

The Muslim Brotherhood's Influence Campaign in Egypt

Amira Oron and Dudi Siman-Tov | No. 2039 | September 30, 2025

This article examines the influence campaign led by the Muslim Brotherhood against the Egyptian regime since the ouster of President Morsi in 2013. The movement operates satellite television channels, websites, and social media networks, while also relying on affiliate movements and cross-border campaigns, with the aim of destabilizing the regime and encouraging internal unrest and resistance. The influence campaign highlights the regime's failures in terms of the economy, infrastructure, and human rights, and depicts President al-Sisi as responsible for the situation. In addition, the movement exploits the war in the Gaza Strip and Egypt's relations with Israel to deepen the rift between the public and the regime. The campaign incorporates additional actors, some of whom are not openly affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood but operate in the same ideological spirit, with a growing convergence between on-the-ground protests and digital amplification on social media. Israel should recognize these processes and study them in order to formulate a relevant policy toward Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood's threat.

Since its founding in Cairo in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and successive regimes in Egypt have been marked by varying levels of tension and rivalry. The current regime, led by President al-Sisi since June 2014, is, in fact, the result of the struggle between the Brotherhood and the Egyptian army, then headed by al-Sisi as minister of defense, which culminated in the Brotherhood's defeat and the removal of President Morsi from the presidential palace on July 3, 2013. This event marked the beginning of a relentless campaign waged by the Egyptian regime against the Brotherhood and its members. The Brotherhood was outlawed, its assets seized, and thousands of activists were arrested, tried, and in some cases executed. Since then, the regime has continued to act against the Brotherhood in numerous ways and across multiple platforms, including academic studies, books, films, and television series—all designed to consolidate a national narrative portraying the Muslim Brotherhood and its members as enemies of the state.

The Muslim Brotherhood's Activity Against the Egyptian Regime

Due to the pressure and measures taken against it, the Muslim Brotherhood does not operate in an organized or overt manner within Egypt, and its supporters and followers conceal their ideological affiliation. The regime is aware of this and acts accordingly to prevent the movement from re-establishing itself. Outside Egypt, however, the movement exploits every form of media and social network to undermine the regime and encourage resistance both domestically and abroad among its supporters worldwide. It operates websites producing news reports, videos, and commentary on all domestic and foreign policy issues related to Egypt. It also runs television channels broadcasting, among other places, from Istanbul.

The influence campaign is directed first and foremost against the current Egyptian regime and is intended to pave the way for the Brotherhood's return to power by exhausting and embarrassing Egypt and by highlighting the regime's failures and the damage it causes the state—through false and distorted reports. One claim in particular is that the current Egyptian state is Muslim but not Islamic, and that its regime is heretical and assists Israel in its war against Hamas.

Messages aimed at Western audiences focus on violations of civil and human rights in Egypt. It is claimed in part that if the Brotherhood returns to Egypt's political arena, it will not seek to carry out a revolution but rather to integrate and present a political alternative. This reflects the Brotherhood's consistent strategy of "double discourse": internally—emphasizing the Islamic narrative and accusing the regime of heresy; externally—adopting a democratic discourse of human rights in order to preserve and recruit international legitimacy.

The Brotherhood and its activity are divided into three fronts: The London front, led by Salah Abdel-Haq; the Istanbul front, headed by Mahmoud Hussein; and the "Current of Change" front, led by Mohamed Montasser.

Its main communication channels are:

Television channels: Mekameleen, Rabia, Al-Sharq, Misr al-An;

Websites: Ikhwan Online, Ikhwan Web, Ikhwan Wiki, Ikhwan Search, Ikhwan Book, Rassd;

Social media accounts on Facebook, Telegram, and other networks operated by individuals and communities identifying with the Muslim Brotherhood;

Research institutes, including the Egyptian Institute for Political and Strategic Studies, based in Istanbul;

The Brotherhood's periodical, *Majallat al-Da'wa*;

Al-Jazeera TV and Qatari-funded newspapers, including *Al-Quds al-Arabi* and *Al-Arabi al-Jadid*, which promote the agendas of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas.

Key Issues Raised by the Brotherhood Against the Regime

Domestic Issues. The Muslim Brotherhood primarily accuses the regime of mishandling the economic crisis. Another closely related issue is the country's failing infrastructure, where citizens directly experience the regime's inability to provide adequate services. Frequent and deadly road and train accidents, as well as building fires, are cited repeatedly. Recurring summer power outages, due to insufficient electricity supply, remain a particularly sensitive issue for both the public and the regime. According to the Brotherhood, these matters demonstrate the regime's inability to govern effectively.

The regime's strategy of attracting investment—particularly from Gulf states through land sales for construction and development—also draws criticism. Opponents accuse the regime of relinquishing parts of the homeland to cover its heavy debts. On January 11, 2025, the website Rassd [published a post](#) responding to an announcement about a Saudi investment in a Red Sea tourism project. The post, titled "The Map of Selling Egypt During the al-Sisi Era," featured an image of President al-Sisi holding a "For Sale" sign with a map of Egypt behind him.

Another effort seeks to erode public trust in the leadership, government, and army by spreading false reports, half-truths, and distortions. For example, Egypt's military procurement is portrayed as unnecessary, designed solely to please the president, the commander-in-chief, and senior officers—at the expense of public needs. Criticism of the army is effectively criticism of the Egyptian state itself since the army is Egypt's most important institution and its backbone. This campaign also highlights Egypt's military buildup in relation to Israel—addressed below.

The Brotherhood's campaign devotes significant attention to human rights issues in Egypt, particularly the treatment of detainees and prisoners. Seeking to maintain the loyalty of its followers, many of whom have relatives imprisoned due to their affiliation with or support for the Brotherhood, the movement frames these individuals for Western audiences as "prisoners of conscience." For example, on June 6, 2025, Salah Abdel Haq, the leader of the London front, [issued greetings](#) to Egypt's "prisoners of conscience" for the Eid al-Adha holiday.

Criticism of the regime intensified in June of this year as the Brotherhood prepared to mark the anniversary of its removal from power. Its affiliate movement, Hasm, which seeks to create the impression that it operates inside Egypt while actually running its media arm from Turkey, issued a statement declaring a return to violent activity in Egypt. Videos purportedly showed its members training for such operations. This threat appears linked to the plight of imprisoned Brotherhood members and reports of their harsh conditions of incarceration.

To broaden criticism of the regime and recognizing Egyptians' reluctance to speak openly online, the Brotherhood's Isnad movement, operating from Turkey under the leadership of exiled Egyptian filmmaker and Brotherhood supporter Ezz al-Din Dweidar, [invited Egyptian citizens](#) to send video clips voicing opposition to the regime. These, it promised, would be shared with foreign actors abroad for amplification ("Anyone who has something to say but cannot make his voice heard, record a video and send it to us, and we will make his voice heard").

One expression of the [Isnad campaign](#) in Egypt was an unusual incident that was filmed and published on social media, in which youths stormed a police station—the National Security headquarters near Cairo—and locked officers in a cell because of a claim that the Rafah crossing had been closed. Public protesting like this before cameras was extraordinary, showing a willingness to risk severe retaliation from the regime. Although the Interior Ministry claimed the incident was fabricated, it appeared authentic.

In this context, [a study conducted in Sudan](#) suggests this is part of a broader, cross-border pattern: The Brotherhood operates fake profiles, Telegram groups, and news sites in Sudan, Ethiopia, and Jordan. In Sudan, its digital campaigns aim to undermine the regime's legitimacy. In Ethiopia, the campaign focuses on the Grand Renaissance Dam and portrays Egypt downstream as a failed state unable to protect its water resources. In Jordan, as in Egypt, rapprochement with Israel is framed as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. In this way, the Brotherhood seeks not only to destabilize Egypt but also to generate coordinated regional pressure.

Foreign Issues. At the forefront of the Brotherhood's campaign is the Palestinian issue, with particular emphasis on the war in the Gaza Strip. The war that Israel is waging against the

Gazan population, as it is portrayed, with all its harsh dimensions—mass killings (including children), destruction, and starvation—is fully exploited to discredit the Egyptian regime and mobilize supporters to object to both Israel and the Egyptian regime. President al-Sisi and his government are depicted as collaborators with Israel, enabling starvation, massacre, and devastation. The Brotherhood argues that Egypt fails to assist Gazans through its available diplomatic channels and exerts insufficient pressure on Israel in the military and economic spheres. By effectively supporting Israel, it claims, Egypt keeps Gazans trapped in the Strip by refusing to open the Rafah crossing.

In June, the Brotherhood made extensive use of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla of activists who departed Tunisia en route to Gaza but were blocked by Egyptian authorities. This served as “proof” that Egypt was collaborating with Israel against the Palestinians, contributing to their starvation and deaths. Egyptian officials and commentators, however, rebutted these claims, stressing that since the start of the war, Egypt has consistently worked to deliver humanitarian aid through the Rafah crossing.

Another prominent dimension of the Brotherhood’s support for Palestinians and Hamas has been the organized protests outside Egyptian embassies worldwide. At the first such protest on June 30, 2025, at the Egyptian embassy in The Hague, demonstrators linked two issues: Egypt’s ongoing human rights violations and its role in maintaining the Gaza blockade. The phenomenon spread rapidly, with 16 demonstrations taking place by the end of July 2025, some of which involved vandalism—spray-painting, break-ins, or attempted intrusions. Each protest was filmed and circulated virally. Isnad promoted its campaign under the slogan: “Besiege their embassies until they lift the siege on Gaza.” Midan, which is active in the digital sphere and identifies as a youth movement that seeks to bring about the downfall of the al-Sisi regime, also used the Palestinian issue prominently in its publications.

The Brotherhood has long criticized Egypt’s relations with Israel, portraying them as further evidence of the illegitimacy of al-Sisi’s regime for maintaining official ties with an “illegitimate entity.” The unprecedented wave of Israeli [media reports](#) (source unclear) in 2025 highlighting Egypt’s military buildup and heightened presence on the Sinai border, depicted as a threat to Israel, played into the Brotherhood’s hands. Its publications emphasized tensions and gaps between Egypt and Israel, especially on sensitive military-security issues, aiming to undermine the peace treaty’s significance and mutual commitments in the eyes of Egyptians. For example, on January 6, 2025, the Rasd website published what it described as Israel’s reasons for concern over Egypt’s construction of security fences in Sinai, claiming this angered Israel and was seen as a violation of the Camp David Accords. Although factually baseless, the Brotherhood deliberately uses the term “violation of the peace treaty” as a rhetorical strategy to question the treaty’s validity and delegitimize peace relations in Egyptian public opinion.

Implications of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Influence Campaign Against Egypt

1. **Shift from traditional media to social networks:** With technological development and growing social media use in Egypt, the Brotherhood has expanded its activity online, turning platforms into a constant and intensive arena of influence, especially among the younger generation expected to lead resistance against the regime. This online presence of the Brotherhood explains the repeated regime warnings to the public not to trust online information. Commentators, TV hosts, and senior journalists also

highlight the regime's concern over the Brotherhood's campaign, its negative effect on public opinion, and the internal instability it fosters.

2. **Integration of protests and digital influence:** Physical protests themselves become viral media events. Demonstrations at embassies are not meant to take over them but rather to document events and circulate them, challenging the regime's international image. Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdel-Aty has addressed the issue, issuing instructions to Egyptian diplomats worldwide on how to handle protesters.
3. **Involvement of other movements:** The campaign benefits from support by affiliated groups, led by Isnad. The phenomenon of campaigns that are unidentified and encourage opposition to the regime reflects a convergence of forces and interests.

Implications for Israel

From Israel's perspective, it is important to monitor the Brotherhood's influence campaign against Egypt to identify the domestic issues burdening the Egyptian public and challenging the regime. Furthermore, understanding the rift the Brotherhood seeks to generate between the regime and society will help Israel better assess Egypt's policy considerations and approaches toward Israel. Such an assessment will enable Israel to craft a balanced and measured policy toward Egypt—particularly in shaping public messaging and official statements by Israeli leaders on matters related to Egypt, and especially the Palestinian issue.

Editors of the series: Anat Kurz, Eldad Shavit and Ela Greenberg