

allafrica.com - Egypt: Living Without The State In Cairo's Slums

Cairo — For the residents of the Middle East and Africa's largest city, Cairo, 2013 ended with the often repeated government promise to finally provide basic services and development in the slums, where half of the city's residents live.

But instead of waiting for Prime Minister Hazem Al-Beblawi's slum renewal project, announced in November, to bear fruit, many are simply coping as best they can without the state.

When basic services are lacking, it is often down to slum dwellers to use their own initiative. They dig land, construct septic tanks and water pipes, install storage barrels, and raise community funds to get private engineers to build sewage pipes and connect them to the main network.

"These communities have an inherent self-reliance in finding ways to get by," said Thomas Culhane, co-founder of Solar CITIES, an NGO that invests in solar and renewable energy in poor communities.

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