

A Justice lost amidst the legal text
An introductory paper from the "Neoliberalism and Law" series on the transformations of the
legislative function in Egypt.

Law, at its core, is not a neutral entity outside of politics, but rather a direct reflection of power relations at a specific historical moment. In countries of the Global South, of which Egypt is a prominent example, law has never been merely a rigid text for assessing rights, but rather a tool for shaping questions of power and redistributing resources to the advantage of the most powerful party.

This paper is not a study of the history of laws, or a mere presentation of legislative materials. Rather, it is an attempt to understand how the function of law has changed: from a means of providing relative protection and limited social redistribution, to a tool that empowers the market and restricts rights. Neoliberalism is not merely imposed on the economy in an abstract and separate manner, but rather reshapes laws as part of a redistribution of economic and social power, a reality evident in its Egyptian version.

Since the mid-twentieth century, the law has been a space for renegotiating the social contract at every stage. With the July 1952 Revolution, its role was not limited to regulating relations between individuals and institutions, but rather became a framework for addressing the question of justice itself. Major laws, such as the Agrarian Reform Law No. 178 of 1952, were not merely technical texts, but rather a political declaration of a partial redistribution of wealth, a clear message to peasants that the state was "present" as a guarantor¹.

But this role did not remain unchanged. In the 1970s, as a necessity of the open-door policy, the language of the market entered the core of the legal system, with protective provisions being retracted, and legislation promoting investment and liberalizing trade being introduced. Then followed the major transformation in the 1990s, with the economic reform and structural readjustment program of 1991, which completely rewrote the rules of the game: privatization, investment, and labor laws all moved toward undermining guarantees and reshaping the relationship between state and society.

This introduction lays the foundation for the rest of the series. In the following papers, we will examine each chapter of the transformation: how privatization became a tool for uprooting the public sector, how the state of exception became the norm, and how justice retreated into a formal façade, satisfied with the presence of texts and procedures. Throughout all of this, the question remains: Has the law remained the guardian of justice, or has it become its tool for reproducing a system that legitimizes inequality under the banner of "rule of law"?

1- The absence of justice behind the facade of the law

The mere existence of a legal text has never guaranteed justice; sometimes, its very existence is an elegant cover for the absence of the latter. The law, as practiced in Egypt, often appears as a neutral facade, but at its core, it is a tool for redistribution of power and stabilizing an unbalanced social structure.

¹ For more details, see Saqr Al-Nour, edited by Reem Saad, Report on Erasing the Effects of Agrarian Reform and Social Contempt for Agricultural Tenants, published by the Center for Memory and Knowledge Studies, 2023..

This delusion did not arise by chance, but was carefully constructed. It was crafted by the state over decades through school curricula, newsletters, and official speeches. Citizens were told that the law is a roof that shelters everybody, but when we look at this roof in context, we discover that it is not the same roof for everyone—but rather an umbrella that protects some and leaves others exposed to the rain.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos points out that the law is often used as a facade promising equality, but in reality it reproduces unequal power relations when its formulation and application are monopolized by the powerful.²

In Egypt, as in many societies, the law was not a neutral entity suspended in air. Rather, it was a network of relationships, interests, and tensions between conflicting forces. Texts that appear to be "mere rules" in law books are in fact the translation of a long-standing struggle: Who wrote these rules? For whom? Against whom? And who was excluded from the drafting process in the first place?

In his analysis of the critical theory of law, Duncan Kennedy asserts that laws are written as if they are neutral, but in reality they are the product of deliberate struggles, compromises, and exclusions.³

Here the major gap reveals itself: there is a difference between law as a rigid system of rules and justice as a living value. Law has no intrinsic moral content; its meaning is always determined by its consequences: Who does it protect? Who does it exclude? Whom does the text deliberately ignore or remain silent about?

These questions have no place in official state discourse. There, the law is treated as something sacred: "We respect the law" is a phrase used for justification, not for discussion. Even when the law itself is unjust or biased, the discourse continues to treat it as a symbol of discipline. This is where the true disparity begins: when respect for the law becomes an end in itself, divorced from the purpose for which it was originally established—the protection of human dignity—the law loses its meaning and becomes a tool for perpetuating blind compliance.

So-called "legal neutrality" is nothing more than a linguistic veneer covering deliberate political decisions. Not all laws are just, and not all their applications are equitable. The law is often an obstacle to justice—not because it is absent, but because it is so omnipresent. It is present in prosecutors' offices, in courtrooms, and in official gazettes. But this presence does not mean protection; rather, it means that the text has become a tool for restricting those it is supposed to protect.

Human Rights Watch explains that Egyptian authorities often cloak repressive policies in legal language, issuing laws that appear neutral but are, in essence, tools for controlling the public sphere.⁴

² Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

³ Duncan Kennedy, *Legal Education and the Reproduction of Hierarchy*, *Michigan Law Review* (1983), University of Michigan Repository.

⁴ Human Rights Watch, Q&A: *The Legal Framework and Operating Environment for NGOs in Egypt*, published July 15, 2021.

Laws are not written in a vacuum. Every article, every clause, and every regulation is formulated under the influence of a specific balance of power. There are those who possess the drafting tools and technical expertise, while others have no choice but to comply. In Egypt, in particular, the state has never abolished the law. It has not descended into chaos; rather, it has invented something more complex: it has emptied the law of its protective content and replaced it with a system of texts that give injustice a facade of "formal legitimacy."

2- From economy to legislation: How was the current legal structure developed?

The legislative transformation in Egypt since the early 1990s was not a technical response to financial pressures or an emergency economic situation, but rather part of a deeper process of reshaping the state's role in society. The year 1991 marked a critical turning point when Egypt began implementing an economic reform and structural adjustment program supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, under the slogans of reducing the fiscal deficit, liberalizing the exchange rate, and revitalizing the private sector.⁵ Behind those slogans, however, lay a shift in the legal structure itself, transforming it from a framework that balances interests into a tool paving the way for market dominance.

Law 203 of 1991⁶, restructuring public sector companies, represented a pivotal moment in this process. The law not only regulated public sector companies, but also established the legislative framework for their privatization. Hundreds of companies moved from public to private ownership within a single decade, transforming the relationship between the state and citizens from one of "social guarantor" to "market facilitator." This privatization was not a purely economic process; it was also a political and legal process that redistributed power centers in society.⁷

Legislation did not stop at the public sector. The 1997 Investment Law granted broad privileges to investors, both foreign and Egyptian, including tax exemptions, special incentives, and guarantees against nationalization or expropriation. Over time, official discourse began to redefine social rights as conditional privileges that could be granted or withdrawn based on "investment attraction" priorities.

This shift has impacted fundamental areas of daily life. The right to housing, for example, began to erode with the issuance of the tenant Law No. 4 of 1996⁸, which effectively abolished the "old rent" system and subjected the relationship between landlord and tenant to market logic, raising the cost of living for broad segments of the population. In labor laws, old guarantees such as fixed-term tenancy were eroded, opening the door to precarious temporary contracts, weakening workers' bargaining power. Social protection, meanwhile, shifted from a mandatory state obligation to limited-scope programs conditional on narrow eligibility criteria.

Under the umbrella of "investment promotion," public ownership has been redistributed on a massive scale, often without sufficient transparency or effective oversight. Human rights and economic organizations, such as the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, have

⁵ Fatma Ramadan, *The Evolution of Trade Union Legislation from the Monarchy to the Present*, *Dar al-Maraya Journal*, Issue 8, p. 118

⁶ Public Business Sector Law No. 203 of 1991, published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. 42 (bis), June 19, 1991

⁷ For more details: Mohamed Gad, Emad Mubarak, edited by Amr Adly, *The Trial of Privatization: A Critical Reading from Economic and Legal Perspectives*, Memory and Knowledge for Studies, 2022.2022

⁸ For the full text of the law: <https://mksegypt.org/ar/laws/23915>

documented cases of major public companies, such as Omar Effendi, being sold in deals marred by corruption and lacking effective parliamentary or judicial oversight. Even when the administrative judiciary intervened and issued rulings to annul some of these deals⁹, as in the case of the Tanta Linen company, these interventions have had limited impact, governed by a political and security frameworks that prevented them from effecting a radical change in public policy.

In essence, the law was not an obstacle to these transformations, but rather their primary tool. Regulations and executive decisions were not designed to regulate the market, but rather to regulate society so that it conforms to market logic. Even the judiciary, which at times served as a limited haven for opposition to economic policies, became part of the system that enabled this pattern to persist, by providing only formal oversight that did not affect the basic legislative structure.

With the outbreak of the January 2011 revolution, it seemed as if this process had temporarily halted, but it was more of a brief pause in an ongoing process. After 2013, the neoliberal project returned at a faster pace, this time relying on a closed political environment and exceptional laws, which allowed the same structure to be reproduced without the need for extensive economic justifications or even social consensus.

3- Post 2013: From temporary exception to a redefinition of state and law

What happened in Egypt after 2013 was not merely a return to the old regime or a fleeting human rights setback, but rather a structural transformation in the form of the state and the function of the law. The relationship between state and society was redefined, not through negotiation, reform, or the introduction of a new social contract, but rather imposed through a carefully crafted legal architecture and a redrawing of the public sphere. This redrawing, not even with the goal of resolving social conflict, but with complete bias, deepened it.

In previous decades, moments of exception were presented as emergencies, justified by security concerns or confronting an existential threat to the state, and assumed to be temporary. But after 2013, the exception became the rule. There was no longer a temporal or legal distinction between "a normal" and an "exceptional" situation. The emergency law was not lifted but rather enshrined in the constitution. The exceptional courts were not abolished, but rather the regular judiciary was emptied of its functions to the point where it became an improved version of those courts.

This transformation was clearly evident in the legislative structure that followed 2013. Laws were no longer a tool for regulating rights or restraining power, but rather a tool for reshaping society according to the logic of absolute control. Laws such as the Civil Society Associations Law (No. 70 of 2017, then No. 149 of 2019)¹⁰, the Anti-Terrorism Law (No. 94 of 2015)¹¹, and the Anti-Cybercrime Law (No. 175 of 2018)¹² were not designed to protect security or ensure stability, but

⁹ Counselor Hamdy Yassin Okasha, *Corrupt Privatization and the Schemes to Sell Egypt*, 2022, p. 118

¹⁰ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. 33 (bis – B), August 19, 2019.

¹¹ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. 33 (bis), August 15, 2015.

¹² Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. 32 (bis – C), August 14, 2018

rather to restrict civil society organizations, expand the powers of the executive branch, and criminalize expression, even in its symbolic or digital forms.¹³

The definition of "threat" was expanded to include anything that is inconsistent with the state's discourse. Article 2 of the Anti-Terrorism Law¹⁴, for example, uses vague wording that allows for the inclusion of forms of peaceful dissent under the heading of terrorism, without requiring the intent to commit violence or the presence of a direct threat. Article 25 of the Anti-Cybercrime Law¹⁵ used the phrase "violating family values" as broad term for criminalization, opening the door to prosecution of digital content even in the absence of actual harm or incitement to hatred.

In this sense, the law no longer merely imposes restrictions on actions; it has redefined the notion of the "acceptable citizen": not one who simply adheres to legal texts, but one who aligns with the state's discourse, avoids gray areas, and exercises strict self-censorship without direct interference from the authorities. There is no longer a need to declare an explicit prohibition; fear is now embedded within the texts themselves, translating into voluntary behavior on the part of individuals.

This legal expansion was accompanied by a qualitative change in the structure of the judiciary. The 2019 constitutional amendments¹⁶ deepened the judiciary's subordination to the executive branch, both through controlling the appointment of heads of judicial bodies and their budgets. The Public Prosecution, which is supposed to be an independent prosecution body, has transformed into an executive arm in managing the public sphere through the widespread use of extended pretrial detentions, the practice of "security rotation," and the transformation of suspicion into a permanent legal status.

¹³ Amr Abdelrahman, *Virtual Freedom: Toward Ending the Suppression of Digital Expression by the Cybercrime Law*, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, May 21, 2025

¹⁴ Article 2 of the Anti-Terrorism Law: "An 'act of terrorism' means any use of force, violence, threat, or intimidation, inside or outside the country, with the aim of disturbing public order, endangering the safety of society, its interests, or its security, harming individuals or spreading fear among them, or endangering their lives, freedoms, public or private rights, or their security, or other freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the law; or harming national unity, social peace, or national security; or causing damage to the environment, natural resources, antiquities, funds, or other assets, buildings, or public or private property, or occupying or seizing them; or preventing or obstructing public authorities, judicial bodies, government departments, local units, places of worship, hospitals, educational institutions, diplomatic and consular missions, or regional and international organizations and bodies in Egypt from carrying out their work or engaging in all or part of their activities, or resisting them; or obstructing the implementation of any provision of the Constitution, laws, or regulations. Likewise, any conduct committed with the intent of achieving one of the purposes stated in the first paragraph of this Article, or preparing for it, or inciting it, if such conduct is likely to cause harm to communications, information systems, financial or banking systems, the national economy, energy reserves, the state's security reserves of goods, foodstuffs, or water, or their safety, or medical services in cases of disasters and crises."

¹⁵ Article 25 of the Law on Combating Information Technology Crimes: "Anyone who infringes upon any of the family principles or values in Egyptian society, violates the sanctity of private life, sends numerous electronic messages to a specific person without their consent, provides data to a system or website for the promotion of goods or services without their consent, or publishes—through the information network or by any means of information technology—information, news, images, or the like that violates the privacy of any person without their approval, whether the published material is true or false, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of no less than six months and by a fine of no less than fifty thousand Egyptian pounds and not exceeding one hundred thousand Egyptian pounds, or by either of these two penalties."

¹⁶ To see amendments: <https://www.presidency.eg/media/46122/%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%87%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-2019.pdf>

Security rotation, for example, is no longer merely an exception; it has become a constant tool for keeping activists and dissidents under endless suspicion. Every time a judicial decision is issued to release a person, a new case emerges with virtually the same charges, returning the person to square one in a cycle devoid of the logic of trial or the principle of innocence.¹⁷

As for the administrative judiciary, which previously provided a limited space for reviewing executive decisions, its role has been reduced to a formal exercise, with restrictions justified by vague concepts such as "protecting national security" or "preserving public values," without these justifications being subject to the principles of proportionality or necessity. Thus, the judicial ruling itself has become a tool for compliance rather than a mechanism for review or balance.

In this context, constitutional rights were not abolished, but were emptied of their content. The right to demonstrate, the right to organize, and the right to freedom of expression were not removed from the texts, but were relegated to a set of exceptional conditions that deprive them of their essence. Rights became conditional, linked to prior authorization, and surrounded by restrictions that make them theoretically possible but practically impossible.

Thus, after 2013, the law became not just a cover for political repression, but an integrated structure for redefining state and society. It was no longer a framework for coexistence, but a ladder for gradual compliance, a filter through which only disciplined versions of the citizenry could pass.

4- Law and moral authority: When Values are reproduced by a Legislative Sword

After the state tightened its grip on the political sphere and reorganized the balance of power after 2013, it did not stop at neutralizing the opposition. Rather, its project expanded to include reshaping social values and norms themselves: what is "acceptable" and "unacceptable," what is "appropriate" and "inappropriate." This time, the goal was not merely to control political action or the organizational domain, but rather to infiltrate behavior and conscience and reshape the image of the "good citizen" according to its official perception.

The law became a central tool in this process, not only for regulating policy, but also for reproducing patterns of behavior and social identity. This trend was clearly evident in cases related to what were termed "family values" or "public morals," where vague legal provisions were employed to criminalize acts that did not represent direct harm and did not involve a "victim" in the traditional sense of the term. Cases such as those of Haneen Hossam, Mawaddah al-Adham, Salma al-Shimi, and other content producers on social media, are clear examples of the use of law as a tool for moral discipline.¹⁸

In those cases, there was no actual violation of third party rights or threat to public safety, but the state adopted a discourse that viewed certain actions, images, or videos as a threat to public morality, justifying its intervention. Article 25 of the Cybercrime Law, which criminalizes "attacks

¹⁷ Press Release by Human Rights Organizations: Judicial Authorities Must Stop the "Recycling" of Opponents into New Cases after the End of Their Prison Sentences.
<https://cihrs.org/egypt-judicial-authorities-condemned-for-recycling-political-prisoners-into-new-cases-after-the-end-of-their-prison-term/>

¹⁸ Guide for Those Asking about the Mawada and Haneen Case: Report on the Harsh Sentences against Online Content Creators on Charges of Human Trafficking, *Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights*, August 24, 2021

on family values in society," was left open to broad, unchecked interpretation, becoming a gateway to criminalizing digital content based on shifting and politicized moral standards.

The role of the Public Prosecution in those cases has gone beyond the traditional function of the prosecution, to become a guardian of public morals. Its official statements did not stop at recounting facts or legal grounds, but used explicitly value-laden language such as "violating the values of the Egyptian family" and "spreading debauchery"—terms that carry no precise legal definition but are employed to create a state of prior condemnation among public opinion.

The courts, in turn, were not merely arenas for adjudicating charges, but were sometimes transformed into symbolic platforms, sending normative messages to society through their rulings about the "acceptable limits" of behavior. In some judgments, moral language emerged that went beyond the scope of legal texts, emphasizing concepts like "protecting the moral order" or "preserving values," thus making the judicial ruling itself a tool in the project of reshaping collective conscience.

The paradox is that this pattern of intervention is sometimes presented under the guise of "protecting women" or "defending the family," but the practical outcome is the hollowing out of the protection discourse, turning targeted women into objects of condemnation as "corruptors of values," instead of viewing them within the framework of individual rights or personal freedoms. Here lies the connection between this approach and broader policies adopted by the authorities, where moral discourse is invested in to expand control over the private sphere and bind it to the public realm.

In this way, the law transcends its role as a regulator of relations or guarantor of rights, to become a tool for recalibrating collective imagination and behavior—often marked by classist and gendered discrimination, a clear expression of biased standards in the "New Republic." The issue is no longer about a "body" violating the text, but about the "idea" or "desire" that may deviate from the preordained script. It is a form of power that precedes the act itself, working to shape consciousness and imagination in line with the established order.

This pattern is not an exclusively Egyptian exception; it can be observed in other authoritarian systems that use legal texts to confer legitimacy on processes of social disciplining. Yet the specificity of the Egyptian case lies in merging this moral dimension with the neoliberal context that empties rights of their substance and redefines them to serve the logic of control. Under this system, individual freedom is not a value in itself, but is conditional upon its conformity to the state's model of the "disciplined citizen."

5- Neoliberalism as Formal Justice: False Neutrality and the Erosion of Meaning

At the core of the neoliberal project, justice retreats from being a substantive value tied to fairness and equality to becoming mere formal procedures, confined to the existence of legal texts and procedural pathways, regardless of their content or actual effect. In this logic, justice becomes synonymous with access to the legal system—even if that system is incapable of producing any real fairness.

The neoliberal discourse promotes the idea of legal neutrality as a fundamental guarantee, presenting the law as a neutral tool and the market as an inherently fair mechanism. But this alleged neutrality is nothing more than a linguistic veil that conceals the persistence—and

reproduction—of power imbalances. Formal equality before the law does not translate into actual equality in rights or access to justice; rather, it may be used to justify unjust outcomes generated by the very structure itself.

This inconsistency appears clearly in economic laws, such as Investment Law No. 8 of 1997 (amended in 2017) ¹⁹, drafted in polished technical language with official justifications like “attracting capital” and “achieving growth.” In practice, however, it enabled the redistribution of wealth in favor of limited groups and granted investors legal immunities against real accountability, while the majority of citizens remained unable to access any equivalent protections.

This “formal justice” does not stop at investment laws. In cases of privatization and the sale of public assets, legal debates are often reduced to whether procedural requirements were met: Were official approvals issued? Were bidding steps followed? Meanwhile, the more important question—whether the deal truly served the public interest—is neglected. Administrative court rulings in some privatization cases, such as the annulment of the sales of “Tanta Linen” company or “Omar Effendi,” revealed a wide gap between the texts invoking “public utility” and the reality that redefined this utility in favor of capital. ²⁰

Reinterpreting concepts such as “public utility” or “public order” to align with market priorities is one of the most salient features of this transformation. Decisions granting investors vast tracts of land or exempting them from taxes and customs are presented as steps serving the “public interest,” while the poorest groups are excluded from that very definition of interest. ²¹

Within this logic, the law ceases to play the role of balancing interests, becoming instead a tool that legitimizes imbalance. Oversight and accountability mechanisms are deliberately weakened: civil society is restricted, the judiciary is neutralized, and parliament becomes a rubber stamp for executive authority. The slogan of the “rule of law” is deployed as a tool for disciplining marginalized groups, while economic elites receive actual protection under labels like “investment stability” or “market security.”

The danger lies in that this erosion of the concept of justice does not happen all at once, but through small accumulations: shifting the state’s economic role from “guarantor” to “facilitator,” amending legal texts to align with the interests of capital, and reshaping the public imagination so that justice is redefined as mere “compliance with correct procedures,” even when the outcome is manifest injustice.

In this context, society becomes less able to claim its rights, because the very language of justice has been redefined. The question is no longer “Did you obtain your right?” but rather “Did you follow the legal pathway?”—without asking the fundamental question: “Was the legal rule itself just?” This shift in the definition of justice empties discussions of fairness of substance and turns rights claims into purely administrative processes, detached from the essence of rights and politics.

¹⁹ Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. 19 (bis), on May 11, 1997.

²⁰ Counselor Hamdy Yassin Okasha, previously cited reference.

²¹ Fatma Ramadan and others, edited by Amr Adly and Fatma Ramadan, *The Rise and Decline of the Egyptian Labor Movement: Workers, Politics, and the Egyptian State (2006–2016)*, Al-Maraya for Cultural Production, 2017, p. 119 and later

6- Preliminary Conclusions: Toward Holding Neoliberal Law Accountable

This paper does not claim to offer a final answer. It represents a research entry point into a series that will further trace the trajectories of law in the neoliberal era, analyzing how it is reshaped to serve both market and power. It merely seeks to reveal preliminary features that make it impossible to treat law as a mere “regulatory tool” or “neutral texts” that can be understood in isolation from their political, economic, and social context.

Neoliberal transformations have not only altered the nature of the economy but have also redefined the law itself. It is no longer a guarantor of plurality and protection, but a mediator in reproducing inequality. It is no longer a canopy of rights, but a tool for unequal redistribution of privileges. It is no longer a constraint on power, but a language that masks and beautifies it, granting it formal legitimacy.

Law, under this transformation, has been used not only to curb opposition or regulate the political sphere, but also to codify deep social and economic changes: granting the market the upper hand in setting priorities, turning social protection into conditional privileges, and redefining the “right” as a “service” to be bought and sold. The Universal Health Insurance Law of 2018²², for example, presented the right to health in the form of a subscription system, so that access to healthcare became conditional on the ability to pay or join a financing scheme, rather than being recognized as an inalienable right.

In this context, it is futile to limit demands to “legal reform” or “updating legislation” if the very foundation on which such reform rests is itself a tool of bias. Any reform that does not touch the structure of law as a concept will continue to produce new texts that serve the same logic, even if they come under different banners.

This is what makes holding neoliberal law accountable a prerequisite for any project seeking to rebuild the meaning of justice. The issue is not only about the “executor of law” or its “scope of application,” but about “who writes the law?” “In whose interest is it written?” and “whose voice is excluded in its drafting?” These questions are not academic luxuries, but analytical tools that expose the political and economic structure that the law works to enforce.

What is therefore required is a dual accountability: holding the market accountable as a political actor, not just an economic one, and holding authority accountable for turning law into an instrument of hegemony. This accountability must reject the separation of the economic from the political, because it is precisely this separation that has allowed justice to be transformed from a social substance into a procedural façade.

Restoring meaning to justice requires a law that protects plurality instead of suppressing it, resists market overreach instead of merging with it, and bridges the gap between legal texts and the principle of fairness. Here, returning to international standards, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, becomes an important tool to reconnect the idea of rights with the social substance of justice, rather than settling for procedural formality.

In this sense, holding the law accountable must shift from mere criticism of texts or demands for partial reforms to a critique of the very structure that makes these texts possible and reproduces

²² Universal Health Insurance Law No. 2 of 2018

them. Any project to restore justice must begin here: with confronting the reality that law in the neoliberal era is no longer a guarantor of rights, but an instrument for reshaping society according to the measures of both market and power.