



The Tahrir Institute
for Middle East Policy

UNMET DEMANDS, TENUOUS STABILITY

EGYPT FIVE YEARS AFTER JANUARY 25



THE TAHRIR INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY

The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP), a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization, is dedicated to understanding and supporting Middle Eastern countries undergoing democratic transitions and committed to informing international policymakers and the public of developments in these countries.

TIMEP is fully registered and acknowledged under Section 501(c)(3) in the District of Columbia. For more information about TIMEP's mission, programming, or upcoming events, please visit www.timep.org.

This report is the product of the collaborative efforts of TIMEP's staff and fellows.

UNMET DEMANDS, TENUOUS STABILITY

Introduction	4
The Public Sphere, Media, and Political Engagement	5
Electoral Politics	10
Legislation and Rule of Law	15
Rights and Freedoms	19
Sectarianism	24
Gender and Sexuality	28
Security	33
Economy	38

INTRODUCTION

After five years of protests, struggle, and change in government cabinets, parliaments, and presidents, Egypt is nowhere near where many had hoped when Egyptians took to the streets on January 25, 2011. Given the tumultuous environment in the Middle East and North Africa and particularly the rise of the Islamic State and the ongoing conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, many observers misdiagnose the Arab Spring as a mistake. This faulty view assumes that had the series of uprisings—starting in Tunisia on December 17, 2010—not occurred, the apparent stability under authoritarian rule in these countries would have endured for the foreseeable future. It mistakenly views the current conflicts, civil wars, insurgencies, and the reinstatement of authoritarianism in some countries as outcomes of the uprising, rather than as symptoms of longstanding problems and challenges facing these countries which had led to the uprisings but were never properly addressed.

Unfortunately, this misperception has led many international policy makers to juxtapose security and stability on one hand and freedom and democracy on the other—and to prioritize the former side. This perspective ignores recent history, when ostensibly stable regimes collapsed after a few weeks of protests.

This report challenges these assumptions by looking closely at all aspects of governance in Egypt: political engagement, rule of law, rights and freedoms, minority rights, gender equality, security and economic stability. The aim is twofold: to summarize how, despite the aspiration for change that emerged on January 25, 2011, Egypt has arrived at its current state; and to provide recommendations for how to move toward fulfillment of this aspiration in the current context.

In the eight sections of this report, we provide a brief background of the conditions before 2011, followed by a review of the developments over the past five years, and analysis to explain the factors and logics that have driven these developments. Each section concludes with recommendations of priority action points for Egyptian and international policy makers.

This report is based on the findings of long-term research projects conducted at the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy. Our research strategy follows a systematic process of data gathering, documentation, and analysis, upon which we formulate our advocacy positions. We begin our research with thorough documentation, as volatile situations and changing governments and rulers in Egypt have caused many political factions to attempt to cast recent history in their own terms. Per TIMEP's mission, we are committed to highlighting local voices and understanding internal dynamics and nuance; thus, all our work is conducted in close collaboration with local analysts, researchers, journalists, and civil society actors.

THE PUBLIC SPHERE, MEDIA, AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Background

In the decade prior to 2011 Egypt saw a variety of limited openings in its political environment that resulted in increased public discussion of the government and its performance. Independent newspapers emerged, some quite critical such as *al-Dostour* and *Al-Masry Al-Youm*. The opening of media space—coupled with external pressures on official media that came with the introduction of satellite news, particularly Al Jazeera—helped create a more diverse media environment, exposing the population to more critical political narratives.

Egypt also witnessed growing political activism on the street. Preceding the U.S. invasion of Iraq, activists organized a number of protests against the war. That movement eventually came to be the antecedent for the Kefaya (“Enough!”) movement that called on then-President Hosni Mubarak not to pursue an additional term in office in 2005 and preventing his son Gamal from taking power. While Mubarak was re-elected and opposition candidate Ayman Nour was later imprisoned by the regime, the 2005 election was the first multi-candidate presidential election in Egypt and public criticism of the regime reached new heights. That year’s parliamentary elections also led to unprecedented gains for the Muslim Brotherhood, as they won nearly a fifth of the seats, though widespread government rigging in 2010 erased these gains.

Economic, social, and governance issues led to other protests, some of which became widespread and lasting campaigns. Activists joined laborers demanding pay raises, most notably in the general strike in Mahalla in April 2008, which birthed the April 6 Youth Movement. A wave of recorded incidents of police violence culminated in 2010 when police in Alexandria publicly beat to death a young man named Khaled Said who had uploaded a video of police corruption to the Internet. Images of his beaten body led to widespread condemnation of police brutality, and the Facebook page “We are all Khaled Said” was widely shared. This site—along with numerous other groups of activists—called for protests on January 25, 2011, Egypt’s annual Police Day holiday. Domestic momentum, coupled with the inspiring example of Tunisians successfully overthrowing their own longtime dictator, led to massive participation in the January 25 protests and eventually to Mubarak’s overthrow.

THE GOVERNMENT’S EFFORTS TO LIMIT ACCESS TO ACCURATE INFORMATION HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE, BUT EGYPTIANS ARE WELL AWARE THAT THE DEMANDS OF THE 2011 REVOLUTION REMAIN UNMET.

Developments

Immediately following the overthrow of Mubarak, political space in Egypt was hotly contested. Activists sought to maintain their momentum through control of the streets, staging regular protests and clashing with the police and military. The military held meetings with a number of activist groups and political parties, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, while simultaneously subjecting scores of activists to military tribunals. The military faced its most visceral and direct criticism in modern history as the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, the body that ran the country following Mubarak's fall, was criticized in the press and social media.¹ The Wafd party's newspaper went so far as to publish a headline saying "The People Want the Head of the Field Marshal."

Despite rumors of postponement, elections were held for parliament in phases from November 2011 to February 2012 and for president in May and June 2012. While far from perfect, turnout was high, the races were genuinely competitive, and voters were generally enthusiastic about the process. The Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party won a plurality of seats in parliament and their candidate, Muhammad Morsi, won the presidency.

From Mubarak's resignation in February 2011, through the elections period, and until Morsi's removal from office in the summer of 2013, the media in Egypt was highly diverse. Television channels represented an array of viewpoints. Many new media outlets emerged during this time. Comedian Bassem Youssef ridiculed the military, the parliament, and Morsi in an unprecedented fashion, growing his act from YouTube to a smash weekly television show. Supporters of the Brotherhood did deploy old legal tactics against Youssef and others—Youssef faced criminal charges for "insulting the presidency," but never spent time in prison and was never convicted.

The Brotherhood-led parliament drafted a new constitution, as required by the transitional constitutional amendments passed by referendum after Mubarak's ouster. In late November and early December 2012, large protests against the new draft took place outside the presidential palace due to its perceived attempts to Islamize the state. The Brotherhood's supporters attacked protestors and reportedly captured and then tortured some of them by the palace. During this time, the security forces wavered in their support for Morsi, alternately attacking protestors, standing by observing clashes between pro- and anti-government demonstrators, and even playing football with protestors violating curfew in Port Said. The constitution was easily approved by referendum in December 2012 and came into force that month.

In April 2013 a youth-led movement called Tamarod (“Rebellion”) was formed under the leadership of Mahmoud Badr. Tamarod called for Morsi’s resignation and early presidential elections, and launched a petition drive with those demands. The organization operated freely and openly in spite of its calls for Morsi’s resignation, and claimed to have collected 22 million signatures. (It has since been widely reported that Tamarod had the support of the security apparatus and various prominent businessmen.)

On June 30, 2013, the first anniversary of Morsi’s inauguration, there were mass protests in support of Tamarod’s petition demands. The Muslim Brotherhood and its allies organized smaller but substantial protests supporting Morsi continuing in office. On July 3, Morsi was forced from office and arrested by the Egyptian military on the orders of the head of the armed forces, Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah El Sisi. Sisi and the coalition of politicians that supported him closed all Islamist television channels immediately upon the announcement of Morsi’s overthrow.

THE DROP IN PROTESTS SINCE THE SUMMER OF 2013 IS PARTLY A PRODUCT OF THE GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN, BUT ANOTHER DETERRENT TO PROTESTING IS THE CURRENT LACK OF FAITH IN THE BENEFITS OF PROTEST.

Pro-Morsi protests continued for several weeks, centered around a sit-in at Raba’a al-Adaweya Square in Cairo’s Nasr City neighborhood. There were a number of clashes between protestors and the security apparatus that left dozens of protestors dead. This culminated with the brutal clearing of the demonstration at Rabaa on August 14, in which around 1,000 protestors were reportedly killed. The security forces arrested nearly all prominent members of the Brotherhood, including Supreme Guide Mohammed Badie.

The government—headed by interim President Adly Mansour and Prime Minister Hazem al-Beblawi, both appointed by Sisi—passed a law that heavily restricted the right to protest and which has been used to justify the arrest and imprisonment of many activists. Attempts by students to protest on university campuses resulted in frequent, bloody clashes throughout the 2013-14 school year. The forcefulness of the crackdown on dissent has intimidated many and dampened the appetite of activists to continue to take to the streets, and public opinion generally supported the government’s actions.² While labor unrest regularly erupts, these strikes and demonstrations are frequently limited in scope or occur far from the capital, limiting media exposure.

The media that survived the clampdown has been largely pro-government since the military ousted Morsi, with a few exceptions. The press has at times criticized police brutality and highlighted detainees who die from torture while in custody. The authorities have regularly harassed journalists, with a number of them imprisoned. Dozens have been

assaulted.³ The new anti-terrorism law sets penalties for journalists who publish reports on terrorist attacks that contradict official accounts.⁴

As January 25, 2016, approached, the government appeared apprehensive about possible large-scale demonstrations, an inadvertent admission of its failures and insecurity about the level of support it enjoys. Security forces preemptively raided apartments and detained activists ahead of the fifth anniversary of the uprisings, openly declaring that their goal was to reduce the likelihood of protests on January 25.

Analysis

Political debate and activism in Egypt have ebbed and flowed over the past several years. The government's efforts to limit access to critical, accurate information has been somewhat effective, but Egyptians are well aware that the demands of the 2011 revolution remain unmet. The drop in protests since the summer of 2013 is partly a product of the government crackdown using both violence and prisons to punish government opponents. However, another deterrent to protesting is the current lack of faith in the benefits of protest. From the perspective of the average citizen, Egyptians have undertaken two uprisings to overthrow their president and neither instance has led to an improvement in their quality of life.

As the economic situation continues to deteriorate the government will likely prioritize measures that offset hardship for the most vulnerable citizens. The military, over the past few months, has been selling food below market prices in working class areas in an effort to offset the substantial increase in the cost of basic commodities. Given the drop in revenues from tourism, the Suez Canal, and potentially from Gulf supporters, the government may be forced to pull back on its largesse, which risks exposing everyday Egyptians to even greater hardship and risks exposing the government to their wrath.

While the parliament is composed primarily of government supporters and the media broadly continues to endorse government policies, two things must be understood. First, the government is not a unified entity. Within the government there exist competing interests seeking to expand their respective share of power in the Egyptian state. Secondly, censorship and repression are not guaranteed mechanisms for preventing opposition and resistance. Mubarak-era restrictions on expression, the media, and protest were effective for thirty years, but eventually succumbed to a wave of public frustration and anger.

Recommendations

1. Guarantee fair trials and due process to those currently detained, and ensure that only those convicted of actual crimes remain in detention.
2. Train police to respect human rights and to adhere to best practices for crowd control to reduce violence, which only serves to radicalize the oppressed.
3. Repeal the Protest Law and allow peaceful protest as a means to express grievances.
4. Amend the anti-terrorism law to remove sections that prohibit the press from differing with the state's official characterization of events.
5. Cease harassment of journalists and respect freedom of the press and freedom of speech for Egyptian citizens.

¹ Adel Iskandar, "A Year in the Life of Egypt's Media." *Jadaliyya*, January 26, 2012. http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3642/a-year-in-the-life-of-egypts-media_a-2011-timeline.

² Timothy Kaldas, "Dwindling Support for Egypt's Political Prisoners." *TIMEP*, December 19, 2014. <http://timep.org/commentary/dwindling-support-egypts-political-prisoners/>.

³ Basil El-Dabh, "Egypt's Media Crackdown and the New Constitution." *TIMEP*, January 24, 2014. <http://timep.org/analysis/media-crackdown/>.

⁴ Mai El-Sadany, "Yet Another Terrorism Law." *TIMEP*, July 6, 2015. <http://timep.org/commentary/yet-another-terrorism-law/>.

ELECTORAL POLITICS

Background

Prior to the January 25 Revolution in 2011, corruption abounded in the patronage network under President Hosni Mubarak. Under Mubarak, the head of the permanent majority National Democratic Party (NDP), elites competed over state resources through a controlled political sphere. The competition took different forms as the regime oscillated between moments of greater liberalism and greater restriction.

In 2005, constitutional amendments allowed for multiparty but uncompetitive elections for both parliament and the presidency. Candidates affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood won nearly 20 percent of the seats in parliament, and a small but vocal movement galvanized around Ayman Nour for the presidency. After the elections, the state reasserted its hegemony over politics, jailing Nour in December and rigging the 2010 parliamentary contest. This arrangement was finally upended by the protests in January 2011, which led to Mubarak's resignation, the NDP's dissolution, and the sitting parliament being disbanded due to its links to the old regime.

Developments

With many of the former ruling elite removed from the political arena, the country was left with a political vacuum. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) stepped in to fill this void, proposing to govern only until a new constitution had been ratified and a new president and parliament elected. The frustration that many Egyptians felt with the military, which had long supported the regime despite its eventual rejection of Mubarak, led to skepticism and discontent (particularly among activists) with its return to power. Determined to continue the revolution, activists and revolutionaries pushed for a quick end to military rule and began forming political entities to compete for control of the state. This initial period of pluralism saw the formation of tens of new parties and movements, representing almost all segments of the political, religious, and ideological spectra in Egyptian society. Amid the political upheaval, Egyptians overwhelmingly approved a package of constitutional amendments promulgated by the military in March 2011 that would see the SCAF manage the transition process.

Despite the blossoming of differing political views, and partially as a result of their still-nascent development, the 2011-12 elections for the People's Assembly and the Shura Council—the two houses of the Egyptian parliament—were

dominated by Islamists, who were better organized due to their preexisting logistical and political structures, and their long experience of opposition and grassroots work. The Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) and their allies won 47 percent of seats the lower house of parliament and established control over the committee drafting the new constitution, and the Nour Party, a Salafist group, won more than a quarter of the seats.

The growing Islamist trend in the government caused some unease among non-Islamist, centrist, and liberal politicians and their constituencies. Despite their apprehensions, non-Islamist factions attempted to work with the Brotherhood and other Islamists, but efforts were met with broken promises, road-blocking, and deliberate sidelining by the Islamist political groups. These efforts (and their failure) were epitomized in the Constituent Assembly; dissolved in April 2012 for its bias toward Islamist currents, its negotiations through November of that year were marred by contention and walk-outs from non-Islamist parties.

THIS COMBINATION OF CENTRALIZED POWER, SHRINKING POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT, AND GENERAL POLITICAL APATHY HAS LED TO THE RETURN OF A MUBARAK-ERA POLITICAL SYSTEM.

The judiciary was also concerned, and in June 2012 disbanded the People's Assembly—ostensibly due to the unconstitutionality of the 2011 electoral law—only two days before the FJP's second-choice candidate, Muhammad Morsi, defeated Mubarak's last prime minister, Ahmed Shafiq, for the presidency by less than four percent of the vote. Despite rocky relations with state institutions, the Islamist blocs had the upper hand in the political sphere and the new, purportedly Islamist constitution was ratified with 63.8 percent approval (33 percent turnout) during Morsi's tenure as president. However, growing disillusionment with Morsi's rule and apprehension over indirect Muslim Brotherhood control of the state led thousands of Egyptians to take to the streets, culminating in massive mobilization on June 30, 2013 to call for Morsi's ouster. In a swift political shift reminiscent of the January 25 Revolution, Morsi was removed from office, the FJP-dominated Shura Council was dissolved, and the FJP and Brotherhood were later banned.

Once again the military stepped in to fill the political void. Abdel-Fattah El Sisi, who had been appointed by Morsi as minister of defense in August 2012, created an interim government and laid out a three-step roadmap for transition to civilian rule. The roadmap mirrored the earlier SCAF plan, calling for a new constitution, new parliamentary elections, and new presidential elections. The brief period that ensued saw some pluralism despite the lack of legislature, with figures, such as Nobel Peace Prize-winning Mohamed El Baradei serving as vice president and other opposition voices holding cabinet positions. However, the political atmosphere around the transitional road map, particularly amid strident calls and demonstrations for Morsi's reinstatement, increasingly hearkened back to the Mubarak era of repression, especially

after the violent dispersal of the Muslim Brotherhood sit-in in Raba'a al-Adaweya Square.¹ As under Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak, a military-backed candidate—Sisi—won the presidency with 96 percent of the vote (47 percent turnout).² Parliamentary elections were postponed, allowing Sisi to issue laws unilaterally for a year and half.³

Parliamentary elections could not be postponed indefinitely, though, and balloting began in October 2015. However, public interest in politics had receded since 2011, with at most 28 percent of eligible Egyptians participating. Political involvement also declined as some parties opposed to the regime boycotted the elections; the FJP was banned for being a terrorist group, and its allies either were banned or boycotted. This left the competition largely in the hands of groups that repeatedly sought to build a single, pro-regime voting bloc and to return to the perfunctory support of the president seen in Mubarak-era parliaments. Despite the apparent unity, there are centers of support around influential individuals or state institutions, which compete for influence within the coalition. The election, marred by corruption and vote-buying, led to a parliament populated with noticeably more businessmen and retired officers from the army and police than were seen even in the last NDP parliament. Thus, the campaign and results of the parliamentary races resembled the legislative system under the NDP more than the pluralism that characterized the 2011 parliament, though with a greater representation for women, youth, and Christians.⁴

Analysis

The developments over the last five years that have caused the political scene to resemble the pre-2011 situation can be explained by two interlinked processes. The first of these is the increasing centralization of power, which has remained in the hands of the military. Even as civilians moved into parliament and then the presidency, the SCAF remained a political force, declaring that it could exercise a veto over the new constitution and that military matters were exempt from government oversight. Civilian participation (particularly outside of the elite class) in formal politics was further sidelined by the 2014 decision to proceed with presidential elections in the absence of an elected legislature and the subsequent delay of parliamentary elections, which led to Sisi's rule by diktat in 2014 and 2015. The absence of municipal elections and representatives for the past five years—marked by the disbandment of local councils, the continued absence of mayoralities, and the enduring practice of appointing provincial governors (currently dominated by former members of security forces)—further entrenches the distance between citizens and centers of power. A continued lack of accountability for corruption in past regimes (aside from a May 2014 conviction of Mubarak and his sons for embezzlement⁵) leaves the door open for the commission of similar offenses.

The second process has been the restriction of the embryonic political pluralism that developed in the wake of the January 25 Revolution. While the current political space appears much less restrictive than the one-party rule seen under the NDP (and, indeed, there are more political parties in parliament than during the Mubarak era), all major parties and blocs share a generally pro-state platform and ideology—support for the security services, a major role for the state in the economy, and (at least so far) an endorsement of Sisi's presidency. This declining pluralism stems from legislative mechanisms, like the discouragement of political organizing under the 2015 electoral law; political mechanisms, such as the criminalization of anti-regime sentiments; and affective mechanisms, like framing support for the regime as a nationalist and moral obligation. The number of elections held over the past five years has also contributed to the phenomenon through depleting party finances and energy while disillusioning voters, who see little point in involving themselves with legislative bodies that will likely be dissolved before completing their reformist mandate.

This combination of centralized power, shrinking political involvement, and general political apathy have led to the return of a Mubarak-era political system. Much like the regime before the January 25 Revolution, the current Egyptian state is run by a military president presiding over a parliament that is largely ideologically homogenous (or lacking in any clearly-defined ideology). However, the dissolution of the NDP, the upending of formal politics, and the personal character of Sisi's rise have exacerbated tensions between the most dominant ministries (Ministry of Interior, Justice, and Defense), which Mubarak expertly managed during his presidency. In return for acquiescence, Sisi's regime has reverted to the patronage-based support that enriched NDP officials under Mubarak. Not surprisingly, acolytes of the previous regime have come out in support of Sisi. As many as 150 former NDP members are reported to be seated in parliament, apparently reclaiming their positions in the patronage network.⁶

Recommendations

1. Review and amend laws governing local councils to allow for legitimate, popular channels of expression and assembly. No local or regional representation has been assembled since January 2011.
2. Amend national electoral laws to encourage political organization and open real political space for rising secular-civilian and opposition groups. This is critical to ensure necessary and healthy channels for sociopolitical dissent.
3. Investigate and prosecute instances of corruption in Mubarak-era or other officials.
4. Increase the transparency of parliament by broadcasting sessions and allowing reporters consistent access to sessions and members.
5. Both the Egyptian government and international community should support civil society efforts to build the capacity of political organizations.

¹ For more on the political atmosphere at this time, see “The Political Sphere, Media, and Political Engagement” in this report.

² For a wealth of information on the 2014 presidential elections, see TIMEP’s Presidential Elections Monitoring Project, <http://timep.org/presidential-elections-monitoring/>.

³ For more on Sisi’s ability to issue laws in the absence of a parliament, see “Legislation and the Rule of Law” in this report. That section comes from TIMEP’s Legislation Tracker project, <http://www.timep.org/legislationtracker>.

⁴ For more information on Egypt’s 2015 parliamentary elections, see TIMEP’s Parliamentary Elections Project, <http://www.timep.org/pem>.

⁵ For more see Hossam Bahgat, “The Mubarak mansions,” Mada Masr, May 20, 2014, <http://www.madamasr.com/sections/politics/mubarak-mansions>.

⁶ Youssry al-Azabawy, “Egypt’s new Parliament: Marriage renewed between NDPs, businessmen,” *Egypt Independent*, September 12, 2015. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-s-new-parliament-marriage-renewed-between-ndps-businessmen>.

LEGISLATION AND RULE OF LAW

Background

Save for an 18-month break between 1980 and 1981, a state of emergency governed Egypt beginning in 1967 under the country's infamous Emergency Law (Law No. 162 of 1958) and remaining in force until May 31, 2012. Under the state of emergency, the authority of the security apparatus was heightened, various civil and human rights were constrained, and political activity was significantly inhibited. Throughout his presidency, Hosni Mubarak legitimated the extension of the state of emergency by citing to the threat of terrorism and the power gains made by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Prominent legislation passed during the Mubarak regime also included the Law to Combat Terrorism (Law No. 97 of 1992) which defined terrorism very broadly and expanded the concepts of preventive detention and the trial of civilians in military and emergency state security courts. State control of private syndicates was furthered by Law No. 100 of 1993 and prison sentences for journalists for various publication-related offenses were set forth by Law No. 93 of 1995.¹

BETWEEN JAN 2014 - JAN 2016



**263 LAWS ISSUED
BY SISI**

Struggling with a history of heavy-handed political interference and attempted cooptation since the days of the Nasser regime, the Egyptian judiciary enjoyed a mixed record of fluctuations between politicization and judicial independence.² With low voter turnout and continued domination by the National Democratic Party in the parliaments throughout the Mubarak regime, little reform came as a result of the country's legislature. Even the 2005 elections, which gave the appearance of slight political opening in light of the election of Muslim Brotherhood candidates as independents, were ultimately fraudulent and only contributed to the hollow nature of the parliament as an institution.³

Developments

In the wake of the January 25 Revolution, on February 13, 2011, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) suspended the 1971 Constitution by decree. In March, a referendum for an interim constitutional declaration was held

and a 62-article interim constitution, which granted the military full presidential authority, was issued. Elections for parliament were held later that year.

March 2012 brought the appointment of a 100-member constituent assembly to draft the country's new constitution; the body was dissolved one month later amid accusations that it was dominated by Islamist actors. In June, a new constituent assembly was established and began drafting a constitution that was approved by referendum in December 2012. The 2012 Constitution made no mention of international law, allowed the trial of civilians before military courts for "crimes that harm the Armed Forces," guaranteed adherents of the "divine religions" the right to practice religious rites and establish places of worship, included detailed language on the principles of Islamic sharia, set presidential terms at four years with only one reelection, and prohibited the insult or abuse of all religious messengers and prophets, among other provisions.⁴

MANY OF THE DECREES ISSUED BY SISI SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE PRODUCT OF A DIVERSE AND WELL-RESEARCHED PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE PROCESS, RATHER THAN EXECUTIVE DECISION-MAKING.

Then-President Muhammad Morsi issued a controversial constitutional declaration in November 2012 that immunized prior and future presidential decrees from judicial review. This action, coupled with the removal of the prosecutor-general, raised serious questions on the government's commitment to the rule of law and respect for the judiciary. Military trials of civilians continued, "defamation of religion" increasingly became a tool by which to constrain the freedom of expression of individuals, and the harassment of journalists was reported. Little was done in the way of transitional justice or security sector reform.⁵

Following Morsi's ousting, the constitution was suspended and a new 50-member constituent assembly was appointed in September 2013 to draft a new constitution. A January 2014 referendum approved the new constitution, which removed the contested article governing the principles of sharia, listed several circumstances in which civilians could be tried by military court, referenced human trafficking for the first time, banned the formation of political parties based on religion, established a House of Representatives as the sole legislative body, and granted the president legislative authority in the absence of a sitting parliament, among other things.⁶

As no parliament was seated until January 2016, interim President Adly Mansour and President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi enjoyed both executive and legislative authority. During Mansour's presidency, the provisions governing pretrial detention

were expanded,⁷ the infamous Protest Law (Law No. 107 of 2013) severely constrained freedom of assembly,⁸ and the country's first-ever law defining and criminalizing sexual harassment was issued.⁹ Since Sisi was inaugurated on June 8, 2014, and until the parliament was seated in January 2016, he passed over 263 decrees, including amendments constraining the political activity of university students, a counterterrorism law that sets forth a broad definition that affects citizen rights and freedoms, a provision that introduces a life imprisonment sentence for the receipt of foreign funds, and legislation allowing the trial of civilians by military courts for crimes committed against all public facilities.¹⁰

A spike in forced disappearances, extended pretrial detention periods for prisoners of conscience, excessive use of force by security forces, and impunity for military and security personnel for human rights violations have also been reported. With terrorist cases being tried by a handful of security-aligned judges, mass trials in which complex issues of law were decided in disproportionately short periods of time, and urgent matters courts issuing verdicts on political matters beyond their jurisdiction, this period of time also witnessed questions regarding the state of the country's judiciary.¹¹

Analysis

In the absence of a parliament, there is no doubt that Mansour and Sisi enjoyed the authority to exercise temporary legislative power; however, this authority was meant to have been invoked via limited means and such legislation should have been of an exceptional nature to accomplish only what was absolutely necessary for the nation's well-being. The issuing of hundreds of decrees, particularly by Sisi—many of which were controversial, left serious implications for rights and freedoms, and were arguably not immediately necessary. Those decrees should have been the product of a diverse and well-researched parliamentary debate process, rather than executive decision-making, and have hamstrung a parliament that is to review the mass of legislation Egypt has inherited since the ratification of the 2014 constitution in just 15 days. The attitude of deference which analysts predict the new parliament to have for the executive is unlikely to result in any measures that revoke or amend the legislation passed by the president.

Additionally, the severe human rights abuses being reported by non-governmental organizations, the egregious due-process violations in the country's courts, and the failure of the government to hold state-affiliated perpetrators accountable for such occurrences violate Egypt's constitutional obligations and its international legal obligations as a state party to human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Convention Against Torture, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Recommendations

1. Amend or repeal provisions that further constraints on the freedom of expression, assembly, and association of Egyptian citizens, including the Protest Law, the foreign funding Penal Code amendment, and the Counterterrorism Law.
2. Amend or repeal provisions that further due process violations that particularly impact prisoners of conscience, including the decree enabling the military trial of civilians for attacks on public facilities and the Criminal Procedure Code provisions on pretrial detention.
3. Create a cabinet position to handle the transitional justice portfolio in order to facilitate reconciliation, justice in cases involving violations perpetrated by government actors, and security sector reform.
4. Decentralize the litigation of terrorism cases among circuits across the country in order to prevent the concentration of sentences in the hands of a few justices and in order to encourage an environment of independence for the judiciary and protections from politicization.
5. The international community should leverage aid to Egypt on the government's participation in steps that begin a transitional justice process.
6. The international community should provide training and assistance to the Egyptian judiciary and the Ministry of Justice to address case backlog, accusations of politicized verdicts, and judicial appointment reform.

¹ "The Rule of Law in Egypt: Prospects and Challenges," Hiil, April 2012, http://www.hiil.org/data/sitemanagement/media/Quickscan_Egypt_130812_digital_def.pdf.

² Daniela Pioppi, "The Judiciary and the 'Revolution' in Egypt," Insight Egypt, August 2013, http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/inegypt_02.pdf.

³ Joshua Stacher, "Countries at the Crossroads 2011: Egypt," Freedom House, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/EgyptFinal.pdf.

⁴ "Comparing Egypt's Constitutions," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Comparing-Egypt-s-Constitutions.pdf>.

⁵ See "One year into Mohamed Morsi's term: Manifold abuses and the systematic undermining of the rule of law," Cairo Institute for Human Rights Institute, June 26, 2013, <http://www.cihrs.org/?p=6849&lang=en>.

⁶ Sarah El Masry, "Egypt's new constitution: A comparative overview," Daily News Egypt, December 8, 2013, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/12/08/egypts-new-constitution-a-comparative-overview/>.

⁷ "Amended law allows Egypt courts to extend defendants' detention indefinitely," Ahram Online, September 26, 2013, <http://english.ahram.org/Egypt/NewsContent/1/64/82544/Egypt/Politics-/Amended-law-allows-Egypt-courts-to-extend-defendan.aspx>.

⁸ "Egypt: Deeply Restrictive New Assembly Law," Human Rights Watch, November 26, 2013, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/11/26/egypt-deeply-restrictive-new-assembly-law>.

⁹ "Egypt brings in new sexual harassment laws," BBC News, June 5, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27726849>.

¹⁰ Mai El-Sadany, "Tracking Egypt's Extraparliamentary Laws," TIMEP, August 12, 2015, <http://timep.org/commentary/tracking-egypts-extraparliamentary-laws/>.

¹¹ See Mai El-Sadany, "The Courts for Urgent Matters: Legislation from the Bench," TIMEP, July 15, 2014, <http://timep.org/commentary/courts-urgent-matters-legislation-bench/>.

RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Background

Under President Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule, violations of the right to due process and freedoms of expression, association, speech, press, and assembly were widely documented across the country, as were cases of extralegal detention, torture, and forced disappearances. Egypt had been under a state of emergency since the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981, shielding Mubarak, the security forces, and other state organs from accountability. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, international and domestic human rights organizations documented systematic, repeated instances of torture and violations of due process.¹ A 2007 series of constitutional amendments further eroded freedoms, notably by codifying the president's authority to transfer civilians suspected of terrorism to military courts. Peaceful protests against the amendments were forcibly dispersed.

Egypt's Emergency Law allowed security forces to hold prisoners indefinitely without bringing them to trial. Officials from the State Security Investigations Service—*Amn al-Dawla*, which was formally dissolved in March 2011 but quickly reconstituted as *al-Amn al-Watani*, or Egypt Homeland Security—refused to acknowledge those arrested under emergency law, effectively disappearing them. Other violations, which were also happening during Mubarak's era include those against the media, civil society and assembly.

EGYPT RANKS
158 out of 180
IN PRESS FREEDOM

 **32** JOURNALISTS
IMPRISONED
AS OF DEC 2015

 **1,117** LABOR
PROTESTS
IN 2015

 **625** DOCUMENTED
TORTURE
CASES
JAN - NOV 2015

 **1,411** FORCED
DISAPPEARANCES
IN THE FIRST 10
MONTHS OF 2015

Sources: "Egypt fares poorly in 2015 press freedom index," Mada Masr, April 30, 2015, <http://www.madamasr.com/news/egypt-fares-poorly-2015-press-freedom-index>; "1,117 labor protests across Egypt in 2015: Democracy Meter report," Mada Masr, January 11, 2016, <http://www.madamasr.com/news/economy/1117-labor-protests-across-egypt-2015-democracy-meter-report>; and "Civil society organisations document 625 torture cases from Jan. to Nov." December 11, 2015, Aswat Masriya, <http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/view.aspx?id=b7e1d4ab-d89d-4c90-a86b-4fd7265ef1da>.

The Egyptian state also maintained a tight grip on other freedoms. The state had a monopoly on printing and distribution of periodicals, directly controlled the three largest daily newspapers, and censored foreign publications. Egypt's 2003 NGO law (Law 84/2002) prohibits political and union-related activity by non-governmental organizations and allowed for dissolution of NGO by administrative order.² Individuals seeking to assemble in demonstrations were required to have approval from the interior ministry, with those found distributing leaflets risking arrest.

Developments

Despite undergoing the January 25 Revolution and a formal end to Egypt's state of emergency in May 2012, many of the same human rights and freedoms violations have continued, with no lasting progress on these fronts. WikiThawra, a documentation initiative, recorded more than 80 deaths in state custody in 2014 and more than 40,000 arrests or indictments between July 2013 and May 2014.³ An alliance of Egyptian rights organizations documented at least 625 cases of torture in the first 11 months of 2015.⁴ Forced disappearances have continued since the revolution and have recently escalated in number. In the first ten months of 2015, 1,411 cases of forced disappearance were recorded by human rights NGOs.⁵ In December 2015, the Egypt Commission for Rights and Freedoms reported 340 cases of enforced disappearances over the previous two months, with an average of three cases a day.⁶

The Egyptian judiciary has continued to refer civilians to military trials, and Egyptian law has widened the scope of charges that allow for such trials. Mass trials, including mass death sentences, have continued since 2013, often in cases where defendants are purported to be members of Islamist movements.

THE EGYPTIAN JUDICIARY HAS BEEN USED TO CURB BOTH POLITICAL DISSENT AGAINST THE REGIME AS WELL AS TO CONTROL THE MASSES.

Many others stand mass trials for violating Egypt's protest law, which interim President Adly Mansour issued in November 2013. The law outlaws most public protest, requires government approval for public gatherings of more than 10 people, and demonstrations at places of worship are prohibited.

Media violations and hindering of reporting continue in Egypt. An anti-terror law introduced in August 2015 authorizes the use of broad power against journalists reporting on terrorist attacks, and outlets that publish material contradicting official accounts of security operations face fines of 200,000-500,000 Egyptian pounds. The public prosecution regularly declares gag orders on cases of national importance. In early 2015, President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi issued a

decree giving Prime Minister Ibrahim Mahlab the power to ban foreign publications deemed offensive to religion. These legal measures—in addition to the detention and prosecution of journalists, such as the Al Jazeera reporters accused of terrorism and photographer Mahmoud Abu Zeid (a.k.a. Shawkan)—have drawn international attention and condemnation.

The state has also clamped down on civil society organizations, particularly those with foreign support. In December 2011, police raided seventeen NGO offices, arresting employees and seizing equipment, with 43 workers brought to trial for operating illegally. In June 2013, the NGO employees were sentenced to prison terms of one to five years, and five foreign organizations were ordered closed and their funds confiscated. In September 2014, Sisi issued a decree prohibiting foreign funding for activities that “harm the national interest” with penalties up to life imprisonment or even death. The government has been enforcing Law 84, passed in 2002, with greater force, shrinking the space for civil society. Minister of Social Solidarity Ghada Wali announced that 1,100 NGOs were banned and 571 dissolved in 2015, many for reported links to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Analysis

The Egyptian government has not been willing or able to address the rights violations perpetrated by its officials, even those that run against Egyptian law. Formal oversight bodies, such as the General Directorate for Human Rights within the Ministry of Justice and the Human Rights Directorate within the Ministry of Interior, have proven incompetent in addressing rampant, verified torture allegations. Additionally, despite some civil society organizations tracking and reporting torture cases, their efforts are usually limited to victims’ testimonies as they are rarely permitted to inspect detention facilities.

Since 2011, the elements of the Egyptian judiciary have been used as a means to curb both political dissent against the regime as well as a means of control over the masses. Unfortunately these measures by which the state has manifested its control—such as trying of civilians before military courts and mass death—have highlighted how politicized rulings by Egypt’s judiciary are and to what extent they are polarized.

The Egyptian media had been used in numerous occasions by various governments to maintain unity and promote the state’s agenda. Particularly since 2013, the Egyptian press has become more aggressively pro-government, rarely questioning official narratives as the state shut down Islamist and Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated media outlets. Isolated reporting of sensitive information has provoked outright censorship, owing to the state’s monopoly on printing facilities.

While the Egyptian government continues to justify the protest law as adhering to international standards, the persisting concern is the law's application as a tool to silence political dissent from all segments of the opposition. Furthermore, the use of the law to criminalize Egyptians' freedom of assembly, a right guaranteed under the constitution, in the interest of "national security" and "state unity," asserts the continued dominance of the Egyptian security apparatus, its agenda, and its unregulated reach. The continued prolonged detention of protestors under this law, despite its possible contravention of constitutional and international obligations to protect freedom of assembly, highlights the Egyptian judiciary's lack of independence and susceptibility to the regime's prerogatives.

Egypt has witnessed a shrinking space for political opinions and aspirations (individual or group) that challenge the present leadership. Additionally, the targeting of NGOs operating in Egypt has sent a clear message to civil and international organizations. By all indications, the singling out and restriction of association has been utilized by the state, especially over the last five years as the state claims to be upholding legal standards that have fallen by the wayside. The blind consensus of all government branches to violations of freedom of association, despite international standards of adherence and constitutional guarantees, has helped create a worrisome climate. It remains to be determined if Egypt's parliament will challenge the government's consensus on this issue and other rights.

Recommendations

1. Torture and Forced Disappearances
 - Ensure adequate oversight of prisons and police stations.
 - Hold police and other officials accused of torture or other rights violations accountable, including criminal investigation when appropriate.
 - Investigate forced disappearances cases immediately.
2. Due Process
 - Amend or repeal laws which violate the constitution and the judiciary's neutrality.
 - End the use of administrative detention against political dissidents, and observe all legal limits on pretrial detention.
 - End all military trials of civilians.
3. Press Freedom
 - Release all journalists arrested in relation to their work immediately.
 - Halt censorship of media and journalism.
4. Freedom of Association
 - Repeal the draconian NGO law presently governing civil society organizations in Egypt.
 - Expressly legalize resource exchanges between domestic and foreign nonprofit organizations.
5. Protest Law
 - Repeal the Protest Law immediately.
 - Pardon, exonerate, and release convicts and detainees arrested solely under the Protest Law.

¹ See, for example, "Freedom in the World: Egypt," 2010, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2010/egypt>; "Behind Closed Doors: Torture and Detention in Egypt," July, 1992, Human Rights Watch, Middle East Watch Report, <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/Egypt927.pdf>; "When will the crime of torture stop?" March 11, 2009, Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, <http://en.eohr.org/2009/03/11/when-will-the-crime-of-torture-stop/>.

² "Egypt: Margins of Repression, State Limits on Nongovernmental Organization Activism," July 3, 2005, Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2005/07/03/egypt-margins-repression/state-limits-nongovernmental-organization-activism>.

³ "Egypt: Rampant torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions signal catastrophic decline in human rights one year after ousting of Morsi," July 3, 2014, Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/07/egypt-anniversary-morsi-ousting/>.

⁴ "Civil society organisations document 625 torture cases from Jan. to Nov." December 11, 2015, Aswat Masriya, <http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/view.aspx?id=b7e1d4ab-d89d-4c90-a86b-4fd7265ef1da>.

⁵ Sarah El-Sheikh, "1,411 forced disappearances in the first 10 months of 2015: Human rights entities," Daily News Egypt, November 3, 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/11/03/1411-forced-disappearances-in-the-first-10-months-of-2015-human-rights-entities>.

⁶ "In Egypt, 340 forced disappearance cases in two months," December 24, 2015, Middle East Monitor, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/africa/23019-in-egypt-340-forced-disappearance-cases-in-two-months>.

SECTARIANISM

Background

The 1971 Constitution, which remained in place until the January 25 Revolution, guaranteed the freedom of belief and freedom of religion for Egyptian citizens. The implementation of the constitutional provision was inconsistent with constitutional guarantees. One court refused to recognize the Christian religion of one convert in his national identity card, preventing him from formalizing his conversion. Another court ruled that the Ministry of Interior would have to allow Bahá'í citizens to place a dash where national identification documents require religious affiliation, considered to be a compromise after the Supreme Administrative Court refused to fully recognize the Bahá'í faith.

Blasphemy was added to the Penal Code in 1982, and was amended in 2006. This law was used to inhibit freedom of speech and religion, constraining the rights of religious minorities. Since 1856, a law governing the construction of houses of worship has required that the executive approve any new church building in addition to other constraints, many of which did not exist for mosques.¹ In 2005, an amendment to the law governing the construction of houses of worship allowed churches to be able to conduct basic repairs without waiting for government approval, though church expansion and renovation continued to provoke frequent government and social opposition.



400+

**SECTARIAN
INCIDENTS
IN 18 DIFFERENT
GOVERNORATES**



~130

**ATTACKS ON
CHRISTIANS
IN MID-AUG 2013**

**CHRISTIANS ARE MOST FREQUENT TARGETS,
BUT ATHEISTS, SHI'A, BAHÁ'IS, AND OTHERS
ARE ALSO AFFECTED.**

Incidents of sectarian violence and attacks, particularly those committed against Christians, rose in the latter years of former President Hosni Mubarak's rule. Between January 2008 and January 2010, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights documented at least 53 incidents of sectarian violence in 17 different governorates.² The high level of violence, coupled with a failure to convict those responsible for even the most prominent of events like the December 2010 bombing of the Two Saints Church in Alexandria, contributed to a culture of impunity.

Developments

Sectarian violence—and impunity for the attacks—continued consistently during Egypt’s transition after January 25, 2011. In May 2011, a series of attacks took place against churches in Imbaba after Salafis claimed that a convert to Islam was being held against her will. In October 2011, a peaceful protest against the burning and destruction of Mar Gerges Church in Aswan was attacked by army vehicles and personnel outside the Maspero Building in a massacre that ultimately claimed 25 lives and left dozens injured.³

After former President Muhammad Morsi came to power in June 2012, sectarian rhetoric and language was increasingly heard on television networks and furthered by political officials.⁴ April 2013 witnessed sectarian violence in Khesous, Giza, and the siege of the Abbasiya Cathedral, marking an unprecedented attack on the headquarters of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Christians were not the only victims of the increased sectarianism; June 2013 brought the lynching of four Shi’a Egyptians after months of anti-Shi’a rhetoric from notable Sunni figures.

EGYPT’S AUTHORITIES HAVE CONSTITUTIONAL AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS TO ENSURE THE FREE PRACTICE AND ENJOYMENT OF RELIGION.

In the immediate aftermath of Morsi’s removal and following the violent dispersal of the Muslim Brotherhood sit-ins, mid-August 2013 witnessed around 130 widespread attacks on Christians.⁵ Since August 14, 2013, TIMEP and Eshhad documented over 400 sectarian incidents in 18 different governorates against religious minorities, the majority of which have been against Christians.⁶ Although some perpetrators were sentenced to prison for a few church attacks, the majority have yet to be brought to justice and police have failed to conduct adequate investigations. Informal reconciliation sessions, which rarely bring fair or just results for the largely Christian victims, continue to be used as a replacement to the judicial process.

The 2012 and 2014 Constitutions used nearly identical language regarding religious freedom as previous constitutions. Language stating that the principles of the laws of Christians and Jews would govern their personal affairs was approved. Freedom of belief was guaranteed as an inviolable right; however, the freedom to practice religious rites and to construct houses of worship was reserved only for adherents of the “divine religions,” excluding Bahá’ís, possibly Shi’a, and other religious minorities in the country from constitutional guarantees.⁷

Charges of blasphemy continue to be brought before the courts.⁸ About 41 percent of blasphemy cases, most of which rested on flimsy evidence such as Facebook posts, were filed against Christians. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom reported that in 2014, the majority of charges were leveled against Sunni Muslims, but that the majority of those sentenced by a court to prison for blasphemy were Christians, Shi'a, and atheists.⁹

The Jewish community continues to dwindle in number. Jewish religious buildings are occasionally vandalized, and, broadly speaking, anti-Semitic discourse is common and largely acceptable.¹⁰ Bahá'ís¹¹ and atheists¹² continue to be ostracized by Egyptian authorities.

Analysis

Religious freedom—including both the right to maintain personal religious beliefs and the right to fully practice such beliefs—is severely restricted throughout the country. Although this freedom is supposedly an absolute right provided for in the 2014 Constitution, textually, this freedom is strictly limited to the three Abrahamic religions. In practice, freedom of religion is limited through legal and social structures that the state directly and indirectly supports. Legislation—like the church construction law—and institutional practices—like the listing of religion on the national identification card—further inequality between the country's religious communities and entrench sectarian practices into the legal and social scheme. When violence against a religious community does occur, investigative authorities and the judiciary often fail to respond in a timely manner or provide redress for the victims. Irresponsible racist and sectarian rhetoric is furthered by members of the media, political figures, and even teachers through antiquated curricula within the public schooling sector.

Egyptian officials often fail to respond to attacks on minorities, and at other times authorities refuse to review laws despite widespread demands that they be amended. However, authorities' culpability for sectarianism has also been direct such as using police power or government authority to perpetrate sectarian acts against Egypt's religious minorities.

Nonetheless, Egypt's authorities have constitutional as well as international obligations to ensure the free practice and enjoyment of religion. Further, it is in the state's interest to ensure that all discriminatory practices and policies are eliminated. Without the freedom to believe and practice that belief, members of society are alienated from each other and the country's development risks being stunted. The state's support of discriminatory practices—across the several

governments that have followed the revolution—and its active role in limiting the freedom of belief and thought parallel its practices in other aspects of society, including press freedoms, political expression, and other areas.

Recommendations

1. Amend or repeal its blasphemy and church construction laws.
2. Take measures to ensure that the security sector and judiciary properly implement laws.
3. Prohibit or reform the use of reconciliation meetings as an alternative to the judicial system.
4. Implement curriculum reform to alter education materials that further sectarian rhetoric.
5. Undertake immediate reform of the security sector and judiciary to ensure that sectarian practices are curbed and abolished.
6. Reopen investigations into events like the Two Saints Church bombing and the Maspero massacre—along with other incidents of mass violence, like the clearing of Raba'a al-Adaweya Square—in order to curb the culture of impunity prevalent among the security forces.
7. The international community should provide a platform for international and Egyptian parliamentarians to be trained on the role of the legislature to preserve the rights of minorities;

¹ See Mai El-Sadany, Houses of Worship in Egypt: An Enduring Source of Inequity, TIMEP, October 3, 2014, <http://timep.org/commentary/houses-worship-egypt-enduring-source-inequity/>.

² Two Years of Sectarian Violence: What happened? Where do we begin? An Analytical Study of Jan 2008 -Jan 2010, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, <http://eipr.org/en/report/2010/04/11/776>.

³ See Ishak Ibrahim, Three Years After the Maspero Massacre: Where is the Justice?, TIMEP, October 9, 2014, <http://timep.org/commentary/three-years-maspero-massacre-justice/>.

⁴ Kristen Chick, Egypt's Copts lash out at government's anti-Christian rhetoric, Christian Science Monitor, April 12, 2013, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2013/0412/Egypt-s-Copts-lash-out-at-government-s-anti-Christian-rhetoric>.

⁵ Sectarianism: Post Sit-In Dispersal, Nile Revolt, August 14, 2013, <https://nilerevolt.wordpress.com/2013/08/14/1198/>.

⁶ Eshhad, <http://eshhad.timep.org/>.

⁷ Comparing Egypt's Constitutions, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Comparing-Egypt-s-Constitutions.pdf>.

⁸ See Eshhad Issue Brief: Egypt's Blasphemy Laws, Eshhad, December 8, 2015, <http://eshhad.timep.org/reports/minority-profiles-and-issue-briefs/eshhad-issue-brief-egypts-blasphemy-laws/>.

⁹ Egypt, Annual Report of the US Commission of International Religious Freedom, 2015, <http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRF%20Annual%20Report%202015%20%282%29.pdf>.

¹⁰ Eshhad Minority Profile: Jews, Eshhad, August 6, 2015, <http://eshhad.timep.org/reports/minority-profiles-and-issue-briefs/jews/>.

¹¹ See Eshhad Minority Profile: Bahá'í, Eshhad, July 13, 2015, <http://eshhad.timep.org/reports/minority-profiles-and-issue-briefs/bahai/>.

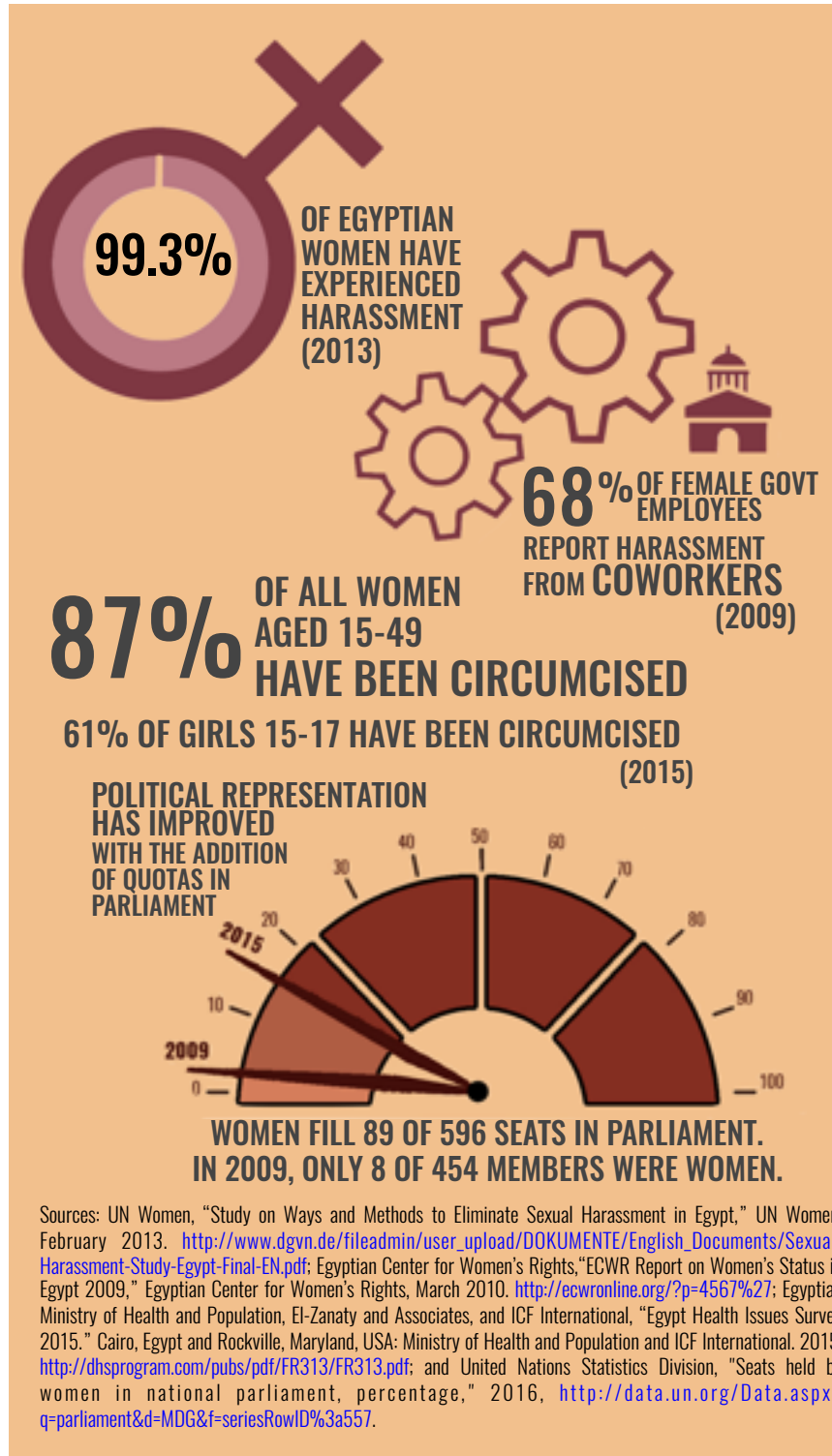
¹² See Eshhad Minority Profile: Non-Religious, Eshhad, August 26, 2015, <http://eshhad.timep.org/reports/minority-profiles-and-issue-briefs/non-religious/>.

GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Background

The issues that Egyptian women and the LGBT community face have endured since before January 25, 2011. In 2008, it was reported that 83 percent of Egyptian women reported experiencing harassment in Egypt.¹ Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also a longstanding issue, with 91 percent of ever-married women ages 15-49 reported to have undergone FGM in the country.²

The political and economic engagement of women in Egypt has remained largely stagnant for the past decade. Egypt's ranking in the Global Gender Gap report worsened from 120 in 2007 to 123 in 2011, out 135 total countries.³ Additionally, a UNICEF Gender Equality Profile in 2009 found that female labor force participation was only 22 percent.⁴ The profile also noted that women occupied 12.7 percent of parliament seats in 2011 with a quota system in place. The National Council for Women, established by presidential decree in 2000, was intended to advocate for women's issues in Egypt but faced criticism for its ties to the state, a situation which activists described as weakening space for advocacy of women's issues in civil society.⁵



Despite Egyptian law not explicitly criminalizing same sex activity, LGBT citizens have been periodically arrested and charged with debauchery, including the notable 2001 Queen Boat incident, where a floating restaurant and nightclub was raided and 52 men were put on trial.⁶

Developments

While women came to the street alongside their male counterparts during the 2011 uprisings, they were often met with sexual harassment and violence, perpetrated by security forces and civilians alike. During the 2011 revolution, security forces detained, stripped, and performed invasive “virginity tests” on women. Violations continue; a recent study by UN Women found that 99.3 percent of women and girls in Egypt have experienced harassment.⁷ There have been very few convictions for such assaults, despite the fact that interim president Adly Mansour criminalized harassment.

Though legally banned since 2008 (violations are punishable by up to two years in jail and a fine of 5,000 Egyptian pounds), progress in the fight against FGM has been made only recently. The most recent Egyptian Health Issues Survey (2015) found that the FGM rate among girls 15-17 years of age has dropped from 74 percent (2008) to 61 percent.⁸ Though Dr. Raslan Fadl was recently convicted for performing FGM—the first doctor to be so convicted—he has not served his prison sentence and his clinic remains open.⁹

While women’s political and economic participation in Egypt remains far below parity, the recently elected parliament has a record number of female members, constituting 14.9 percent of seats. However, according to the Global Gender Report (2015), Egypt now ranks 136 out of 145 countries examined in gender equality.¹⁰ The National Council for Women has introduced training programs and campaigns to encourage women in the political process and has advocated for female representation in government. Its head, Mervat Tallawy, announced plans in November 2015 to introduce draft legislation to the parliament to address violence against women.¹¹

Presently in Egypt there are no established organizations which promote LGBT issues or rights, and 2014 and 2015 witnessed various raids targeting alleged members of this community. One notable raid of a public bath suspected of hosting homosexual activity was covered live by television reporter Mona Iraqi; the sensationalism of the case provoked a rare backlash against Iraqi and the security forces, but Iraqi was ultimately acquitted of defamation charges.

Analysis

Despite participating side-by-side with men in protests that led to Mubarak's ouster, little progress has been made on women's rights. The failure of successive administrations to engage with civil society on gender issues has partially contributed to the lack of progress in this area. The positioning of the National Council for Women (whose members are close to the ruling elite) as the sole guardian of women's issues by the government has created obstacles to addressing issues facing Egyptian women, as other women's organizations and civil society are largely left out of the process.

Similarly, some of the largest gender issues, like FGM, sexual harassment, and sexual violence, have seen little to no improvement. While the guilty verdict in the FGM case drew the world's attention to the issue and set a legal precedent regarding the legal prosecution of both practitioners and family members under the FGM law, any success represented by the trial has been reversed by failure to enforce of the verdict. Furthermore, the case represents the procedure's medicalization in Egypt, a shift that has served to entrench the practice and remains to be addressed in efforts to combat FGM.

Despite efforts undertaken by the government to address sexual harassment and sexual violence (criminalizing sexual harassment, forming a ministerial committee, creating a female police task force), two major concerns remain. The proposed solution to increase police presence is not necessarily a deterrent given allegations that police continue to carry out acts of sexual violence (against women and men), both in public and in detention. Further, there has been little engagement of Egyptian civil society as part of the state's national strategy, despite its extensive collective experience and the variety of programs currently operating that address the issue of sexual harassment.

DESPITE PARTICIPATING SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH MEN IN PROTESTS THAT LED TO FORMER PRESIDENT HOSNI MUBARAK'S OUSTER, LITTLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

The Egyptian government has increasingly cracked down on the LGBT community in service of two of the government's interests. The government is aiming first to elevate moral panic among citizens as a means to justify its security apparatuses' expansion. The government is also publicly affirming its commitment to the religious ideals of a conservative Egyptian society, which is a particular political concern for the regime because of their ouster of a government led by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Because LGBT issues are often framed as culturally “inauthentic,” the support of any Western or international organizations further marginalizes the community in a country with a predominantly conservative Muslim population. Besides a handful of organizations that may provide legal counsel to those arrested, the only organizations involved with the gay community are health organizations, specifically those working on HIV/AIDS. This reinforces preconceived notions of the LGBT community as promiscuous, and due to Egyptian cultural norms, progressive campaigning methods such as providing condoms, promoting testing for sexually transmitted diseases, and other preventative measures are almost impossible to carry out.

Recommendations

1. Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

- Consult civil society organizations that have long worked to combat sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Expand the law to allow for the prosecution of all acts of sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Educate and reform the security sector, and hold officers accountable for crimes or failure to fulfill their duties.
- Conduct awareness campaigns to educate the public on root causes of the issues.
- Educate and inform citizens of their rights and the criminalization of sexual harassment.

2. FGM

- Continue to work harmoniously with civil society organizations monitoring and campaigning against the practice to uphold the law and sentences.
- Educate the population regarding the criminalization of FGM.
- Crack down on clinics performing the practice.

3. Women’s Rights, Political Engagement, and Economic Empowerment

- Uphold women’s constitutional guarantees.
- Encourage women’s political inclusion by recruiting women for committees and legislative bodies.
- Solicit civil society—not only the NCW—for input on the development of legislation or programs concerning women.

4. LGBT

- Cease targeted campaigns against LGBT community immediately.

-
- ¹ Magdi Abdelhadi, "Egypt's sexual harassment 'cancer'," BBC News, July 18, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7514567.stm.
- ² Fatma El-Zanaty and Ann Way, "Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2008," 2009, Cairo, Egypt: Ministry of Health, El-Zanaty and Associates, and Macro International, <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR220/FR220.pdf>.
- ³ Ricardo Hausmann, Laura Tyson, Saadia Zahidi, "Global Gender Gap Report," World Economic Forum, 2011. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2011.pdf.
- ⁴ UNICEF, "Egypt: MENA Gender Equality Profile," UNICEF, October 2011. <http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Egypt-Gender-Eqaulity-Profile-2011.pdf>.
- ⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Divorced from Justice," Human Rights Watch, December 2004. <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/egypt1204/2.htm>.
- ⁶ Human Rights Watch, "Laws Affecting Male Homosexual Conduct in Egypt," Human Rights Watch, March 2004. <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/egypt0304/9.htm>.
- ⁷ UN Women, "Study on Ways and Methods to Eliminate Sexual Harassment in Egypt," UN Women, February 2013. http://www.dgvn.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DOKUMENTE/English_Documents/Sexual-Harassment-Study-Egypt-Final-EN.pdf.
- ⁸ Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population, El-Zanaty and Associates, and ICF International, "Egypt Health Issues Survey 2015." Cairo, Egypt and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Ministry of Health and Population and ICF International. 2015.
- ⁹ Agence Free Press, "Egypt female circumcision doctor remains on the run," Lebanon Daily Star, November 17, 2015. <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/Nov-17/323427-egypt-female-circumcision-doctor-remains-on-the-run.ashx>.
- ¹⁰ Hend El-Behary, "Egypt among 10 worst countries for gender equality," Egypt Independent, November 22, 2015. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-among-10-worst-countries-gender-equality>.
- ¹¹ Khalid Hassan, "Egypt electoral law a step toward justice for women," Al-Monitor, November 9, 2015. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/11/egypt-elections-women-leadership-positions.html#>.


SECURITY


Background


While Egypt has seen a period of increased terror violence over the past years, the country is no stranger to the phenomenon. Throughout the 1990s attacks took place consistently, whether by anonymous actors or by two dominant organized groups—Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Gama'a al-Islamiya. The violence came to a head with the Gama'a al-Islamiya's 1997 attack on tourists at Luxor, killing 58 tourists and four Egyptians. The Egyptian state responded to the violence with a heavy hand, sending scores of Islamists to prison and enacting repressive social measures.

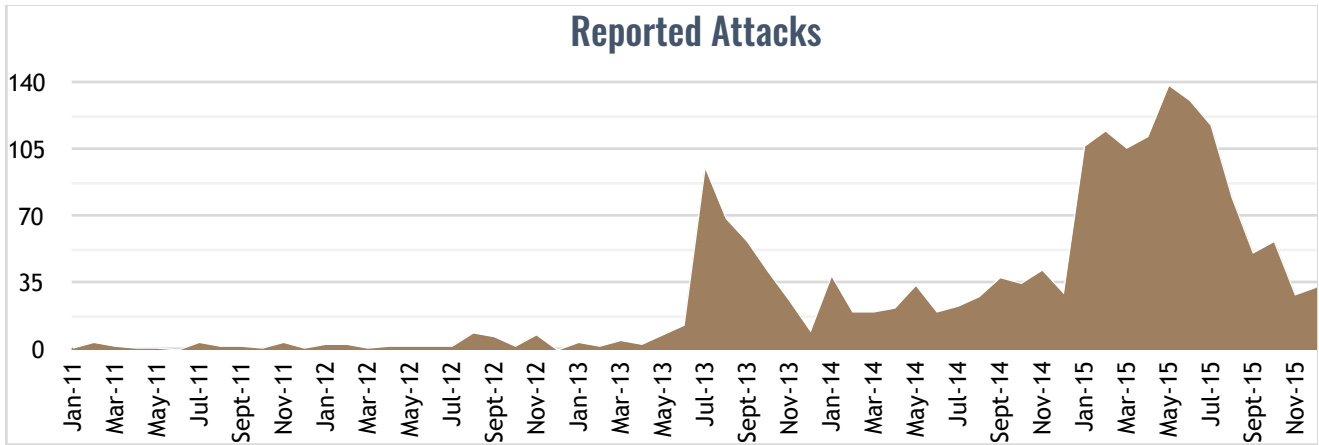
Combined with economic development initiatives and a rejection of violence from the groups themselves, the attacks quieted. Though several large-scale attacks killed scores at tourist resorts on the Red Sea through the 2000s, the decade was relatively stable. Even North Sinai, which has since seen a persistent insurgency, was fairly calm, despite the presence of criminal smuggling networks. A prelude to the period of instability (and sectarianism) that would persist in the years following President Hosni Mubarak's ouster, on December 31, 2010, unknown militants bombed a New Year's Eve service at the Coptic Two Saints Church in Alexandria, killing 23 and injuring nearly 100.¹

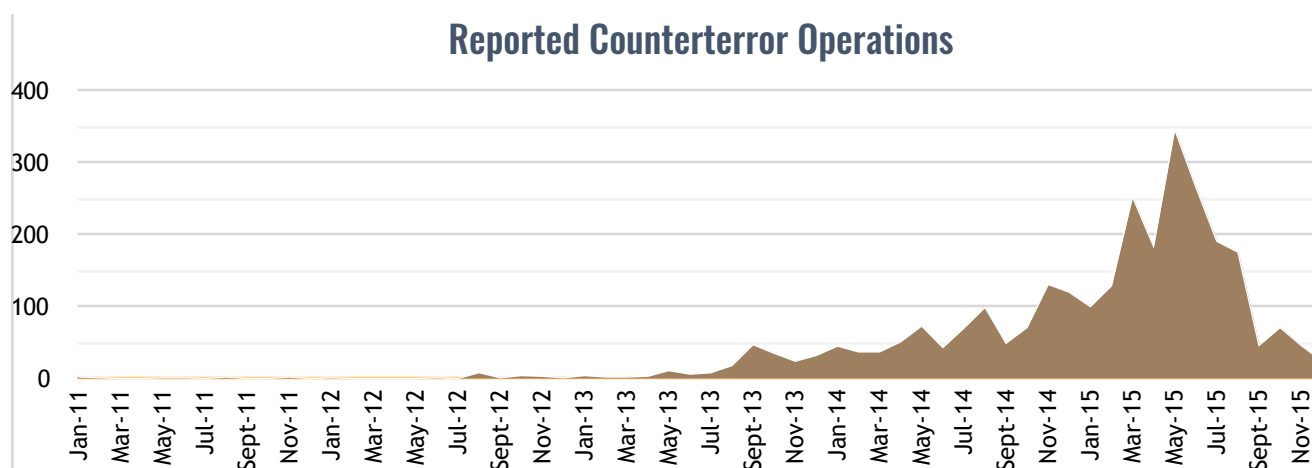
BETWEEN JAN 2011 - JAN 2016

 **14,700+** ALLEGED TERRORISTS ARRESTED

 **1,791+** TERROR ATTACKS REPORTED

 **1,700** ALLEGED TERRORISTS KILLED





Developments

In the months following Mubarak’s ouster, street demonstrations continued, sometimes escalating to violence. Spontaneous and sporadic protests, sit-ins, and strikes continued under the Supreme Council of Armed Forces and later under Morsi, often resulting in clashes between security forces and those demonstrating in support of revolutionary demands (or between different protest factions, for more see “The Public Sphere, Media, and Political Engagement” in this report). Notable examples include the dramatic events that unfolded on Maspero Bridge on October 9, 2011;² on Muhammad Mahmoud Street in November 2011; and in Cairo’s Abbassiya district in May 2012. After the removal of President Muhammad Morsi in July 2013 the nature of violence underwent a shift in form and intensity. It became organized, premeditated violence, and Egypt once again was embroiled in a period of terrorism. The period from January 2011 to January 2016 has seen 1,853 reported terror attacks.³ Ninety-four percent of these have taken place since Morsi’s ouster, and 59 percent have taken place in the past year.

Violence since the January 2011 uprising has been particularly intense in the North Sinai province, where 47 percent of all reported attacks and 69 percent of all deaths have taken place. In 2011, the longstanding emergency law was lifted, allowing for the release of prisoners held under it,⁴ and the period of instability in the security sector allowed for frequent jailbreaks. Some of those who left prison—seasoned jihadis like Kamel Alam, Muhammad Nasef, and Muhammad Bakry Haroun—ended up in Sinai, again organizing and mobilizing networks. By 2013—even prior to Morsi’s deposition—the existing groups, who had largely focused their attention on the plight of Palestinians in neighboring Gaza, turned their attention to Egyptian security forces. Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, the most powerful group, claimed 32 attacks before pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in November 2014, becoming the Islamic State’s Sinai Province, or Wilayat

Sinai. Since then, the group has claimed 283 attacks and 426 deaths (including their claim to have downed a Russian airliner, killing 224 civilians on board).

The growing organization and escalating violence seen in the Sinai was also seen throughout Egypt. In the months immediately following Morsi's ouster, attacks rose; of the 165 attacks reported in July and August 2013, 98 percent were claimed by organized groups. Two years later, in July and August 2015, 48 percent of the 221 reported attacks were claimed. Groups operating in mainland Egypt emerged. Ajnad Misr, a jihadi group loosely affiliated with al-Qaeda; the allied Popular Resistance Movement, a coalition of groups like Revolutionary Punishment and the Popular Resistance Movement that claimed to seek justice against security forces; and the Islamic State all claimed attacks in 2015.

Since 2011, over 14,700 alleged "terrorists" have been imprisoned and over 1,700 have been killed, according to official sources, with 98 percent of these operations reported after Morsi's ouster. The increase in arrests and deaths has corresponded with a legislative and discursive shift in the definition of terrorism, as well as with the launch of successive military campaigns in North Sinai. Prior to 2011, and through June 2013, the state referred to "terrorists" as those who carried out acts of terror, particularly jihadist violence. After protests on June 30 against Morsi, however, this changed, and on July 24, 2013, then-Defense Minister Abdel-Fattah El Sisi asked for broad public support for a mandate to combat

THE STATE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY WIN THEIR BATTLE AGAINST MILITANTS, BUT NOT WITHOUT MASSIVE COSTS TO HUMAN LIFE, LIBERTY, AND EGYPT'S ECONOMY.

terrorism. At this time, "terrorism" came to indicate any anti-state activity or sentiment, particularly from the Muslim Brotherhood, but shortly thereafter to include all stripes of opposition. In a parallel process, rapidly changing legislation and the use of urgent matters courts broadened the legal definition of terrorism and facilitated its enforcement and the

prosecution of a broad manner of anti-state sentiment and activity as terrorism. A review of Interior Ministry Facebook posts illustrates this shift; whereas those arrested for anti-state actions (graffiti, protests, attacks on police stations) were deemed "accused" ("*mutahamin*") throughout 2012 and early 2013, by 2014 they were arrested as "terrorists" ("*anasar irhabiya*").

Most recently, late 2015 witnessed a relative drop in violent attacks; the monthly rate of over 100 attacks reported per month from January to July 2015 dropped to 61 attacks per month for the latter half of the year, with fewer than 40 reported in November and December 2015.

Analysis

The current state of instability is the product of internal and external developments. Terror violence, in particular, indicates the use of violence to further political aims. As channels for political expression have been increasingly closed off, various militant groups have claimed that their use of violence is in the interest of achieving “revolutionary” aims, bringing justice for state transgressions, or other political aims. The state has responded by continuing its closure of political space in the name of security, locking violent actors and the state in an existential battle. Given the sheer size of Egypt’s security forces and their international support, the state will almost certainly win, but not without massive costs to human life, liberty, and Egypt’s economy.

This paradigm has been particularly salient in North Sinai, where the Bedouin majority has been almost completely marginalized (historically, geographically, economically, and socially). As militant networks coalesced and carried out larger and deadlier attacks, the state has responded with slash-and-burn campaigns, further destroying economic prospects, alienating residents, and creating persistent antagonism.

Throughout Egypt, these domestic factors have worked in tandem with global developments. Global extremist networks (namely the Islamic State and al-Qaeda) have capitalized on the unrest and frustration, providing increased support (monetary, technical, and strategic) to domestic Egyptian groups. Many Egyptians have also left Egypt to fight in Iraq, Syria, or Libya, and some have returned home to fight.

The state’s approach of securitization and restriction has applied not only to violent actors, but increasingly applies to any who do not demonstrably support the state’s actions. As history has shown, while this may have had some success in quieting the most egregious period of violence, it is unlikely to have a lasting effect of peace and stability.

Recommendations

1. Implement a security strategy that is innovative and holistic: rather than rely strictly on security-based approaches, the state should consider and address the roots of instability through social programs, as well as criminal investigations and targeted military operations, where required.
2. Focus state efforts on known threats (based on robust intelligence gathering), differentiating between political opponents, criminals, and terrorists.
3. Given the sustained nature of the threat in North Sinai, adopt the best practices of counterinsurgency, with the engagement (rather than oppression) of the local population as its cornerstone.
4. Egypt's allies should encourage the alignment of local, national, and global security strategies, with tailored solutions for each.

¹ The perpetrators of the Two Saints Church bombing remain unknown. Media coverage of the event, buttressed by details provided by the Ministry of Interior, framed the bombings as the work of Palestinian militants; this recourse to blame “foreign hands” has remained a persistent feature of media narratives on attacks in the years since, though largely overshadowed by the shift toward the Muslim Brotherhood as the de facto perpetrators assumed in most violent activity. In the months following the attack, other media outlets accused Interior Minister Habib al-Adly of involvement, and investigations were opened though never concluded. For more on sectarianism in Egypt, see “Sectarianism” in this report. For more on responsibility for the Two Saints Church bombing in particular, see Lina Attalah. “Remembering the Two Saints bombing – and the lack of justice,” Mada Masr, January 1, 2016, <http://www.madamasr.com/sections/politics/remembering-two-saints-bombing-%E2%80%93-and-lack-justice>.

² For more on the events at Maspero and the aftermath, see Ishak Ibrahim. “Three Years after Maspero: Where is the Justice?”, The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, October 9, 2014, <http://timep.org/commentary/three-years-maspero-massacre-justice/>.

³ All figures cited herein are the product of TIMEP’s Egypt Security Watch project: www.timep.org/esw.

⁴ See Hossam Bahgat. “Who Let the Jihadis Out?” Mada Masr, February 16, 2014, <http://www.madamasr.com/sections/politics/who-let-jihadis-out>.

ECONOMY

Background

Of the three demands voiced in the slogan of the January 25 Revolution—“Bread, freedom, and social justice!”—two concerned the economy. Although triggered by political events, the revolution reflected the collapse of the implicit contract the Egyptian state had forged with its citizens, in which the latter had traded political rights for a basic livelihood. The government relied on economic devices, including subsidized energy, transportation, and essential foodstuffs, to walk this tightrope. An inflated public sector—Egypt had 5.5 million civil servants at the end of 2010—had kept popular discontent at a manageable level.¹

The liberalization agenda of the 1990s and 2000s (privatization of some state-owned enterprises, devaluation of the Egyptian pound) produced growth, but its speed, cronyism, and scant attention to economic and social exclusion generated social discontent. Youth unemployment grew, and rampant inflation depressed purchasing power. These woes were compounded by police brutality and state violence, pushing not only middle class activists to revolt, but also society’s very poor: its workers. The 2011 revolution was preceded by growing labor activism and numerous strikes, especially from 2006 onward, leading up to calls for a general strike in April 2008. Workers in large state-owned factories participated in around 60 large-scale strikes in the final days of Mubarak’s reign, and strikes continued even afterward.



Developments

Since 2011, the economy has been run with a short-term approach, with the executive power legislating in the absence of a parliament for four out of the five years since. The first post-revolution government, under the leadership of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), continued on the same economic path as before, eschewing reforms in favor of short-term moves. It rejected an IMF standby loan package with excellent terms geared toward economic reforms, favoring instead short-term measures such as the creation of 450,000 positions in the already-bloated public sector, and its salaries and pensions. The government of Muhammad Morsi, which took power in June 2012, followed a market-led economic policy leading to the creation of a new “businessmen’s association” with close ties to the government to capture business interests—a replication of the Mubarak years with different figures. The Egyptian pound lost 15 percent of its value against the U.S. dollar, ushering in imported inflation, most notably on food and fuel. An energy crisis precipitated Morsi’s political demise, as electricity outages in the spring and summer of 2013 reached 12 hours at a time in some parts of the country and petrol stations constantly ran short of gas.

After the July 2013 removal of Morsi, the administrations of Adly Mansour and Abdel-Fattah El Sisi came to power with an immediate stimulus package of U.S. \$12 billion in aid and loans from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait, a

DESPITE LARGE STATE EXPENDITURES, THERE IS AN INSUFFICIENT EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL EQUALITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

model that has continued into 2016. The Sisi government has focused its economic reforms on investment policy as well as a string of mega-projects, promising the development of 26 cities and tourist centers, along with plans for the development of the Suez Canal and surrounding area. The digging of a new channel for the canal, intending to double traffic in the canal and reduce transit time, was funded by public debt issuance which raised \$8.5 billion in a matter of days, was dug within a year, and was opened to traffic in August 2015. However, the project has thus far fallen short of its goals, with Suez Canal returns having declined due to lower traffic. With its Gulf benefactors reeling from low oil prices, in 2015 the Egyptian government began negotiations for a \$3 billion loan from the World Bank, a reversal from its earlier policy.

In 2014, the government also finally embarked on energy subsidy reforms, slashing fuel subsidies by a third in July. Fuel subsidies still occupy some 13 percent of government spending. The tourism industry—which has declined since the revolution—suffered further in 2015 from an apparent terrorist attack against a Russian airliner flying from Sharm el-

Sheikh to St. Petersburg. Smaller terrorist attacks, along with an incident where the government killed eight Mexican tourists and their Egyptian guides, have also suppressed tourism.

THE STATE'S PREDILECTION FOR MEGA-PROJECTS IS A MATTER OF CONCERN IN THE ABSENCE OF AN HONEST PUBLIC DEBATE AROUND THEIR IMPACT, FEASIBILITY, AND INTER-GENERATIONAL COSTS.

In a series of presidential decrees, the government had undertaken a large number of legal economic reforms aimed at improving fiscal consolidation, improving public sector spending and debt management, export promotion, and reducing inflation. But these announced reforms have had little to no impact, as debt and inflation remains on the rise. The foreign currency shortage and a heavy dependency on imports have compelled the government to continue the gradual depreciation of the pound, which fell by 11 percent in 2015.

The growth rate of gross domestic product tumbled from 5.1 percent in 2010 to 1.8 percent in 2011, and has slowly risen in the following years.² It is estimated to be at 4.2 percent in 2015³ and forecast to rise to 4.5 percent in 2016,⁴ still below government projections. Unemployment for 2015 is estimated at 12.8 percent and inflation at 11.1 percent; youth unemployment stood at 27.4 percent in the third quarter of 2014.⁵ The national debt has nearly doubled from \$149 billion at the end of 2010 to \$290 billion at the beginning of 2016.⁶

The government has initiated a number of mega-projects, including the completed Suez Canal channel as well as an industrial zone nearby, a new mega-network of roads, the “reclamation” of 1 million acres of land from the desert, a new “administrative capital” for the country projected to cost \$45 billion, as well as massive investments in the northwestern city of Matrouh’s port and beach resorts. A lack of transparency regarding land ownership and allocation, the awarding of government contracts, progress on signed agreements, or even fundamental objectives of the projects makes it difficult to assess the efficacy of these development schemes.

Analysis

The current economic policy is characterized by high spending and rising debt, with an unsustainable reliance on financing influx from allied Gulf countries. The current administration’s string of mega-projects has successfully boosted national morale but comes with dubious results and uncertain returns, along with concerns about the absence of an honest public debate around their impact, feasibility, and inter-generational costs. Despite the large state expenditures, there is an insufficient emphasis on social equality and poverty alleviation, which bodes negatively for political stability.

The 2015 Credit Suisse report on Global Wealth reports that the Egyptian middle class expanded between 2000 and 2007 but has shrunk by a full half since 2008, even as the upper class accumulates gains in wealth.⁷ The tourism industry will need time to recover, and is closely tied tightly to Egypt's success in combating terrorism. Government and industry efforts to promote tourism have not proven successful.

Repairing the Egyptian economy will take a number of far-reaching reforms. The public goodwill that the government currently enjoys offers a very limited window of opportunity to implement those by reining in public debt and inflation and pushing ahead with public sector reforms. Unfortunately, the present government, much like its predecessors, appears to prefer to kick the can down the road and finance its expenditures by debt, leaving the bill for future generations.

Recommendations

1. Submit government projects to the public for debate, with the government allowing a free and fair discussion around the projects' costs and revenues and publishing public and private feasibility studies.
2. Implement a public, transparent, and competitive bidding system for state-sponsored projects, while facilitating procurement by local small and medium enterprises.
3. Permit the Egyptian pound to follow a limited, controlled devaluation, and ease currency controls.
4. Create an efficient framework for regularizing informal work without affecting its capacity to absorb a part of the excess labor supply.
5. Given the spike in negative feedback from visitors, undertake a sensitization campaign within Egypt regarding popular behavior vis-à-vis tourists.

1 Mohamed El Dahshan, "The Egyptian economy," In *Egypt after the spring: Revolt and Reaction*, Adelphi Series, 55 (2015): 201-218.

2 "Annual Report 2010/2011," Central Bank of Egypt, <http://www.cbe.org.eg/nr/rdonlyres/c3aedcd4-a959-4911-850e-c5483b61e99c/1363/annualreport2011eng.pdf>.

3 Ehab Farouk and Eric Knecht, "Egypt lifts 2015-16 GDP growth forecast," Reuters, December 5, 2015, <http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFKBN00BQ20151205>.

4 "Egypt GDP Annual Growth Rate: Forecast 2016-2020," Trading Economics, January 21, 2016, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/egypt/gdp-growth-annual-forecast>.

5 Lin Noueihed and Ehad Farouk, "Egyptian unemployment edges up to 12.8 pct in Q3 - statistics agency," Reuters, November 5, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/egypt-unemployment-idUSL8N13A0A720151115>.

6 "Ministry of Industry and Trade: Egypt's public debt is estimated at 1.9 trillion," Egypt Independent, January 9, 2016, <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/870437>.

7 Anthony Shorrocks, Jim Davies, Rodrigo Lluberá, "Global Wealth Report 2015," October 2015, <https://publications.credit-suisse.com/tasks/render/file/?fileID=F2425415-DCA7-80B8-EAD989AF9341D47E>.



UNMET DEMANDS, TENUOUS STABILITY - THE TAHRIR INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY



The Tahrir Institute
for Middle East Policy