

EGYPT UPDATE No. 26

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CHRONICLES OF THE CONTINUED EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION OF 25 JANUARY 2011



Supporters of deposed President Mohamed Morsi attempt to block a street during a clash with Egyptian Security Forces in Nasr City, Cairo on January 8, 2014. (Photo credit: Virginie Nguyen Hoang/AFP/Getty Images)



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“Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will
make violent revolution inevitable.”

John F. Kennedy, President of the United States of
America. Address on the first Anniversary of the Alliance
for Progress, reception for the diplomatic corps of Latin
American Republics, 1962.

Egypt’s Continuing Saga

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I – Major Events that Took Place in November and December 2013

1. Daily incidents, many of a violent nature, have taken place since June 30, 2013 when the popular uprising against the Morsi government took place. That uprising took place in part in response to a speech made on July 24, 2013 by General el-Sisi. He asked the people, who were dissatisfied with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) regime and the prospect of a theocratic state, for a mandate for to the army so that it could remove the then-elected President Mohammad Morsi, establish a new government, and appoint a new president.¹ As stated in Updates 24 and 25, this was a military coup that had popular legitimacy in that there was no other legal way to impeach or remove the elected president. This was due to the fact that the 2012 Constitution that had just been adopted by referendum on December 22, 2012 had not yet entered into effect. But it was contrary to law nonetheless. This was a clash between popular revolutionary legitimacy and legality. The former won because it had might on its side. Since then, a state of confrontation has existed between the new Regime and the MB and its supporters. For all practical purposes, one could also use the expression that a “state of war” has existed since then. It is also likely to continue even though the confrontational strategies and tactics, some of which are described below, may change, particularly after the prospective presidential elections of 2014 and the legislative elections of 2015 describe in the Regime’s timetable in Update 20, Paragraph 16. A reasonable prediction, based on the confrontations that have taken place between the Regime and the MB since June 30, 2013, is that the presidential and legislative elections are likely to present an opportunity for increased violence between the two sides.
2. What follows below are a number of events which are important to understand the progression of the violent interactions between the Regime and the MB that has now

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extended to pro-democracy forces. What is described below are only the more salient events that took place in November and December 2013. For all practical purposes there has been a confrontation every day during these two months in as many as fifteen cities. The number of deaths and injuries has increased as both sides have resorted to deadly violence.



People fled a public bus in Cairo on January 3 after it was caught up in clashes between supporters of former President Mohamed Morsi and the police. (Photo credit: Virginie Nguyen Hoang/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images)

- On December 24, 2013, a bomb was placed outside a police station in the Delta city of el-Mansoura that left 16 people dead and over 130 injured.² There is no doubt that this was an indiscriminate act of terror-killing. The Sinai-based *Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis*, who are mentioned in Paragraph 19 below, released an online statement claiming responsibility for the attack. Without any investigation the government decided that the attack was conducted by the MB. On that basis, the next day Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Hossam Eisa read a statement on state television that officially declared the

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MB a organization.” No evidence of the MB’s involvement was presented, nor was there any justification offered for the Cabinet to make such a decision, which as discussed below (see Paragraph 12), is a matter for judicial determination. It is not within the power of the Executive Branch to make such a determination. In fact, a case is pending before the criminal court of Cairo to disband the Freedom and Justice Party, which will be heard on February 15, 2014. To the best of this writer’s knowledge, there is no case pending before a criminal court to decide on whether or not the Brotherhood is to also be deemed a “terrorist organization” within the meaning and applicability of Articles 86 – 99 of the Egyptian Criminal Code. This means that people participating in demonstrations believed to be organized by the MB as a designated “terrorist organization,” could face up to 5 years in prison and the leaders could face up to a life sentence and maybe even the death sentence. The government statement mentioned above referred to a number violent incidents, which the government claims have been committed by the MB over the last few years. While the Mansoura attack was unquestionably an egregious criminal attack, it was not the only one that has taken place in recent months.



A policeman stands at the site of the explosion in Mansoura on December 24, 2013 that killed at least a dozen and injured over 100. (Photo credit: AP/Ahmed Ashraf)

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- In September, a suicide blast was intended to kill Interior Minister Mohammad Ibrahim but did not succeed.³
- On December 13, 2013 a bomb exploded outside of a Security Force camp in Ismailiyah killing 1 and injuring 18.⁴
- On December 20, 2013 two Egyptian soldiers were killed along the border with Gaza at el-Mahdiya.⁵ One of the corpses was subsequently paraded along the streets on a stick in a clear show of contempt.
- On December 26, 2013 a car bomb exploded in a Cairo intersection, reportedly injuring five persons.⁶
- On December 29, 2013 a bomb outside an army base just north of Cairo wounded four soldiers.⁷
- More recently, three bombs detonated which targeted police and military convoys near Sheikh Zuweid on January 3, 2013 and injured four soldiers.⁸
- The same day, at least 13 people were killed and 55 people injured in clashes with security forces during pro-MB rallies in several Egyptian cities, including Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Fayoum, Minya and Ismailia.⁹

3. As a result of these events, a series of arrests have taken place throughout the country, which are too many to report. During the latter part of the month of December 26, 2013 alone, 27 MB supporters were arrested in the Nile Delta province of Sharkiya on charges of being members of a “terrorist organization.”¹⁰ The main evidence on which this was based was the distribution of pamphlets that were anti-Regime. The next day, on December 27, 2013, 90 Brotherhood members were arrested in the province of Gharbiya for being members of a “banned organization.”¹¹ The Ministry of Interior announced that 3 people had been killed and 265 arrested for protesting throughout the country. These numbers, however, were subsequently reevaluated and the death toll rose to 5, the number of arrests totaling 305.

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4. As of December 18, 2013 the security forces have been rounding up pro-democracy advocates, particularly from human rights and civil society organizations, and targeting in particular the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights because of a well-documented report the organization submitted to the U.N. in connection with the review of economic and social conditions in Egypt. A portion of that report was attached as an appendix to Update 25. A number of organization members have been arrested arbitrarily and a number of other human rights organizations have also been targeted with their leaders unjustifiably arrested. Many of these arrests and abuses are documented by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.¹²

- On January 9, 2013 Egyptian courts convicted 113 MB supporters for demonstrating against the Regime. Many of them have received as much as 3 year prison terms and high financial penalties. In a separate case 24 MB supporters were also sent to 3 years in prison over labor clashes.
- The Morsi trial, which is about to start, has been bolstered by a new charge of espionage leading to further demonstrations.



Supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and ousted Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi shout slogans against the military in front of Al Rayyan mosque, on the outskirts of Cairo, on December 27. (Photo credit: Reuters/Amr Abdallah Dalsh)

5. The situation of Egypt's Christian population also remains precarious. Many rang in the New Year with prayers for peace after months of the unrest described above, but many if not most, expressed no regrets over supporting the military-backed Regime that overthrew Morsi's government in July 2013.¹³ After security forces violently dispersed pro-MB protests in August, many Christians, churches, and Christian-owned property were targeted across the country, particularly in Upper Egypt, as described in greater detail in Updates 21-24. The perception that Christians were behind Morsi's overthrow was fueled by the appearance of Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II along with other Muslim religious leaders and politicians when Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, Egypt's current de facto leader, announced that he had removed Morsi from power. Much of the violence that ensued against Christians was conveniently blamed on the MB by the Regime, without much investigation or sufficient proof.¹⁴ Copts, who are mostly anti-MB and pro-Regime, will back the new Constitution in the upcoming referendum, according to Emad Gad, a Coptic analyst with the Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies.¹⁵ Whether the letter and the spirit of the law on religious equality will make a difference in the lives of Egypt's Christians, who have for decades complained of systematic discrimination, remains to be seen in 2014 and the years to come.



A picture taken on August 14 shows the facade of the Prince Tadros Coptic Church after being torched by unknown assailants in the central Egyptian city of Minya. (Photo credit: stringer/AFP/Getty Images)

II – The Confrontational Strategies and Tactics of the Regime and Its Opponents

6. As stated in Updates 24 (October 31, 2013) and 25 (December 7, 2013)¹⁶, the Regime is set on a confrontational strategy with the MB, and for that matter with any other group expressing opposition or dissent. This includes pro-democracy elements of society. There is an all-out effort by the Regime while it continues to face demonstrations and acts of violence whose originators are claimed by the Regime to be MB. These violent incidents have not, however, been adequately investigated by the Regime and the results of any investigations if they took place, have not been shared with the public (see Paragraph 11). Thus, the respective claims of the Regime and the MB become a public relations battle, as opposed to established facts, which leads to polarization.
7. The overall strategy of the Regime's repression of the MB and any other opposition is straightforward. It involves strong, swift, and decisive action. This means immediate action by Security Forces, backed if necessary by certain Army units from Central Command (which includes the larger Cairo area), at times the Presidential Guard (which has been involved in certain locations), and ultimately if needed by the Army's Special Forces (SA[°]EQA). Responses to quell any demonstration, public gathering, or even minor manifestations of public political expression, including student demonstrations on university grounds, are immediate and involve overwhelming force with the objective of swiftly ending whatever public manifestation of political expression is occurring.¹⁷ These political responses are the same in all cases, and no qualitative or quantitative distinctions are made, no more than there are distinctions made on the basis of who the protagonists are, how they

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act, or what positions they express. The clampdown is absolute and applies to all political groups.



Student protesters gather outside the main gate of Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt Sunday, December 1, 2013 before marching to Tahrir Square. (Photo credit: AP/Mohammed Asad)

8. The tactics of repression include: arbitrary arrests and detention, disappearing of political leaders, questionable and even obviously trumped-up criminal charges, violations of the right to counsel, and other procedural rights. All of this violates in some cases the letter of criminal procedure law and its spirit in others. Many of these measures are based on the controversial Law on Public Demonstrations (of November 24, 2013)¹⁸, and they violate constitutional principles going back to Egypt's Constitution of 1923 and up to the new 2013 Draft Constitution (which is to be submitted to a public referendum on or about January 15, 2014). Last, but not least, these repressive measures violate Egypt's obligations under the 1963 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).¹⁹

9. The tactics mentioned above have resulted in an untallied number of deaths and injuries believed to be caused by the excessive use of force. No substantially reported criminal or disciplinary actions have been taken against the Security Forces involved in these actions. The Prosecutor-General's Office and all of those under him have failed to act in accordance with what the law requires of them. Prosecutors' appointments and assignments have been driven by political motivation. Judicial independence, which includes prosecutors in the Egyptian criminal justice system, has been compromised. Even some judges have strayed away from fairness and impartiality by finding people guilty when there is doubt or little evidence, and by meting out excessive punishment. One such egregious case is the sentencing of 21 women to 11 years.²⁰ That sentence was later reduced by a judicial chamber to a suspended 1-year term. The judge in the first case who meted out these disproportionate sentences should have been brought up on disciplinary charges before the Senior Council of Judges.



Egyptian women supporters of ousted President Mohammed Morsi stand inside the defendants' cage in a courtroom in Alexandria, Egypt, Wednesday, November 27, 2013. (Photo credit: AP/Amira Mortada/El Shorouk Newspaper)

10. The specifics of the Regime's record of repression have been documented by several sources both internally and externally, and that is why human rights and civil society organizations have now been targeted by Security Forces. Many of these organizations have

been raided, their equipment destroyed, their staffs intimidated, and a number of arrests have been made.²¹ In short, the Security Forces are back to creating a climate of intimidation.

11. Surprisingly however the government has not compiled official documentation of violations of law and abuses of power on either side of this struggle. The Security Forces could document the provocation of the MB, their acts of violence against security officials and civilians, the violence against Copts, and the other actual and attempted acts of violence. This is both surprising and curious, particularly because the MB are quick to criticize the Security Forces, the Office of the Prosecutor General, and the Regime for specific violations. But the Regime may feel that it has gotten away with excessive use of force and likely crimes such as those committed at Rabaa al-Adawiya and al-Nahda squares on August 14, 2013 (see Egypt Updates 23, 24, and 25²²), and that it does not need documentation one way or the other, even though the two events mentioned above resulted in an estimated 1,000 civilian deaths and an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 injuries in the span of 72 hours. No investigation or fact-finding of these events has taken place to date. On the other hand, there were also several violent attacks by MB demonstrators against police officers and civilians that remained without official investigation and fact-finding. The public deserves to know, and those who committed crimes, no matter what side they are on, should be held accountable. It is believed that the Regime has rejected an international or fair, impartial, and independent national fact-finding commission. This rejection is hard to explain. One hypothesis is that society is too polarized and that no one would trust any such fact-finding exercise as being fair, impartial, and independent. Another is that both sides have elected to fight it out in the arena of public opinion and on their own respective terms. That approach, perhaps, better suits their differing political goals. Truth is necessary when justice and reconciliation are the goals, but it is inconvenient when political dominance is the end game.



Doctors at a newly-installed makeshift hospital hundreds of meters away from Cairo's Rabaa al-Adawiya Square urged authorities to provide more space to house the bodies of slain supporters of ousted President Mohamed Morsi. (Photo credit: Anadolu Agency)

12. The Regime appears to have yielded to its hard-liners who seem to believe that the present is a historic opportunity to destroy the MB. Their leaders include the head of General Intelligence and the Minister of Defense. It is believed that General el-Sisi is of a similar inclination but is subtler in his approach. The comprehensive approach of the Regime includes quelling any sort of public political expression and large-scale arrests of the leadership (estimated at over 4,000 from July 1 to December 30, 2013). Most of the senior MB leaders, including former President Morsi and the political leadership in the Office of Guidance (Maktab al-Irshad), are in prison subject to being prosecuted. They are likely to be found guilty and receive long prison sentences or even death sentences. The Freedom and Justice Party has been temporarily suspended pending a judicial determination expected July

15, 2014 which is likely to dissolve the party on grounds that it is a “terrorist organization”. There is no surer way to create martyrs, or to induce new adherents to the MB, as these measures force the movement to become more underground and decentralized, but at the same time more cohesive as members and supporters gather behind one single goal: to resist the military-dominated Regime.²³



Members of the Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau (*Maktab al-Irshad*).²⁴ (Photo credit: Bayehha blog www.bayheyya.blogspot.ca)

13. The Central Bank froze the accounts of reportedly over 1,000 non-governmental organizations reportedly linked to the MB. This includes a variety of charitable organizations as well as educational ones.²⁵ The government has also begun steps to seize over 140 Brotherhood affiliated schools and to also freeze the assets of over 130 of the MB leadership, in addition to those who have been arrested and charged with crimes and whose assets are reportedly frozen. Some of these assets include hospitals and medical centers that serve an estimated 2 million poor persons who are unable to get public medical assistance, including emergency care. They also include schools associated with the MB. The government has since announced that some of these organizations will be allowed to operate under the bureaucratic control of government ministries, including the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education.²⁶ What harm this will do to the poor persons who are dependent on these social and medical services is likely to be significant. This too will invite more

support for the MB. It should be noted that because the freezing of these assets is likely to block the work of many charitable and social groups that provide a variety of services ranging from medical to educational, the government is trying to allow these funds to continue to be used, but through the control of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Whether that will work with any degree of efficiency is yet to be established in view of the well-known bureaucracy of that ministry and its overall inefficiency.

14. The Regime's repressive measures have also taken on more bizarre manifestations. They include:

- President Morsi was charged with yet other crimes, such as supporting terrorism, conspiring with foreign governments against Egypt's national interests, and espionage²⁷.
- Unsubstantiated charges were levied against a variety of MB leaders, several of whom have since disappeared within the prison system.
- Some MB supporters then were arrested only for urged people to vote against the new constitution in the referendum.
- Pro-democracy advocates (who are not MB) Ahmed Maher, Ahmed Douma, Mohamed Adel, and Alaa Abdel Fattah were each sentenced to one year imprisonment for a peaceful demonstration for which a permit was not issued²⁸.
- Government controlled television announced that a public official claimed that the pro-democracy movement called the April 6 Movement, which helped start the January 25, 2011 "Revolution", was funded by secret foreign sources, including the United States' International Republican Institute.²⁹ This was done as a way of discrediting the motives of the pro-democracy movement and also to justify the conviction of three of its leaders as mentioned above.

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- Egypt's former Prime Minister Hesham Kandil was arrested on December 24, 2013 (presumably while he was in the process of fleeing the country via Sudan in fear of his life).³⁰



Political activists Ahmed Maher (in white hat), Ahmed Douma (L), and Mohamed Adel (R) of the 6 April Movement appear behind bars in Abdeen Court in Cairo. (Photo credit: Reuters)

- On January 1, 2014 prosecutors announced that they are investigating allegations by a prominent blogger who goes by the name of Ahmed Spider that a puppet named Alba Fahita (who plays a gossipy widow and has appeared regularly on Egyptian television) was sending coded messages to the MB in a television advertisement she appeared in for the company Vodafone Egypt. One of these alleged coded messages, as explained by the blogger during a television appearance, was an incitement to attack Coptic Christians, because the advertisement starts with a cactus tree suspiciously decorated for Christmas.³¹
- Authorities have arrested people for merely displaying pro-MB signs of paraphernalia. For example, a fifteen-year-old boy was arrested in early December after his teacher spotted a ruler with a pro-Morsi symbol inside his pencil case.³²
- On December 30, 2013 four Al-Jazeera English journalists, including an Australian, were detained by secret police for allegedly joining the MB and inciting riots around the country.³³

- In early November 2013, the private Egyptian television station CBC suspended the popular show by satirist Bassem Youssef after he mocked the current pro-military fervor in Egypt.³⁴
- Last September, security forces in southern Egypt captured a stork they suspected of spying because it had an electronic tracking device attached to it.³⁵ The stork was subsequently found dead just days later on a small island in the Nile.
- The Cabinet decision to label the MB organization a “terrorist organization” is beyond its authority since this is a matter for judicial determination (see Paragraph 12).³⁶
- The qualification contained in the Draft Constitution of 2013, that applies to every one of the rights enunciated therein, is that every right is subject to being “regulated by law.” In other words there are no constitutional rights that the legislature cannot curtail. This means that any legislature can put so many conditions on any given right that it would be tantamount to de facto elimination of said right. Yet no one seems to be aware of this absurdity. The Draft Constitution also provides for civilians to be tried before the military but not for the military to be subject to the civilian judicial process. It also provides for complete immunity for the Chairman of the SCAF, namely General el-Sisi who is presumably accountable before the military courts, even though there is a provision in military law that grants him immunity. He is, in essence, untouchable by the law.

15. In addition to being legally questionable and absurd, these measures are also likely to have counterproductive effects at home and abroad. The MB are mounting an international political public relations campaign. A legal team recruited by the MB held a press conference in London on January 6, 2014 regarding steps they are taking to counter the repressive measures that have been ongoing for months against the MB.³⁷ As mentioned in a recent New

York Times news report from January 5, 2014, the current measures against the MB will, instead of causing them to crack and disintegrate, force them to work and mobilize underground, which is what they did for most of their 85-year-old history. As a result the MB is becoming more decentralized, but also more cohesive in their rallying behind the single cause of resisting the current Regime.³⁸

16. As stated above, it is highly doubtful that all of this will eradicate or significantly weaken the MB movement. This assessment is based on four essential reasons. The first is that no amount of repression can eradicate a movement that is estimated to have in Egypt alone between 1 to 3 million members and between 3 and 4 million supporters and sympathizers. If anything, repression will bring them popular sympathy, new supporters, and new members. The second is that there is an unknown number of MB members and supporters all over the world. My guess is that the figure is likely to be no less than a million persons out of a total 9 million Egyptian expatriates, most if not all of whom are not within the Regime's reach. This may explain why the Regime chose to exclude Egyptian expatriates from the Constitutional Committee of 50, even though they are acknowledged voters. In fact, they were the only national constituency deliberately excluded from participating in the drafting of the new constitution. The third is that in an era of globalized information and social networking, events are reported almost instantaneously and the Regime cannot hide much. The final reason is the existence of an international civil society that supports basic human rights and fundamental freedoms everywhere in the world. There is no way that the Regime can suppress all these forces, hard as it may try, that will ultimately combine in their efforts in discrediting the Regime. All of these arguments, valid as they are, do not include what is even more valid one, namely: is this right? The answer is no. Might does not make right. The Regime has succeeded in creating a climate of intimidation and its repression has indeed been effective, but most of its means and methods are wrong. The MB is back to where it was in the struggles for survival under Nasser, but the Regime is mistaken in its

belief that they have succeeded in their goal of eradicating the MB. They will continue to fight back as they have throughout their history and the nation will not be better for it. Reconciliation and not repression should be the goal.

III. Geopolitical Factors and Their Internal Consequences

17. The reservoir of support that the Regime had on June 30, 2013 is slightly eroding at home even though the majority of the people are opposed to the MB and support the Regime. Egyptians are simply fed-up with instability, and this feeling is what supports the Regime.
18. The external support for the Regime derives from Egypt's strategic weight in the Arab world, its role as the insurer of peace with Israel, and its potential role as a counterweight to Iran's growing influence in the region. But all three are aleatory, because geopolitical considerations are quick to change. Reality on the ground is ultimately more outcome-determinative than political speculations. It is difficult to assess how long the Regime will be able to get away with its repressive measures without feeling external pressures to desist from the. Following are certain considerations that will impact Egypt and the Regime.
19. The Egyptian Second Army is still battling a guerilla war against foreign and local elements in the northern Sinai Peninsula. These elements reportedly consist of members affiliated with al-Qaeda referred to as Ansār Beit al-Maqdis (Partisans of Jerusalem), local Bedouin tribes, and some Hamas elements from Gaza. The attacks by these elements have resulted in a steady stream of Egyptian military casualties. In the short run it does not seem that these brave troops are likely to effectively protect themselves from these guerilla fighters, let alone defeat them.
20. While this is taking place on the southern border of Gaza, on its northern border skirmishes between Gazans and Israeli forces have been ongoing. Israeli air and ground attacks have taken their toll on Gaza civilians, including women and children, and on civilian

targets. There is by now a consistent pattern of Israeli reprisals, which even though is in violation of International Humanitarian Law, that state has consistently gotten away with. This apparent immunity extends back to “Operation Cast Lead” of December 2008 – January 2009 that caused a reported 1,300 civilian deaths, 6,500 injuries, and 20,000 civilian houses and public buildings to be destroyed or damaged. All of that destruction was in retaliation for an alleged 4,000 to 6,000 projectiles of different types (missiles, mortars, and the like) fired into Israel over a five-year period that resulted in only 6 deaths (2 military, 2 armed settlers, and 2 civilians).³⁹

21. The relevance of the above is the perception by Gazans that the Egyptian military has consistently acted against them in support of Israel in exchange for U.S. arms and U.S. support for the military. The continued squeezing of Gaza by Israel and Egypt smacks to Gaza’s residents of an unholy alliance. This perception is not restricted to Gaza, however. Many Egyptians, Palestinians, and Arabs agree with this assessment. This explains why al-Qaeda affiliated elements and others are fighting the Egyptian military in the Sinai. The extent of the conflicts leads the Egyptian military to be fearful that the Northern Sinai is in danger of being overrun by Gazans. This seems to be the preferred way out of their besieged narrow territory with its extremely high population density and limited access to food and supplies due to the Egypt abetted Israeli blockade. In a perverse way this Northern Sinai situation and Egypt’s stance on controlling Gaza is enhancing Egypt’s strategic importance to Israel and the U.S. But it would be a tragic mistake if Egypt would be drawn into a n outright confrontation with Gazzans, albeit a segment of them, namely the military wing of Hamas. Attacks by Egyptian forces on Gaza would have negative consequences in Egypt, in the Arab world, and in the Muslim world as a whole.



Egyptian soldiers use bulldozers to search for tunnels on the border with the Gaza Strip. (Photo credit: Said Khatib/AFP/Getty Images)

22. These and other geo-political factors, such as Egypt's potential role in offsetting Iran's growing influence in the region, makes the U.S., the E.U. states, and the Arab states turn a blind eye to the Regime's repressive strategies and tactics, even when they know that they are counterproductive and will negatively affect the Regime's legitimacy.

IV. The Political Timetable

23. The Regime is encouraged by the apparent external support it is receiving from the U.S., Europe, Russia, and some Arab states. It is moving towards what it calls normalization based on its timetable, discussed in Update 20, Paragraph 16. On January 2014 there will be a referendum on the new 2013 Constitution, presidential elections in 2014, and legislative elections in 2015 (assuming this order is kept). General el-Sisi is likely to resign his military post and run for president as a civilian. He has large popular support and would win without

a doubt by a large plurality. But those urging him to do so, particularly those in the SCAF, must know that even if he wins by a landslide, he will inevitably face serious economic and social problems that no individual can solve in a short period of time.

24. Popular pressure is mounting to end this transitional period and close the revolutionary chapter that was opened on January 25, 2011. Stability at any cost is what the majority of the people want. They see General el-Sisi as the symbol of stability and also as the leader capable of preserving it. Indeed, recent reports from an educational seminar organized by the Egyptian Moral Affairs Department of the Armed Forces indicate that el-Sisi will almost certainly run for president. His assumed successor as Chairman of the SCAF is Lieutenant-General and current Chief of Staff Sedky Sobhy.⁴⁰⁴¹

V – The Overlooked Economic Crisis

25. All of the above does not help the deteriorating economic situation. That situation, consistently referred to in almost every Egypt Update for the last two years, has been overlooked by every government since January 2011. Egypt presently survives because of financial support from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, but this financial support only covers the government's shortfall and financial need. It does not go towards rebuilding the economy.
26. The Regime has not developed a plan to address the crisis that until now has been overtaken by the confrontational events discussed above. The economic crisis has its roots in the corruption of the Mubarak regime. No one has yet assessed the depth and breadth of the economic crisis, let alone offered a plan to address it. Its impending nature may manifest itself in rising food costs, food shortages, and rising inflation. This would lead to food riots, large-scale group criminality, and the likelihood that the MB will take advantage of such a situation to destabilize the Regime. The risk is that society will disintegrate. This is why the

Regime needs to seriously focus on the economy instead of putting all its energies into the struggle with the MB.



General Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi had previously left some doubt about whether he would run for president. (Photo credit: Mohamed El-Shahed/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images)

¹ New York Times, *Egyptian General Calls for Mass Protests*, July 24, 2013, available at:

² New York Times, *Egyptian Officials Point at Islamist Group After Blast at Police Building*, December 24, 2013, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/25/world/middleeast/egypt-car-bomb.html>.

³ BBC News, *Egypt's Minister Mohammed Ibrahim survives bomb attack*, September 5, 2013, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23971239>.

⁴ Reuters, *Car bomb kills one police officer in Ismailia*, December 12, 2013, available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/12/us-egypt-explosion-idUSBRE9BB10Q20131212>.

⁵ Associated Press, *2 Egypt Soldiers Killed Fighting Sinai Militants*, December 20, 2013, available at: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/2-egypt-soldiers-killed-fighting-sinai-militants>.

⁶ Ahram Online, *Bus explodes in Cairo's Nasr City, leaving 5 injured*, December 26, 2013, available at: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/90060.aspx>.

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³⁷ The legal team in London announced they had filed a case with the International Criminal Court against the military-backed regime in Egypt for allegedly having committed crimes against humanity since the summer of 2013. It is unlikely that this will succeed, since Egypt is not a party to the ICC's Rome Statute. The Court, however, may have jurisdiction over a case if it receives a declaration from a non-party accepting the Court's jurisdiction for that particular case. The legal team further argued in the press conference that Morsi's government remains legitimate despite the military overthrow, and that they have issued a declaration on behalf of Morsi's government to the ICC. The Globe and Mail, *Egyptian regime accused of killing at least 1,120 in claim to ICC*, January 6, 2014, available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/lawyers-file-claim-in-icc-against-egypts-military-backed-regime/article16204039/>.

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