular audits to prevent future violations.

3. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Waste Management

We demand:

- Public disclosure of EIAs for any infrastructure or tourism projects within the reserve.
- A waste management plan to protect sensitive ecosystems (e.g., mangroves, beaches).
- Periodic reviews of these assessments to mitigate harm, per the Environment Minister's earlier commitments.

4. Civil Society Monitoring

To ensure accountability, we propose:

- A formalized role for NGOs and local communities in monitoring development activities.
- Inclusive decision-making that integrates Indigenous voices (e.g., the Ababda tribe).

5. Standardized Entry Fees

Fees across Egypt's protected areas vary by up to 800% (e.g., Dahab's Blue Hole: 25 EGP vs. Hankorab's 200 EGP). We call for:

- Equitable pricing to ensure accessibility for Egyptian citizens.
- Transparent criteria for fee structures.

6. Community-Based Resource Management

- Establish participatory mechanisms to involve the Ababda tribe in natural resource management.
- Guarantee direct economic benefits for locals from tourism/development projects.

7. Emergency Waste Management Plan

- Implement urgent measures to reduce plastic pollution in critical habitats (e.g., mangroves).
- Enhance recycling and cleanup initiatives.

8. Visitor Safety and Infrastructure

- Deploy trained lifeguards at beaches.
- Provide basic amenities: shaded areas, informational signage, and clear safety protocols.

9. It is essential to update monitoring and surveillance systems within natural reserves to enhance their capacity for early detection of any violations or illegal activities. This can be achieved by employing modern technological means, such as smart cameras and drones, and integrating them into a centralized system that enables rapid and effective intervention.

Relevant Resources

Local Laws & Regulations

- Egyptian Protected Areas Law No. 102 of 1983: [Link](#)
- Map of Natural Reserves: [Link](#)

International Agreements

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): [Link](#)
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands: [Link](#)
- CITES: [Link](#)
- IUCN Protected Areas Guidelines: [Link](#)

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