

17 September – 20 October 2013  
Newsletter - Issue No. 40

**Egypt:**

**What Is Next for The Brotherhood? Reforms!**

**The Failure Is the Ministry of Interior!**

**President Sisi?!?**

**Egypt's Revolutionaries: What, Who and How to Move from Principles to Action?!**

**A Third Way.... Really?**

**73' War Anniversary: The Lessons We Failed to Learn**

**#Oct9: Maspero – Two Years After**

**Lebanon:**

**The Lebanese Dilemma: Dangerous Divisions**

**Syria**

**Rebel vs. Rebel**

**The Islamic Alliance Emerges**



## What Is Next for The Brotherhood? Reforms!

Nervana Mahmoud

### The Brotherhood's New strategy

*"The Islamists are only updating their tactics without a serious reflection on the past or a genuine desire to reform their ideology. Their new slogan of civil disobedience may sound attractive, however, it is highly unlikely that it will be seriously effective on the ground. It may be easy to boycott pro-government TV channels, but not public transport or the national banks. Today, most services of Egypt's underground metro have worked as usual. Egyptians are already fed-up with uncertainty, and the Islamists' policy of deliberately creating instability will be off-putting to many"*

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Ibrahim el-Houdaiby

### A Nonviolent Muslim Brotherhood?

***"As the organization recovers from the current crisis, it will adopt strong positions against violence. Some members, therefore, will be forced to leave the group once they publicly turn violent, while others will not inform their leaders of their intentions. Young Islamists forced out of the Brotherhood are more likely to not work through existing Islamist organizations. Critical of the inabilities of institutionalized groups and fighting a dual battle for Islam and of revenge for the loss of their loved ones, these activists will perform their "sacred mission" alone. This new wave of terrorism will capitalize on the technological boom that makes knowledge of explosives only a click away.***



***Egypt's regime has been successful in preempting such attacks so far, but the underground and individual nature of these activities undermines the possibility of dealing with them using security measures alone. In the current context of unconditional exclusion, this risk of violence will be on the rise"***

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## **The Big Pharaoh**

### **Disbanding the MB: Paving the way toward its revival?**

*"Disbanding the MB will not affect the long term survival of the organization, despite the organization's credibility having suffered severe blows when Morsi was ousted from power last June. In fact, forcing the MB back underground will only help it regroup, especially since it will surely benefit from the many mistakes committed by the current interim government. The Brotherhood's leaders are in fact most comfortable underground. They have experienced this position for over 80 years, and they've managed to survive successive regimes with various degrees of repression. Putting the MB under the light weakened it, while putting it back in the darkness will only allow it to gain strength once again"*

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## **The Failure Is the Ministry of Interior!**



### **Sendmonkey**

**For Mohamed Ibrahim, the clock is ticking for his removal...**

***"In case you are not familiar with who Mohamed Ibrahim is, he is the current Minister of Interior in Egypt, and a disgrace. He was appointed by former President Mohamed Morsi in the middle of the constitutional crisis in order to turn a blind eye when the Muslim Brotherhood's thugs were sent to attack and kill anti-Morsi protesters in Itihadiya, an order he carried out perfectly. When 30 June happened, and the interim government was announced, many were surprised to see him still in place, but it seems now that his time in power is running out" [...]*** ***"No one will be sad to see him go, inside or outside of the ministry, given that he is a black mark on the current government and one that won't go away until he is replaced. Luckily, it won't be long until that happens, and hopefully he will be held to account for what he did"***

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## **Rana Allam**

### **There Will be No Progress**

*"There will be no progress in the deteriorating, horrifying traffic situation in the Egyptian capital, unless the ministry of interior starts working. There will be no improvement unless their concept of traffic police transcends the "let's take your licenses because they are not renewed" and start addressing the real problems. When they paralyse major roads and big streets to check every passing car's license, yet neglect those who completely ignore traffic laws...there can be no improvement in traffic. Unless police vehicles follow traffic rules, no one else will. Unless they stop idiotic solutions like tying up a car's tire as a punishment for the driver's double parking, completely ignoring that tying up this car will simply prevent correctly parked cars from moving...there will be no improvement. In a country that paints no lane lines on the streets, has no pedestrian rights whatsoever, has no respect for traffic laws, has no such thing as minimum and maximum speeds, and a traffic police that believes the problem will be fixed by paralysing a street to check car licences, how will there be progress?" [.....] **"There will be no progress, unless we start dealing with the problem and stop covering up for the failure that is the ministry of interior!"***

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## **Heba Afify**

### **The Deep Return**

*"Amr Hamzawy warned of the danger of the tendency of both society and the political elite to accept the return of Mubarak's men and their practices. **"The post June 30 arrangements gave the elites of the pre-revolution state the chance to return to the forefront of the political, media and social scenes. They were able to renew their blood and re-enter the state and its institutions amid the fascist hysteria and the constant use of traditional scapegoats,"** he writes. For him, the rebuilding of the police state under the pretext of terrorism can only have catastrophic political ramifications"*

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## H.A. Hellyer

### Will post-Morsi Egypt live up to great expectations?

***"The key question on the minds of many western policymakers is this: does the current road-map lead to the eventual establishment of a new Egyptian Republic, where Egyptians feel the state more accurately lives up to its expectations and demands? And if it does not, what guarantee is there that Egyptians will tolerate this continued state of affairs? In the final analysis, that is the question that not only western policymakers wonder about – it is the question that Egyptians should be most concerned about"***

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## **President Sisi !?!**

### Bassem Sabry

#### Who Is Egypt's Next President?

***"Of all the 2012 elections candidates, two still stand out. Ahmed Shafik, Mubarak's last prime minister and Morsi's run-off opponent (scoring more than 48%), arguably is the most popular political figure in the country right now after Sisi, but would still prove to be very divisive for the non-Islamist camp in the country. Also, he is 72, but that apparently doesn't seem to stop anyone in Egypt. The other candidate, Nasserist and populist politician Hamdeen Sabahi who surprisingly placed third in the previous elections, is widely regarded to be less popular than he was right after the elections. But for many - especially with the secular-leaning side of the revolutionary camp and within the National Salvation Front - he might be the only obvious candidate to field, and it has been allegedly a general understanding within the NSF that he would be their candidate. At 59, Sabahi is young by Egyptian politician standards, and he has a good enough relationship with the military that would allow them to work together. Both Sabahi and Shafik have stated they would not run if Sisi ran and that they would endorse him in such an event,***



**but Sisi's official position remains that he will not seek the presidency.** For many reasons, this is arguably the better course for Sisi to take. Still, it would be premature to fully discount the possibility of Sisi changing course and running, whether due to the mounting public and media pressures, with too many Eisenhower and De Gaulle references being made, or in the event of the lack of a strong candidate that Sisi could work with, or at the very least not pose any serious potential troubles"

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**Wael Nawara**

### **Why General Sisi Should Not Run For President of Egypt**

**"Egypt may not need Sisi as a president as much as youth need to regain confidence that there are national figures who put the interests of the country above their own.** Egypt does not need the military to rule, but rather – during the coming transitional stage – it needs the army to serve as a strong guarantor, which can support legitimacy and the democratic transformation capitalizing on its popularity and credibility in mobilizing popular support for elected governments and necessary, though sometimes unpopular, reform measures" [.....] **" The message I wish to deliver to Sisi is: "Complete your favor, and don't yield to pressures demanding that you run for president. For Egypt needs restoring faith and confidence, more than it needs any president"**

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**Ziad Akl**

### **Sisi come, Sisi go!**

"Whether Al-Sisi ends up being president, or another military or intelligence figure like Murad Mowafi or Hosam Khairallah or whoever else the numerous security institutions of Egypt decide to nominate and end up filling the office, real power will remain in the hands of the deep state institutions – mainly security institutions and the bureaucratic elite. The fundamental structural problem so inherent within the system in Egypt is far from over. As long as we believe that individuals hold the answer instead of institutions and principles; then we will simply wait for one charisma after the other, a Sisi comes, a Sisi goes; it's all the same. What we need to ask is not who will be president, but rather, how will he be president and by who's support"

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## **Egypt's Revolutionaries: What, Who and How to Move from Principles to Action ?!**



**Mohamed A. Fouad**

### **One-hit wonders**

***"Kefaya, April 6 Youth Movement, Tamarod. It remains a mystery as to why none of these movements gave rise to long lasting organized movements. This is in large due to the lack of a long term vision. From Kefaya to Tamarod, the movements which have sprung in the Egyptian political scene were bound to single objectives. Once those objectives were fulfilled, these movements were left in a limbo. While I agree that political progression requires the presence of change agents, it is the continuity part that is seriously lacking here. There remains the fundamental flaw of mistaking motion for action, and thus leaving all those movements as nothing but one-hit wonders"***

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**Wael Nawara**

### **Egypt Should Preserve Unity Among Disparate Parties**

***"This is why the government must preserve unity between the coalitions of January 25 and June 30 through prudent policies, so that it can sustain popular support of the interim administration and its road map. Failure to do that could lead to a new wave of protests and clashes that could consume the entire country at a time when Egypt's economy has been weakened by several years of unrest. The authorities must also even try to attract members of the third bloc, the Islamists, into an inclusive political process to bolster stability. This is what the economy desperately needs, be it for the sake of tourism, the flow of investments or the recovery of consumer and business confidence "***

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**H.A. Hellyer**

### **Where are They?**

***"Where are they? Where have they all gone? Where are all those young activists from the 25 January revolution?" It is a question that I get asked almost every time I engage with non-Egyptians; those based in Egypt or those who live in other capitals. The cynical among them reckon those activists 'sold out', and are essentially cheerleaders***

for the military, despite having protested against the military in late 2011 and much of 2012. The idealists are just left confused, because they haven't a clue where these 25 January activists actually are. **The truth is – many of those activists also do not know where they themselves are. But they remain – and their part in Egypt's story is not over**" [.....] "I saw one of those activists recently, and asked him, "So, what now?" He smiled, and said, "You know, I always felt I did not do enough for Egypt while Hosni Mubarak was in power. I get to make up for it now." However marginal the thought of this maverick middle trend is, it still lives. While much of Egypt, whether pro-military or pro-MB, might regard these revolutionaries to be traitors to "the cause", these activists still have a lot more to give. **One day, Egypt might realise that while these revolutionary activists were imperfect, they were the most honourable manifestation of the promise that was Tahrir Square – and none have provided Egypt with a better vision than that promise**"

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**Egypt's revolutionaries: what do they stand for?**

**"Three things have become rather clear in Egypt. 1. The military's popular base in Egypt is extremely solid**, despite the excessive and tremendous use of force against supporters of the deposed leader Mohammad Mursi. **2. The pro-Mursi coalition, led by the Muslim Brotherhood, will not disappear – and that it has very little resembling a political strategy, wrongly perceiving that the majority supports them. 3. The pro-revolutionary groups and factions, that neither supports the vision of the Muslim Brotherhood nor the military, have a great deal of work to do.** As of yet it's not clear they've started thinking about what role they need to play" [...] **"As of yet they do not seem to have decided quite what they are going to do next"**[.....] **"It seems that members of the revolutionary camp are waiting for some sort of political opening, after which they will be able to play a role. Almost subconsciously they seem to realise that as long as this political conflict between the Muslim Brotherhood and the military is ongoing, there will be little room for the revolutionaries to achieve anything concrete. They won't ally with either of those factions, but they have also not developed a strategy to ensure that if and when the public arena does eventually open up that they will be in the best position to encourage positive change."**

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## A Third Way.... Really?

Sendmonkey

### The Way of the Revolution Front: A critique

**"If one claims to have a revolutionary vision, it will not work without advocating and pushing for radical changes in the social and cultural fabric of this society.** They do not, partly because of their fear of alienating those future imaginary masses that will supposedly line up behind them, and partly because this front includes many ex- and non-MB activists who will never advocate or accept those "radical" positions as their own. So we are left with this: **a revolutionary group in name, centrist in proposed social values and approach, while pushing for so-called radical socio-economic "reforms"- which they know they can't deliver or implement- in a cynical ploy to gain support from Egypt's largest group, the poor.** In short, an abomination"[.....] **"If you are a politician, then your game is economics; but if you are a revolutionary, your aim is social upheaval"** [...] **"If you want to be revolutionary, then stick to freedom, or stop wasting everybody's time in order to simply derive a sense of purpose for yourselves. It got old last year"**

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Wael Gamal

### A Third Way

**"Ever since General El Sisi, the Minister of Defence, asked the people for their mandate to implement a road map to exit the current crisis, the country has been split into two camps: the army and its supporters on the one side, the Muslim Brothers on the other. We saw the necessity to create a third pole, an umbrella group that would unite all those people who want the principles of the revolution to be upheld. The principle of social justice is the most important of all. It is usually only associated with the economy, but in reality it is highly political.** For instance, under Mubarak, every time workers went on strike, the state would intervene siding with factory owners. This sent a clear signal that the state considered strikes as political gestures of defiance" [.....]



"Crucially, we are focusing on building our grassroots groups outside of Cairo, as youth movements in the rest of the country are strong but have lacked coordination so far. We are trying to learn from past mistakes; when disparate movements with the same aims diluted their impact for failing to coordinate. We want to capitalise on past successes, by creating a lasting political forum that caters to all the social forces willing to pursue the goals of the revolution. We are a minority for now, but in my opinion, the potential support-base is enormous"

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## 73' War Anniversary: The Lessons We Failed to Learn

Nervana Mahmoud

### Egypt's Dreaded War Anniversary

"In fractured nations, anniversaries and national days become dreaded occasions that ignite deep concerns, rather than joyful celebrations. **This year's celebration is associated with the most divisive and challenging crisis in Egypt's contemporary history; a war that was originally between two nations, Egypt and Israel, has transformed into a domestic fight between two insecure sects (pro and anti-coup)**" [...] **"The 1973 war was a legacy of competing narratives. Its bloody 40th anniversary indicates that this legacy is still alive and being used for domestic gains. Both sides manufacture their own version of the truth for political points, but if the war should teach us anything, it is that that political settlement is the only viable outcome. Both-sides are after victory, however, the true victory is one that saves Egypt; otherwise it will only be a pyrrhic victory that can ruin the country for years to come"**

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Zeinobia

### #Oct1973War: The lessons we failed to learn after 40 years

"Turning the president in to a holy idol that does not make a mistake that cannot be questioned or criticized is another reason on why we had a disaster in 1967. **Do I need to talk on how Nasser was turned in to a false God!? Do I need to speak on how in 2013 the**



**media is turning General Abdel Fatah El Sisi in to another Nasser.** No president had that status of an Egyptian idol pharaoh like Nasser and I am afraid El Sisi is doing it again. **Ultra-Nationalism made the Egyptians blind leading them to their defeat in 1967. With our arrogance the media and the regime made the Egyptians including army soldiers and officers that Egypt would erase Israel and kick the Americans' asses because we were smarter than anyone else.** In 1973 the political and army commandship were realistic and dealt with the matter accordingly" [...] **"Our foolish arrogance and ignorance as well do not allow us to read from our past and to learn from our mistake"**

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## **#Oct9: Maspero – Two Years After**



**Salamamoussa**

**Maspero – Two Years After**

*"The Maspero marchers meant to protest the burning of a Church, but since then dozens more have been torched. Those who camped and died at Rab'a wanted the return of Morsi, a goal more elusive today. **In revolutionary Egypt death is offered in place of a plan. Hope is nurtured by plans and positive leadership, both absent. What remains for the average man is to simply reject death, its promoters and those who see it as a political tactic.** While longing for a plan, the average man could at least reject false prophets"*

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**Mai El-Sadany**

**The Maspero Massacre: Two Years On**

*"As an Egyptian expatriate, I will never pretend to be able to imagine the immense sense of loss, physical and psychological hurt, and utter destruction of hope that victims and activists felt on the day of the Maspero massacre, and continue to feel today. As an Egyptian citizen, however, it is my duty to continue to demand that the Armed Forces admit to its lack of success in governing Egypt; it is my duty to refuse the objectification and idolization of an entity whose subordinates have attacked its own people; and it is my duty to mourn those killed at Maspero and in similar attacks. These memories serve as calls to action in the ongoing, and often exhausting, fight for a better Egypt"*

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## Wael Eskandar

### **Remembering the Maspero Massacre: The Sectarian State Lives On**

*"There is something deeply saddening about the memory this time around. Perhaps it's because people are cheering on an army that crushed protesters mercilessly just because they were Copts and shall not retaliate. Perhaps it's because people are cheering on the unreformed regime that incited against a large section of society through its state owned media without any real provocation. Perhaps it's because people believe that the regime has been reformed magically without a single serious step to lead them to believe so" [...]* *"This is still a sectarian state, with its army and intelligence still considering anyone Shiite, Christian, Nubian, Baha'i or from Sinai a potential traitor. There is still a sectarian state that will not protect Copts, or other minorities, nor bring the perpetrators to justice. There's still a sectarian state that does not care for citizens and classifies their worth based on their origins or social status. There's still a state we marched against and tied our ropes around its neck in attempts to bring it down. There's still a state with all its flaws, but a people that are willing to turn a blind eye to its flawed structure yet again"*

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## H.A. Hellyer

### **The Politics of Remembering Death**

***"That is where, it seems, Egypt has come to: a place of tragedy and remembering. But only remembering the tragedy that is against your clique – your camp – your tribe – your cause. Not simply the tragedy of death; not simply the sadness accompanied by the loss of life. For all that people try to make it into a 'human' issue, where all blood ought to be considered as sacred, it is not that. It cannot be that, unless all blood, indeed, is sacred. Until then, the cycle continues – death, tragedy, and the remembrance of it, but only selectively. How unselective you are, when it comes to recognising and honouring those losses you know about, even if they are not personal to you and your cause, does say something about you" [...]*** ***"There is another way. That other way is when all life is considered to be sacred – that, indeed, when one life is lost, all humankind is lost. That other way is what has been called for since the first days of the Egyptian revolution – accountability for the loss of life, and remembering its sacredness, regardless of who is killed, or who does the killings. Call it revolutionary. Call it 'Islamic'. Or call it human. Call it what you want – but try to call it so that no Egyptian will ever call it anything ever again. Because***

if there are no more deadly tragedies, there won't be a need to investigate them"

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## Lebanon

### The Lebanese Dilemma: Dangerous Divisions



#### Moulaahazat

#### Is Michel Aoun Switching Sides?

*"For Aoun to question his 7 year-alliance with Hezbollah at a moment's notice would be an act of political insanity. Switching sides implies that the second side is indeed willing to accept you as a member. And that is probably what Aoun is trying to do with his small yet remarkably strong statements. You might view that describing the new stances by strong is an exaggeration but one must not forget that the FPM is Hezbollah's main national ally and by far his strongest political ally, meaning that any criticism, no matter how small it is, is in fact more harmful than the strongest M14 – or even Amal – political stance against Hezbollah. **Aoun is checking out if any of the M14 leaders will understand his small hints and welcome his statements. Stronger statements at a faster rate – without an M14 welcoming attitude – might throw Aoun all by himself on the outside, which is not a good thing for a Lebanese politician"***



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## Tammam Salam's Options

*"Let's rewind six months. Tammam Salam was supposed to quickly form a government, end the electoral law dispute via a proposed consensual law from the cabinet and finally supervise the elections. But then came the parliament's mandate extension. Then came Al-Qussair and the subsequent Lebanese dilemma. Then came Al-Ghouta and the subsequent Lebanese dilemma. Then came the probable American strike and the subsequent Lebanese dilemma. And with them came the refugees, and the subsequent Lebanese dilemma. **But now that Lebanese politics are making a slow comeback to Lebanon, the lack of solutions to the current deadlock leaves the Prime Minister Designate with several options to end the crisis"***



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## Syria

### Rebel vs. Rebel



Hassan Hassan

### Rebel vs. Rebel

***"Jihadists know that the single greatest threat to their existence is not drone attacks or a regime military offensive, but rejection by local populations. They are paranoid about a repeat of the rise of "Awakening Councils," or sahwat, which began in Iraq's Anbar Province after al Qaeda alienated the Sunni population of the area. Sahwat is a pejorative term among jihadists, who believe that the Americans pitted Sunnis against each other in Iraq, only to betray them three years later by handing power to a Shiite government that marginalized their sect" [.....] "Syrians' growing hostility towards jihadists is not the result of a push from outsider powers -- it comes from genuine public concerns about their***

*presence. As people in rebel-held areas no longer have a need for the jihadists' ruthlessness in battle, moderate groups will have a new opportunity to win the hearts and minds of the local populations in liberated cities and towns, as well as on the front lines. If the world wants an ally in their fight against creeping extremism, they will find a broad array of Syrians willing to help them drive the jihadists out"*

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**Joshua Landis**

### **Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Lashes out at Critics**

*"The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria's spokesman, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, released an audio recording Monday September 2013 to defend ISIS against recent attacks in the media. Everyone has been waiting for this statement ever since the ISIS kicked the North Storm and FSA militias out of Azaz, north of Aleppo. The speculation was that ISIS was preparing to take over the border crossing with Turkey in order to capture the revenue and place a strategic chock-hold on goods moving to Aleppo. Turkey closed the border crossing in response"*

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### **The Islamic Alliance Emerges**



**Rania Abouzeid**

### **Syrian Opposition Groups Stop Pretending**

*"The pretense that the so-called Syrian opposition-in-exile speaks for those inside the country, never firm to begin with, was further exposed late on Tuesday, in a two-minute video statement called "Communiqué No. 1," which was issued by eleven armed rebel groups that are influential in northern Syria. Their message was simple: the Western-backed hotel revolutionaries jetting from capital to capital, claiming leadership in the political National Coalition and an interim government-to-be, don't speak for them—and they won't listen to them. The new coalition, which has yet to announce its name, also said it wants Islamic Sharia law to be the basis of any future government, and that the various opposition parties should unite within "an Islamic framework." [...] " This public*

alliance of affiliates of the F.S.A. and of Al Qaeda, however, is more of a shift on paper than a marked change in how things work on the ground. There has long been operational coördination on a local level—for a particular battle or in a certain geographic area. All that has really happened at this stage is that a fig leaf has dropped. The fighting men within Syria have long despised their political and military leaders-in-exile. It's common to hear them say, "We are in the khanadik"—trenches—"and they are in the fanadik," hotels" [...]"  
*"Syrians have historically been moderate and cosmopolitan. Even within a group like Jabhat al-Nusra, there is a difference between the foreign fighters and the Syrians, who tend to be more pragmatic. **The signatories of Tuesday's statement all want an Islamic state in Syria. But what kind of an Islamic state?"**"*

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**Aron Lund**

### **New Islamist Bloc Declares Opposition to National Coalition and US Strategy**

*"It represents the rebellion of a large part of the "mainstream FSA" against its purported political leadership, and openly aligns these factions with more hardline Islamist forces. That means that all of these groups now formally state that they do not recognize the opposition leadership that has been molded and promoted by the USA, Turkey, France, Great Britain, other EU countries, Qatar, and – especially, as of late – Saudi Arabia. That they also formally commit themselves to sharia as the "sole source of legislation" is not as a big a deal as it may seem. Most of these factions already were on record as saying that, and for most of the others, it's more like a slight tweak of language. Bottom line, they were all Islamist anyway. And, of course, they can still mean different things when they talk about sharia"*

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**The Study of War**

### **The Islamic Alliance Emerges**

***"A new coalition has formed among thirteen Syrian rebel organizations, according to a statement that Liwa al-Tawhid released late on September 24. Liwa al-Tawhid has hitherto fallen under the umbrella of the Syrian Military Council. The new Islamic alliance – which includes some of the most powerful factions from the FSA, the Syrian Islamic Front, and also Jabhat al-Nusra – aims to fight to establish***

***an Islamic state under Shari'a law in Syria. It also rejects the Syrian National Coalition and the leadership of Ahmad Tohme – recently elected as the head of the Syrian opposition's interim government" [.....] "The coalition could also represent another major inflection point in the organization of the rebels in Syria. Repudiation of the interim government is a major development and cause for concern, though perhaps unsurprising, given its inefficacy. The greater consequence may lie in the implicit departure of this coalition from the leadership of the SMC, the unified military command of the opposition. Erosion of FSA-controlled ground lines of communication across the Turkish border weakens the SMC, and abandonment by some of its most powerful brigades may leave the SMC in shambles"***

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**Charles Lister**

**Syrian Militant Islamists Denounce SNC and Form “Islamic Alliance”**

***In a video issued late on September 24, the chief political leader of Liwa al-Tawhid, Abdulaziz Salameh, speaking on behalf of 12 other Islamist militant groups in Syria, condemned the “unrepresentative” Western-backed Syrian National Coalition (SNC) and called explicitly for “an Islamic framework based on sharia [Islamic law].” [....] "The announcement is potentially extremely significant for the long-term nature of the Syrian opposition" [....] "Perhaps most significantly, this has served to concretely underline what has been clear to many for some time: that the SNC/SMC has represented an opposition leadership far removed from what has become an increasingly Islamist-led insurgency" [.....] "Certainly, there do remain several key moderate groupings in Syria, but if this development leads to a consolidated Islamic Alliance, the capacity for such moderates to maintain a long-term grip over the future of Syria will be considerably weakened. This can only be interpreted as damaging to U.S. and Western interests in Syria"***

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## Hassan Hassan

### **The Army of Islam Is Winning in Syria**

*"The situation inside the country is more fluid and nuanced than many groups' hard-line slogans would suggest. Moderates can be members of hard-line groups and vice versa. Some groups, such as Suqour al-Sham, include both secular members and Islamist veterans of the insurgency against the U.S. occupation of Iraq. For example, a former judge at Aleppo's cassation court, a secular Syrian who does not pray, nevertheless supports an Islamic identity to the state" [.....] **"The FSA is still salvageable as a moderate force. But the way the Syrian battlefield is shifting should be a wake-up call for the opposition and its backers: The project of establishing a counterweight to extremists, which will be necessary to salvage Syria's future, has so far been feeble.** A true alternative would be the creation of a rebel organization that is not a club for vetted seculars, but a structure that includes all actors -- of varying levels of religiosity -- that can help to curb extremism. If the opposition continues to be disconnected from the dynamics on the ground, however, it will only lead more moderate forces into the extremists' orbit"*

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