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Sinai: "Operation Eagle" – Easy Points



Nervana Mahmoud

Sinai And The Open-Ended Adventure

"It is hard to describe what has happened in Sinai in the last few weeks, although "surreal" may be the only appropriate word. The logic in these events depends on your perspective. ***If you are like me and want a solution for Sinai's deteriorating security situation, then these events may look odd and bizarre****. However, if you are following Egypt closely, then it all makes perfect sense.* ***In simple terms, the best way to describe Morsi is as a man who likes to offer something to everyone, mainly to gain easy points in his conquest to solidify his power and build a new legacy****. He is a man with much verbal punches but one who does not take risky gambles. His management of the Sinai crisis is just one example: in it, Morsi offered something to each player in the arena"*

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Nour Bakr

On Morsi, the Muslim Brothers, SCAF and The Future of Egypt

"The lack of transparency over what has been happening in the Sinai, for years, inhibits a fully practical and useful discussion. It is never as simple as just 'lets bomb the terrorists into submission'. The best counter-terrorism strategy is always multi-pronged and draws on other strategies that have little to do with security directly – but just having that discussion requires and demands a level of transparency that Egyptians do not have at present. This is not a problem that exists simply under Dr Morsi's administration, but a long-standing one"

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Egypt and Iran: It's Complicated



Amro Ali

Egypt and Iran: it's complicated

"The recent reported saga at the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Iran, in which Egyptian president Morsi (given the red carpet treatment and all) diverged from the Iranian script when he stated, "Our solidarity with the struggle of the Syrian people against an oppressive regime that has lost its legitimacy is an ethical duty as it is a political and strategic necessity." [....] "The Syrian delegation walked out in fury and Iranian state TV attempted to limit the damage to their Syrian ally by mistranslating Morsi's words to the effect of "solidarity with the Syrian nation against the plot that has been implemented against this country." Business as usual in Iran. Overlapping interests that include the Palestinians, trade, Suez Canal access, petroleum, and an Egyptian faltering economy will lead to an improvement in Egypt-Iran relations despite this episode and the Syrian question"

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The Secularists/Liberal Front: How to Bypass The Fragmentation of The Opposition



Sarahngb

Revolution Guilt

*"**Today, truth is, so many of us out there are depressed. We are feeling guilty**. It's that simple. An unbearable amount of guilt. Our feelings about our martyrs turned to utter sadness..."What a waste"..."what a shame"..."What was it all for? [.....] "Despite the fact that all signs pointed to an MB government, we were certain that we would make it in parliament, and make it strong"[.....] "**No one needs to blame us, our guilt is more than sufficient. But instead of blaming us, join the fight. Must you either congratulate or berate? Must you always just spectate? Join the fight.** Because despite all the guilt and the stress and the weighing burden and the loneliness and the confusion we are still trying. We haven't given up yet and we are here to fight"*

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Bassem Sabry

About The August 24 "Revolution"

"This entire affair raised many questions and comments. Setting aside the August 24 protests themselves, some lamented the overall form of the anti-Ikhwan opposition and its landscape in general, the fragmentation of the opposition, questioned who can speak in its name, and some of course wondered whether such an opposition theoretically has capability of rallying massive amounts of people into the streets if ever desired to do so. One other question remained on how the more mainstream and post-revolutionary opposition groups could handle the expected return of Ahmed Shafiq to Egyptian politics and his allegedly soon-to-be-announced new political party. Shafiq, who only lost the elections by a relatively narrow margin, is a self-styled liberal and a staunch anti-Brotherhood opponent who still theoretically commands considerable support, but bears the label of "folool." Some, of course, wondered if the word felool would ever have an expiration date, and questioned definitions of it"

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Mahmoud Salem

Just Make It Look Good!

"We are going to have elections. Again. Very soon.Kill me now. *It doesn't help that I know that it won't be that much different for the secular parties than last year's parliamentary elections. Sure, there are new parties and coalitions and currents being formed every day, but one has to wonder if it will lead to anything tangible or real this time around, and by that I mean an actually representative Parliament. So far, from what I am seeing, it seems like no one is learning from their mistakes last time around. And while* ***I am as excited about the legal formation of the Dostoor Party as the next guy, I am worried that they will make the same mistakes that all the parties that were formed last year made, especially the big one: The Vision"***

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Ashraf Khalil

As Egypt's Islamists Cement Their Rule, Can Secularists Reclaim the Revolution?

"They're just starting to realize that [elections] are fast approaching," said secularist writer and analyst Bassem Sabry. "Everyone wants to get into some alliance or another. It's a question of how and who approaches who and who's in charge."[....]" The progressive bloc is unable to reach out to that crowd. There's too much distrust on both sides."

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Bassem Sabry

Five Challenges Facing Egypt's Liberals

The liberals and moderate opposition are trying to not get left out of the game again, and they were busy this past week assembling, dismantling and reassembling a variety of new political parties, coalitions and associations in preparation for a new round of parliamentary elections, expected to be held in the coming months" [....] "Business as usual for Egypt's liberal and moderate opposition means that they would indeed just "come and go." ***If they want to stick around, here are five key issues the opposition should address as they consider their strategy for running candidates in the next round of parliamentary elections*****: Electoral**

Law, Coalition, The Islamist Alliance And Ground Work, Messaging And Platform & The Return Of Ahmed Shafiq"

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Libraliyya

Getting Liberalism Right: The Egyptian Case and its Future

"Egyptian progressive activists and the Islamists share something in common: a fundamental, unquestionable belief that reform, secular or religious, comes from up above. Both have an illiberal totalitarian attitude about the state and its powerful role in reforming society*. One is led by the banner of progressivism and the other by the banner of Islamism" [.....] If there is to be any hope for authentic liberalism to take hold in Egyptian society, Egyptian activists and reformers have to understand that liberalism did not start in the nineteenth century with the advent of the welfare state" [....]" Egyptian activists must start organizing and working at the grassroots level. They need to explain that economic progress does not come from the state, but that it comes through individual hard work and motivation, first and foremost, by advancing oneself economically" [.....]"Finally, they need to be outspoken and truly independent of the state; first by demanding freedom from the state for all, instead of more dependence on and servitude to it"*

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Islamization & Brotherhoodization

Zeinobia

And Egypt Got its First Veiled News Anchor

"Fatima Nabil has entered the history of Egyptian Television as the first veiled news anchor. Nabil is the first among 3 veiled news anchors that will appear in Ch.1 and Nile News of Egyptian TV starting from today" [.....] "This is just a step. Of course as this happens during the era of a President that comes from Muslim brotherhood some people fear that this is another step of the so-called "Brotherhoodization" of the society. ***Well those people must realize that 80% of the Muslim women in Egypt are veiled and***



that banning veiled ladies from working in their own National TV as TV anchors is actually discrimination. *Those people must know that there was an old court order since the days of Mubarak that enforces the veiled TV hosts' rights to go back on air.*

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Salamamoussa

Mursi Hearts Qutb

"History served up an ironic moment when it placed Mursi in Iran on the anniversary of Qutb's death. Mursi blurted his views with the blunt sincerity of a true believer rather than the careful articulation of a political leader. In a country of Shi'a Islam he opened his speech by an arcane and obscure reference to the four Caliphs, consciously echoing Qutb. ***Some in the West, including the drone masters, naively applauded his attacks on Iran, while oblivious to the religious symbolism of his speech. Mursi made his declaration of faith in Qutb and directly rejected any form of Islam that is tolerant or syncretic.*** *When historians rightly speak of the golden age of tolerant Islamic civilization, it is an age well past the first four Caliphs.* ***Mursi the politician is also the student of Qutb. Let it not be said that he is not transparent****"*

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Nervana Mahmoud



The Tragedy of Alexandria Book Market

"As part of the cultural heritage of Egypt's second largest city, this street was the subject of a vicious—and frankly barbaric—assault from the new Islamist governor. The Alexandria security service chose the early hours of Friday morning to carry out its assault on the old book market. The attackers did it in style, too; they destroyed the kiosks and threw the books savagely into piles of rubble in the street and then left without even providing an explanation to the distraught owners who depend solely on these kiosks to earn a living"

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The IMF Loan: Not Going So Smoothly



Karim Maged Fawzy

The IMF Loan to Egypt, and Why We Reject It

"The proposed $4.8bn IMF loan to Egypt sparked a heated controversy. While the Government claims the funds are absolutely necessary to rebuild the country's economy, opponents warn against potentially disastrous, far-reaching consequences. Their arguments are summarized here"

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Bassem Sabry

"A problem with the IMF loan to Egypt is that most people feel there is insufficient transparency with regards to terms of negotiation.

Egypt Finance minister "swore" there were no conditions on the IMF loan, no SAPs, but few are buying it, adding to justified mistrust.

Another element raising concerns is that some consider recent moves towards subsidy reform to be related to the IMF agreement which is an easy connection to make.

In any case, there is just a feeling that "we don't know all of what is going on. Personally, I have no objection towards IMF loans in principle as long as we know what is being asked from us in return and we accept it assuming the alternative of taxation/revenue reform in Egypt, do we want a president to enact such wide reform using his wide power now.

If political parties can unanimously agree on a proposal now and ask that is enacted, perhaps. Needs more thought of me still.

The stories of the IMF and the Asian crisis, among others, and how Malaysia passed the bottleneck on its own terms have popular resonance the IMF and/or Egyptian government assuming they already didn't, could issue a bilingual FAQ on, the proposed joint agreement".



Muftah

IMF Amnesia

"In the absence of an active parliament, President Morsi has been conducting the negotiations unilaterally. Even without formal channels for dissent, the looming IMF deal has already sparked significant domestic debate. Some

Islamists are voicing opposition to the deal on religious grounds while leftists are expressing concern about the IMF's respect for unions and public sector employees. Meanwhile, Morsi and the Brotherhood are doing their best to perpetuate IMF amnesia and paste over the IMF's legacy in the interest of a quick economic turnaround. Going forward, the IMF's penchant for elite-based decision-making appears to be on a collision course with Egypt's ongoing political awakening"

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#USEmbassy

Zeinobia



#USEmbassy: Bad day for US embassies in North Africa

"This is the Jihadist flag replacing the US flag at the US embassy in Cairo from short awhile and it is 9/11. Not less than 2000 protesters mostly from Islamists are at the American embassy in Cairo chanting Pro-Islamist anti-American chants escalating on the Walls the once fortress embassy with complete absence from security"

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*"The US ambassador in Benghazi Chris Steven was killed after the attack on the consulate late last night in a huge escalation of its kind. Allegedly Conservatives in Benghazi attacked the embassy to object the so-called insulting film. The protest already started in Libya hours after the protest in Cairo and according to some sources including a Jihadist Facebook the attack was actually to avenge for the murder of Abu Yahia , the Libyan who was believed to be the second man in Al Qaeda on the occasion of 9/11"[.....] "**I will not say anything except from theological point of view embassies and diplomats are not to be targeted to attack"***

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Mohamed El Dahshan

Here we go again: Islamophobia and protests

"The story in brief: An idiot makes a really bad film featuring Prophet Mohammed and his contemporaries as a bunch of bloodthirsty idiotic pederasts. According to the film, Muhammad was an illegitimate child, and the Quran was written by his wife's cousin, and current-day Muslims go around slaughtering Christians. And that's just in the 13-minute preview that has been making the rounds on the internet (the authenticity of which has been confirmed). Yes, it's chock-full of all the usual Muslim-hating stereotypes, and then some"



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Syria

Assadism



Tony Badran

Bashar's Cult of Personality

"The Obama administration continues to insist that Syria's "state institutions" must be preserved. However, ***what the Samaha case makes clear—by drawing a direct line from Assad's assets in Lebanon to his deputies in Syria—is that Assad has arrogated to himself all of the Syrian institutions that really matter: the security establishment. In other words, the effect of the White House's policy is not just to preserve Alawite hegemony in Syria,*** *but to preserve the cult of personality that Bashar has institutionalized—even after Bashar himself is gone"*

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Maysaloon

Why civil war was Assad's plan all along

"Let us be clear about it, this is one family's grip on a country, not a party's, not a minority's, but one family only and with its barons and loyal core of supporters. Assadism is the litmus test upon which you can test the revolutionary credentials of the artificial opposition that is sprouting domestically. These smart suited and highly educated technocrats with their talk of reform and convenient focus on only the transgressions of the regime's opponents never openly criticize or call for the overthrow of Assad. They have permission to tear the regime to shreds (verbally, of course) but the person of Bashar al Assad is inviolable, and the mere mention of his name in a way that could be construed - even remotely - to be a criticism is avoided"

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The Qatari Initiative



W.Khanfar

Syria: This May Be The Best Chance To Exit The Quagmire

"The Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi's call for Arab-Iranian-Turkish dialogue over the crisis and a safe transfer of power in Syria – which he repeated in his speech to the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Tehran" [...] "The Egyptian initiative is important because it is the first by its newly elected civilian president, and also because it comes after Morsi was able to establish his authority internally by dismissing the previous military leadership. This gives his initiative greater weight abroad and signals a return to Egypt playing its historic leading role. Egypt today appears well qualified to take a balanced position between all the parties: it does not carry any constraining baggage; and given that it represents the spirit of the Arab spring, it has moral authority. All this has pushed the regional parties to respond positively"

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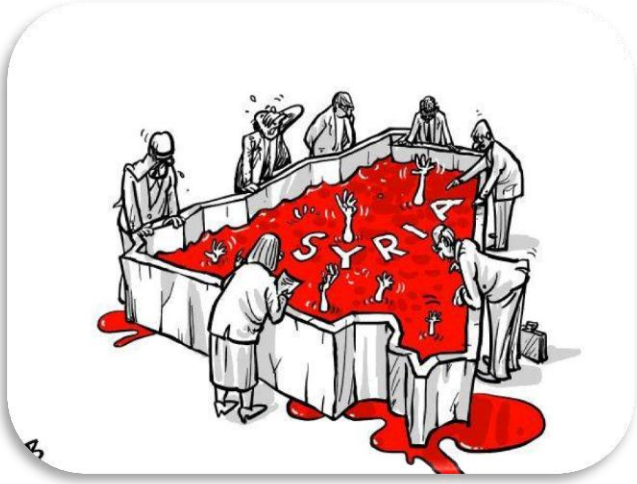

The Fragmented Opposition



İpek Yezdani

Syrian Rebels: Too Fragmented, Unruly

"According to the SNC media officer, Ahmad al-Halabi, there are more than 30 opposition groups fighting in Syria – of whom only 15 could be identified. [....] "According to SNC officials, there were between 70,000 and 100,000 rebels fighting against the Syrian regime in Syria. The most prominent rebel group, the "Free Syrian Army" (FSA) – who listed its main base as in the southern Turkish city of Hatay on its website – is the best connected with the SNC"

Read More + *A full size version map showing different rebel groups*

Libya



Who's Betting on Who? September 12: Electing PM

Mohamed Eljarh

1st Scenario for election of next PM of Libya: AbuShagur wins in a repeat to scenario Al Magariaf was elected head of GNC.

1st Scenario for election of next PM of Libya: Jibril and Abushagur to 2nd round, Barrasi voters will vote for AbuShagur, & He Wins!

2nd Scenario for election of next PM of Libya: National Front is in debt to J&C party for electing AlMgariaf head of GNC, NF (National Front) return favor?!

2nd Scenario for election of next PM of Libya: Barrasi & Jibril to 2nd voting round, AbuShagur voters support Barrasi, and he wins!

3rd Scenario for election of next PM of Libya: Sorry Jibril but I don't see it happening for you!! i really don't! I might be wrong!



Umar Khan

The contenders for Prime Minister: Dr Ibrahim Awad Barasi



*"**Barasi and Jibril** represent two very different groups within the Congress. **Barasi is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Justice and Construction Party (J&C)** whilst Jibril is the head of the National Forces Alliance. Abushagur has emerged as a compromise candidate because of the divisions within the congress members, thus making the competition between the three even more tough"*

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Michel Cousins

The contenders for Prime Minister: Dr Mustafa Abushagur



*"**Deputy Premier Mustafa Abushagur is one of the three front-runners to become Libya's next Prime Minister. The vote in the General National Congress is expected to take place on 12 September**. The private sector is a key to rebuilding the economy. "**We must have a free market**", he says. He would positively encourage it. He also wants to make Libya more accessible to outside investors and technology. "**We are still in the fax age**", he says. He wants to change the regulatory system, cut red tape and bring Libya up to date. He also says he wants to end subsidies. For him, security is the priority. **"We need to take weapons off the streets**", he says. But this should not be achieved by simple force it. Young people with guns are frustrated because they do not have job, he points out; security and jobs therefore go together. "**We have to give opportunities to young people**", he says. The government needs to enter into dialogue with Libya's youth to address the problem"*

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Inkerman Insights

Libya's Next PM: Who's Up To The Challenge?

"It remains unclear as to who will win the position of PM, a role which is expected to be voted on by members of GNC on 12 September 2012. ***Barasi*** *had previously been deemed as one of the PM front runners. However Barasi's popularity has fallen somewhat in recent months, due to the country's ongoing power cuts, with outages lasting up to "three hours" in Tripoli's Janzour district whilst on 05 September 2012, Tripoli International also suffered "substantial" power failure for at least six hours. The frequent power cuts may therefore fuel more support for* ***Abushagur,*** *or even Misrata's independent candidate,* ***Dr Mohamed Barween****, who has been praised for successfully organising his city's local elections on 20 February 2012. Indeed, some reports indicate that Barween's popularity appears to be growing significantly among independent members of the GNC."*



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Heads Hunting: Abdullah al-Senussi Is Back



Mohamed Eljarh

The Significance of Handing Abdullah al-Senussi to Libya

"Libya received Abdullah al-Senussi from Mauritania on Wednesday September 5th. A Libyan government delegation including justice minister, finance minister and army chief received al-Senussi from the Mauritanian authorities in Nouakchott airport. [....] "Libya's elected General Congress will be working to portray the new Libya as a country that respects international law and human rights. Also, if the trials of Gaddafi's officials was fair and transparent, then international confidence in Libya's newly emerging democracy would be unshakable. Furthermore, Libya's success in providing Gaddafi's son and officials with a fair trial would encourage the



international community to use their intervention in Libya as a model to exert their authority on similar situations elsewhere in the world"

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The MB's Lost Once Again, Abushagur Is The New PM



Michel Cousins

Abushagur to Be New Prime Minister

"Libya's Deputy Prime minister, Mistafa Abushagur, has been elected by the General National Congress as Libya's new Prime Minster. In the second, run-off round, he beat Mahmoud Jibril by the thinnest of margins. He took 96 votes to Jibril's 94. Of the 190 members present and voting, he won a wafer thin 50.53 percent of the votes compared to Jibril's 49.47 percent" [...] "Abushagur is expected to take over next month. He now has to draw up a cabinet and present it to the General National Congress for approval. This will take another two weeks"

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Jordan

Rising Prices & Political Rights: "Freedom is from God Whether You Want It or Not Abdullah"

Full YouTube Video – Friday Demonstrations



Rani Dababneh



Why did the King reverse the PM's decision? Extreme Solutions

"King Abdullah II moved quickly to block a sharp unrest and angry protests all over the kingdom, by ordering the government to freeze the fuel price hike decision immediately, suspending the new 10% raise and going back to the same old - already expensive - prices. Despite the fact this decision has relieved the "severe" unrest, and urged some people to celebrate, yet the unrest has remained for sure. People have been actually worrying more about decision

making in Jordan, that should be leading to a social, political, and financial relief to our kingdom that is said to be cash-poor"

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CENSORED





Free Net Jo

Jordan Moves To Censor Online Freedom Of Expression

"A proposed law requiring electronic publications to obtain a license and granting executive authorities the power to close down unlicensed sites threatens freedom of expression online. The government on August 22, 2012, sent the draft amendments to the Press and Publications law to parliament for approval. "The government has long imposed restrictions on how Jordanians may express their thoughts and opinions, now it is trying to extend those restrictions to online expression."



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Alexander McNabb

Jordan Rubberstamps Web Curbs

"Jordan's lower house yesterday passed the amendments to the press and publications law which were behind the recent online 'blackout' protest in the country. The amendments bring websites under the regulatory framework established for newspapers and their passing saw protests outside parliament, with journalists and the Jordanian Press Association opposing the move"

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ArabReform

Jordan: A Flowerless Spring

To this day, the reform movement in Jordan has yet to embrace the slogan, "down with the regime". The Jordanian political system has become submissive and the King remains, even if only in public, cordoned off by a red line exempting him from accountability. Criticizing him is punishable by law according to the Constitution. There are also highly influential cultural factors reinforced by the deeply-rooted opinion held by many Jordanians that royalty is fully above rebuke. However the issue is naturally not this simple. According to the Constitution, the King claims a monopoly over power in Jordan. The Constitution stipulates that the ruling system is a parliamentary monarchy which is vested

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Palestinians



Refugees: The Right of Return is Back

Iyad El-Baghdadi

A Letter from a Palestinian Refugee to a Syrian Refugee By Ibrahim Jaber Ibrahim

"Listen to me, I have a 63 years more experience in this "job" than you: Don't take pictures with Goodwill Ambassadors, don't complain to them about how hot it is or about the pebbles you found in bread. Tell them that your problem is not emotional, and that an Angelina Jolie visit will not solve it. ***And be careful not to ask for a better tent, as there is no tent better than another****"*

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#EndOslo



Abir Kopty

West Bank protests expose Oslo as the prop of occupation

*"Nineteen years after the Oslo Accords were officially signed on September 13, 1993, **it is clearer than ever that the Accords have blocked Palestinian rights of freedom, return and self-determination**. The current protests shed light on this disastrous burden for Palestinians. Protests are spreading rapidly across cities in the West Bank, including general strikes in protest of high prices. At first, protests were orchestrated by Fatah and directed against Salam Fayyad, the Palestinian prime minister, blaming him for the economic crisis and rising prices. Protests were seen as an opportunity to dispense with Mr Fayyad and divert people's anger away from the rest of the Palestinian Authority, as well as to demonstrate to donor countries the necessity of financial aid"*

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Palestinians for Dignity



Why do we need to abolish the Paris Protocol?!!

"Why are prices here, and especially the price of gasoline, constantly rising? We all recognize that each time the Israeli government raises prices, especially the price of gasoline in Israel; we are obligated to do the same here! This is because the Paris Protocol stipulates that our Value Added Tax (VAT) is only allowed to be less than Israel's by 2%, and the difference in the final price of gasoline to the consumers in the occupied Palestinian territories cannot be more than 15% of the price to the consumer in Israel, even though the average income in Israel is three times higher than our average income, and the per capita GDP in Israeli is almost 30 times higher than in Palestine! Simply put, the Paris Protocol controls our fuel prices"

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#PalProtests

YouTube Video, Hebron Sep 10th 2012: "The People Want to Overthrow the President"

"The Team Palestina Facebook group reported that 60 Palestinians were injured in Nablus during clashes with the police, and that Nablus mayor, Adli Ya'ish, was mildly injured while trying to intervene between the protesters and the police. Youth activists protesting against the sharp increase of prices and corruption, the protests are nonviolent and peaceful, while several activists warned that some elements are trying to infiltrate their protests in an attempt to create tension and turn these protests in violent confrontations, and acts of destructing to private and public property"

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