

Tales of the White Mountain

It's very hot here, even in winter, and nobody can see when pillars of dust go up. Moving from one spot to another becomes very dangerous. Heavy machines roar loudly and nobody can hear the shouts of other colleagues.

Workers hit the machines with hammers to create some noise, warning other workers that the heavy, fast machinery is close by. Suddenly, a man screams but no one understands his words. Only a few minutes later they get the reason of his screaming, when they see his blood covering the extremely white ground.

This is not a scene from a battlefield, it's an ordinary working day in Minya limestone quarries 268 kilometers south of Cairo in Egypt.

According to reports from NGOs, roughly 20 thousand workers are employed in Minya quarries, most of them are farmers and fresh graduates suffering from unemployment. Reports issued from the government-affiliated body "Egypt Decision Support Center" said that Upper Egypt's Minya had some 334 quarries in 2009, but the number skyrocketed to 700 licensed quarries in 2014, in addition to tens of unlicensed quarries.

Work in the quarries is like a parallel world that people outside are not aware of. Everyday there, workers risk losing their limbs, and even dying without anyone filing an official complaint with the police to determine the reason behind their death.

Mohamed Ali Eddin

Mohamed Ali Eddin is a freelance photojournalist who focuses on documenting the change in the Egyptian society, human rights and workers' rights. Most of his photo stories reflect the life outside Cairo, where people suffer from lack of public service and media coverage.

He attended visual storytelling workshops with Noor images, Al-Iquindoi Workshops and World Press Photo, then won the WPPH grant for 'Reporting change' in 2013. Tales of the White Mountain won Manuel Riveras Ortiz Foundation grant in 2014 and the photographs were exhibited in Arles, France. The story was published in National Geographic and Washington Post.

Starting his career as a reporter, Mohamed was passionate about finding interesting stories that touched readers. He soon noticed that even good writing went unread without photographs to help tell the story visually. That realization led him to focus more on photojournalism and how a photographer can tell the whole story without words.