

Middle-East New-Media • A Weekly Coverage • Editor: Orit Perlov

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Sexual Assault – Women's Silence is Over

The Daily Beast

Sexual Assault as Political Tool: Men Attacking Women at Tahrir Square by Sarah A. Topol



"On the night former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was sentenced to life in prison, 26-year-old IT officer Nihal Saad and four of her friends joined the tens of thousands who returned to Tahrir Square to protest the verdict, which many believed would be reversed on appeal. At 8:30 p.m., they were attacked by a group of men whose numbers seemed to double by the minute"

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Zeinobia

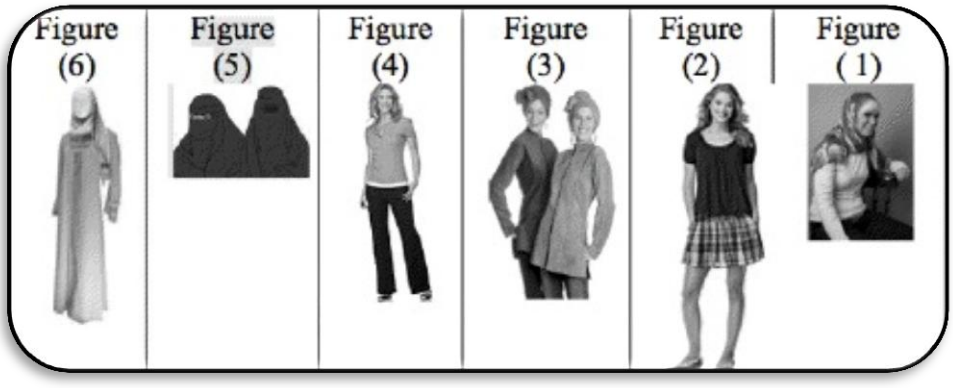
#EndSH: Once Again We Face Ugly Reality

"Last Friday a group of activists mainly from ladies decided to have a march against sexual harassment in Tahrir square , it was not matter of hours when we heard that those ladies were attacked , harassed sexually and chased throughout the streets of Downtown Cairo" [....] "Another thing to all those educated Egyptians on twitter from Upper and Middle classes from Mubarak and Shafk's supporters who are happy and feel proud that the ugly protesters of Tahrir square are being harassed by the other tramps in the square: It is your country's reputation, of course you do not give a damn for your country's reputation but in the end you will pay a price for not standing for the right with your silence and your hate to the protesters of Tahrir square"

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Holly Dagres

Fight Harassment 101: Egypt's Obstacle to Ending Sexual Harassment



"Sexual harassment has always been a major topic in Egypt.

Whether a random groping while walking in the street, or the sexual assault of Mona Eltahawy or Lara Logan, there seems to be continuity in the issue at hand. 98% of women Egyptian or foreign have reportedly been harassed at least once, whether it be in the form of cat calls, groping, and so forth. Although it has almost become the norm, sexual assaults by groups of men are rather unusual"
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The Third Way



Mahmoud Salem

Fairy Tale

*"**A long time ago, in a galaxy far far away, there used to be a planet called Earth, and on this planet there was a country called Egypt**, which was known for its magnificent beauty, bountiful soil and unpredictable people" [.....] "One day the Egyptians, after having a civilization that spanned millenniums and resisted occupiers, was invaded by such external forces, and the wizards of the land, before they fled, unleashed a curse of their own on the land and its people: "For whomever attempts to rule this land after us, will never really get to enjoy it for long and will suffer great misfortune, death and destruction, and watch his dreams and ambitions crumble in front of their very eyes*" [...] "In order for the curse to be broken and lifted permanently, we advise the next generations to give up on all of their dreams and ambitions of grandeur, and instead to focus on assisting their people to lead better lives"*

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Bassem Sabry

The Revolution Will Be Minimized

*"**There is another way**. In return for their support in defeating Shafiq, the revolutionary and civil forces could demand reassurances from the Brotherhood that they would be ensured one or more powerful vice presidents to represent them, a coalition government headed by a non-Brotherhood prime minister, a constitutional assembly that includes their voices, and reassurances on the future of human rights in Egypt. While some will argue Morsi is capable of winning the elections on his own -- relying solely on the support of the Brotherhood and the Salafists - broadening his popular support base carries undeniable benefits. It would confer an undeniable national and revolutionary legitimacy as well as a more definite mandate as president, which the Brotherhood immensely needs at this point.*

The Brotherhood, on its part, has expressed willingness to consider some of these proposals, but have yet to give the concrete guarantees that could decidedly calm fears, particularly given its continuing political feud with liberal group over the composition of the body that will draft Egypt's new constitution. It would be a dramatic risk to take for Egypt's "civil" revolutionary forces, given their dissatisfaction with the Brotherhood's recent track record, but it could be the only option to save the revolution from a potentially fatal blow. ***The revolutionaries may not become king in this round, but they might have a chance to become kingmakers****"*

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Khaled Fahmy (historian and chair of the history department at the American University in Cairo)

*"**The only force that is capable of extracting us from the present crisis is this third way whose history can be traced all the way back to the 19 century, which has ignited the 25 January revolution, and which is gaining self-confidence day after day.** In contrast to other political forces that bask in past glories or that are mired licking their own wounds, this third way, which does not even have a name,* ***face or shape, is the only force that has a vision****. And as politically savvy this third way appears to be, it is its poetry - not its politics - that promises a salvation"*

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Mai Shams El-Din

*"**Many Egyptians find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place in the first post-Mubarak presidential election**. This political and moral dilemma of having to choose between an icon of the ousted regime and the Muslim Brotherhood candidate has boosted boycott calls as a viable third option" [...] "The boycott campaign, however, according to a video they posted on YouTube is calling on Egyptians not only to refuse to be part of what they call a "charade" but also to hold mass protests on June 16 to draw attention to the fact that the "military dictatorship" overseeing the "sham elections" has no legitimacy" [....]* ***"Over 400,000 of the 23 million ballots cast in the first round were declared invalid. Compared to the voter turnout during the parliamentary elections just six months ago, about 7 million Egyptians did boycott the first round already****"*

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MB's Youth – Self Critic



Arabist

We shall be saved or perish all together by Ibrahim Houdaiby

Issandr El Amrani*: "Houdaiby, who comes from a family that has produced two General Guides of the Muslim Brotherhood, decided to end his membership of the group. He also began to write in various venues, gradually forming an elaborate insider's critique of the contemporary Islamist scene in Egypt..."*

"The Muslim Brotherhood is in need of all the political factions in order to succeed in the election, and it needs them to take part in running the country afterwards, just as these factions need the MB in order to forestall a complete reversion to the Mubarak regime. If these various actors do not realize that, they will all face disaster*" [....] "There is no room for selfishness or clowning around in this electoral battle, nor is there room for settling scores or seeking out narrow personal or organizational gains. Whoever supposes that he can achieve anything of that sort in this contest will get himself and others caught in the old regime's trap, and will compromise both his and others' remaining ability to bring about the success of the revolution"*

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Round One Presidential Votes + Expats Runoff Results: Tables + Graphs + Analysis



Hany Rasmy

Egyptian Expats run-off results

Full Document



Mostafa El-Hoshy

Egypt Round 1 Presidential Votes - Summary and Analysis (Candidate Votes vs. Demographic Variables)

Summary of Key Correlation Findings

It appears that the "get out the vote" campaigns of Shafiq and Morsi worked

as they are the only two candidates to positively correlate with rurality, (both strongly correlated) whereas all other candidates showed negative correlation with rurality.

Shafiq appears to have a broad support base with regards to demographic variables – several demographic variables showing no correlation with his vote percentage (additionally, only rurality was strongly correlated)

Sabbahi has a very specific voter base it seems – literate, urban, educated and "pro-revolution" (the last one based on his negative correlation with referendum yes votes). Additionally, he seems to have garnered the sympathies of the unemployed.

Sabbahi seems to have taken many of the votes that would have gone to Moussa based on the fact that they share the exact same profile with regards to demographic characteristics.

It appears the Islamist push was a large reason that the referendum went through given that both Morsi and Aboul Fotouh correlate with a high percent voting yes in referendum. Additionally, apparently the military effect on that result was not as high given no Shafiq vote correlation (if one assumes he is the military candidate).

Full Document + Graphs

Democracy's Growing Pains



Bassem Sabry

Twitter: Shafiq means you are jailing everyone; Morsi means you are stoning everyone; boycott means you are negative; annulment means you are betraying Egypt…



Amin Elmasry

A Weekend from Hell

"Over the next three days, we will have a verdict on the Constituent assembly, Parliament, and Presidential election! If the three institutions are invalidated, this will constitute soft coup! *It will be impractical to repeat all the elections immediately, so the implication is another 6-12 additional months, or longer, under the reign of SCAF. This scenario will likely include a new constitutional declaration issued by SCAF, and potentially some interim President (if Shafiq is*

*disqualified). However, the chances of this scenario are slim" [....] "**Either scenario (or combination) implies 2-4 more years under military rule**, whether directly or through Shafiq. How the new regime will be received depends on the deals that they are willing to cut with the MB, Salafis, and liberal parties to appease them. Either way, it is unlikely that things will calm down after this round of elections"*

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Bassem Sabry



Mursi, Shafiq or Boycott: A Voter's Guide to Egypt's Presidential Runoff

"Egyptians return to the polls on Saturday for the runoff round of voting in the country's first post-revolution presidential election. Ahram Online has collated all the arguments for and against both candidates – the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Mursi and Mubarak's last premier Ahmed Shafiq – as well as the arguments for and against boycotting the election"

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Mahmoud Salem

No principles + No common vision +pressure from authoritarian regime + manipulation by older players +groupthink = jan25 revolution right now

Morsy is not the revolution's candidate. This is not the Ikhwani revolution. Protect the identity of your revolution, god damn it.

The MB will never keep its word. If u will vote for Morsy and they fuck us coz you are a moron or a coward, we won't forgive you. #boycott

The MB sold u out since day one and destroyed this revolution and now they are sold out in turn. Why support them? #boycott

Please don't tell me that if you support them now they won't forsake u in the future. You can't be that stupid. Of course they will. #boycott

If you had to choose between Romania or Iran as your revolution's example, which would u choose? Neither. So boycott. Have a lovely

When u have two enemies fighting, u stay out of it, organize yourself and then attack the winner. Enemy of my enemy can kiss my ass too.



Safaa Abdoun

Democracy's Growing Pains

*"**No sooner were the preliminary results of Egypt's first post-Mubarak election announced, anger, attacks and accusations rippled through the streets of Egypt**" [.....] ""Egypt is indeed ready for democracy, it just needs training, no transformation will happen one day," argues sociology and political science professor at the American University in Cairo, Said Sadek. "This is very normal as we are just embarking on democracy," he added. Historically, this is the first time for Egyptians to choose their leader. Ever since its foundation the republic has been a semi-monarchy as its first president Mohamed Naguib was forced to resign by Gamal Abdel Nasser who assumed power, succeeded by Anwar Sadat and finally Mubarak. "Put in mind that an autocracy depoliticizes the society so you can't expect people to become politically aware in the span of a year and a half," Sadek noted"[....] "**Egypt has no option other than democracy**."*

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Nervana Mahmoud

What Now for Egypt?

So what's next?
*"No one knows, but one thing is clear: **regardless of who will win the runoff–Shafiq or Morsi— the winner will not be Egypt's next leader**. He will be the "junior" under the authority of the big boss who is currently acting as Egypt's "Security Council" with special veto power, willing to veto any decision that is deemed unsuitable" [.....] "Sadly in Egypt, both SCAF and the Brotherhood are strong believers in Amr ibn al As and his famous quote describing the **Egyptian people: "Their loyalty is to the winner." That is why the game between the preachers and the generals is bound to continue until there is a winner. Meanwhile, expect more instability, violence and even political assassinations**"*

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A Coup by Proxy



Arabist

Who's Unhappy About the Coup Against Parliament?

*"**The ruling by the Supreme Constitutional Court on Thursday has been described by many, including myself, as a coup by proxy**. The only democratically elected institution in Egypt is now gone, the SCAF has regained full legislative powers — i.e. the power to rule by decree — and it's not clear whether the president who will be elected in the next two days will be able to assume his position in any case. Furthermore, we know that SCAF intends to amend the constitutional declaration now in place or perhaps issue a new one altogether. If it looks like a coup and smells like a coup and is based on absurd legal reasoning, it probably is a soft coup"*

"The strange thing is that I don't see much outrage about it outside of Twitter"

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Hussein Ibish

Is There Judicial rule in Egypt?

"The court's newly-asserted, proactive role (which goes far beyond what in the United States is derided as "judicial activism") is greatly contributing to a dangerous atmosphere of uncertainty in Egypt's transition. It's no longer a simply question of what Egyptian voters decide for themselves, but also what the judiciary will allow them to decide. Hopes for real democracy in Egypt are now not only threatened by the potential of a tyrannous Islamist majority secured through elections, or military rule that is either open or behind-the-scenes. ***It is also now being called into question by the direct intervention of judges who appear to be inspired by what can only be described as undemocratic "liberal," or at least anti-Islamist, imperatives"***

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"Alawite Enclave"

Al-Monitor

As Times Runs Out for Syrian Regime, Assad Poised to Establish 'Alawite Enclave'

"The Syrian crisis appears to be entering into its final phase. It is uncertain whether the Assad regime will be able to survive what remains of this year. What is clear though is that the regime has chosen the bloodiest of paths, taking Syria into a period of devastation and civil war, consequently putting its own Alawite community in great existential peril. One can only hope that the end will come soon and that the costs of regime collapse and the establishment of a new political order in Syria will not include tens of thousands of more victims"

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Maher's Boys - The Shabiha: Win or Die

PBS

Syria: Shabiha Militia Member Tells It Like It Is

*With his massive, tattooed muscles, shaved head, bushy black beard and trademark white trainers, Abu Jaafar, 38, looks every bit the figure of terror that is now imprinted on the international conscience. It is militiamen like Jaafar that are believed responsible for recent massacres in Houla and Qbeir, in which nearly 200 Sunni civilians were killed, many of them women and children who were stabbed to death" [....] ""**Each group of Shabiha is linked to a security officer who takes direct orders from Maher,**" he said, suggesting also that the gangs were becoming self-financed from looting and extortion. The way Jaafar tells it; however, **money is not the prime motivator for the violence that follows the call from Mualem**. "**I know the Sunnis will take revenge for what we have done. I am fighting to guarantee a good future for my sons and grandsons. So this is the final battle: Win, or die. There's no third choice."***

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Jadaliyya

Hizballah, Development, and the Political Economy of Pain: For Syria, What is "Left"

"In the meantime, all eyes are on the breaking point in Syria, whether they look towards an unexpected turn of events, or towards full-fledged civil war after the continued breakdown of the little remaining semblance of order and state control. Daily and systematic violence and confrontations have reached Damascus in full force, and there does not seem to be any way back"

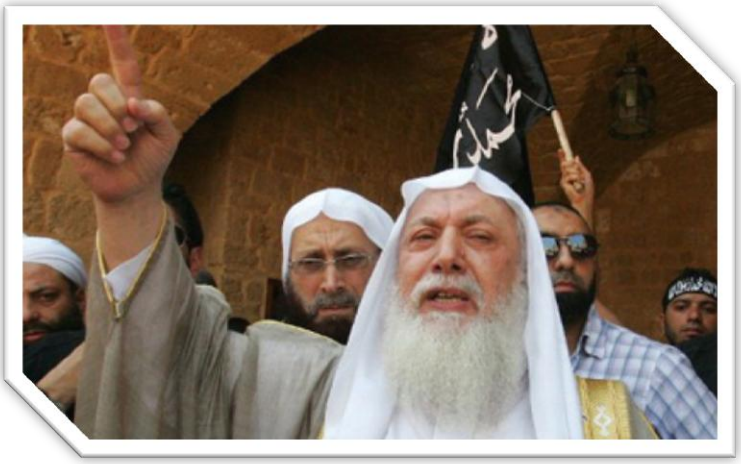
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Lebanon

How to Minimize the Religious Figures Authority

Hanin Ghaddar

Silence Religious Figures



"It seems Lebanon these days is being led by religious figures. Maybe it is time for men of religion to step aside. Maybe it is time for them to do nothing but pray in closed rooms, where no cameras and microphones can enter. They should not be allowed to speak in public if more than five people are present. It is time for all of them, without exception—in Lebanon and the region—to just shut up, at least until we build our immunity against sectarianism" [.....] "To break them, we should start a new kind of revolution, one against our religious institutions and leaders; a revolution against ourselves in order for us to become real citizens. The moment we separate our state institutions from the religious ones, we can start building our country. Otherwise, we will keep hearing provocative sectarian rhetoric that will eventually destroy us, yet again"

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Mustapha

Silencing Religious Figures is not the Answer

I agree with Ghaddar's sentiment that religious figures are spreading venom and deepening polarization in Lebanon. I personally think that they're a vile bunch whose negative contribution to public life and culture outweighs their positive contribution to people's spiritual lives. But ***I don't believe that they should be "silenced", for whatever that means. Blaming religious leaders would be focusing on the symptom instead of the cause.*** *Religious leaders are empowered by two forces:*



- *The Lebanese people who are asking to be represented by them because of the lack of secular authority. The real problem is not that religious leaders are talking. It's that the Lebanese people are listening.*

- *Lebanese politicians who never challenge religious figures' authority. Politicians politely stand by as religious leaders make public statements that are the clear prerogative of elected policy makers*

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Rohan Talbot

Lebanon: The Dark Side of the Twitter Revolution

"This weekend in Tripoli, some of the worst fighting took place that Lebanon has seen for several years. From my vantage point on a hill just north of the city, at the height of the violence – around 3am on Sunday morning – I could hear almost constant gunfire, and explosions every five minutes or so" [.....] "Lebanon is not on fire, though a battle for the narrative is in full swing. With each new provocative event, accusations fly between the pro- and anti-Assad camps. Both highlight the others' crimes (real or imagined), and accuse their opponents of attempting to provoke strife in Lebanon for their own nefarious purposes" [.....] "Rumour moves fast in Lebanon even without technology, but there is a danger that twitter, Facebook etc. may increase the

infectious spread of tensions in the country. If it continues to be a vector for the narratives of those attempting to provoke disharmony in Lebanon, social media may become a force for discord and oppression rather than unity and peace"

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Saudi Arabia

Women's Right Battle is Live & Kicking



Eman Al Nafjan

Cornering Saudi Women

Last week a sixty year old woman was arrested for driving a car in Madina. She was accompanied by a twelve year old girl and they were driving around an empty construction site to gather scrap metal. *According to the traffic police she was convicted of driving without a license, the person who gave her a car will be punished and her male guardian will be called in to sign a pledge promising that he will ensure that she never drives again" [....] "It's funny that while women unemployment is in staggering numbers instead of actually offering gender segregated employment opportunities, these lawyers are obsessed with only stopping opportunities that don't fit in with their belief system. I don't see any of these ultra conservative lawyers and businessmen actually starting a women only factory or implementing a work from home option for potential female employees in their own offices. Nope, all they do is run around objecting in every way possible to women who are trying hard against all odds to make ends meet. In the interview AlZamil admits to being on this case since it was only a proposal six years ago.* ***All this obsession with stopping Saudi women from working openly in malls, while it is an extremely common sight to see women in traditional Arab markets on floormats in the heat and dust selling their wares****"*

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Post-Nayef: Next Generation's Succession Battle Begins



Gregg Carlstrom

Talking to people about Nayef, the consensus seems to be "nothing will change, because his policies have become institutionalized."



David B Roberts

On the Death of Crown Prince Nayef

"Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Nayef Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, has died at the age of 78. He had been ill for some time, apparently suffering from some form of cancer, and had received long-term treatment in America and he was recently recuperating in Geneva when he passed away" [.....] "**Saudi Arabia needs to come to terms with moving the leadership down a generation to the grandsons of Ibn Saud,** yet this would likely be a highly fractious decision. With Prince Salman waiting in the wings, it is unlikely to happen this time, though the leadership will surely discuss who is to be next; a difficult but crucial decision for the future of the House of Saud and Saudi Arabia"

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Saudi Arabia's Succession: Runners, Riders & Dynamics

"The key positions in Saudi Arabia are still mostly held by sons of the founder the modern Saudi state, Abdulaziz Al Saud (or Ibn Saud, as he is commonly known). This means that those in power are often exceedingly old and thus in ill-health and the death of two Crown Princes within nine months testifies to this concern" [....] "here need to be practices and procedures in place to manage the transition to the next generation, the grandsons of Ibn Saud. An Allegiance Council was set up to deal with this but this is essentially untested and everyone is fully aware that it will only play a role if it is allowed to by the more powerful Princes"

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Libya

The Disbarment Dilemma & the Hope for Unity



Rida

Libya's Elections factor: Militias/NTC/TG knows they're illegitimacy is coming to an end, so everyone is trying to settle scores before July

Libya Dilemma: Because of the Mistrust we have in the Gov. no one is disarming. Gov. is not stabilizing country because everyone is armed.



Abdel Bari Atwan

Libya's Best Hope for Unity is Democratic Elections

"Elections to a new, 200-member parliament have [likely] been postponed but remain imminent, and this is the brightest prospect for Libya's future. The new legislative body will replace the NTC, appoint a government and write the constitution. There is a lot of enthusiasm for the ballot box, with 80% of those eligible to vote having registered to do so. Libya has all the raw materials for a thriving and prosperous country – vast oil wealth and a small population. If the elections produce a credible government representing all Libya's people, the militias might voluntarily combine to form a national army and ensure nationwide security"

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Tunisia

Art Exhibition & The Salafis True Color is Being exposed



Ed Webb



Ennahda statement on La Marsa artwork calls for criminal prosecution of artists

"The Ennahdha Movement (parliamentary) group in the National Constituent Assembly (ANC) said Tuesday that it will propose a law criminalizing the violation of the sacred and will work to include in the Constitution a principle against interference with the sacred"

"Religious symbols are above any mockery, irony or violation," the group said in a statement Ennahdha, whereas freedom of expression and creation, "although recognized by the Movement", are not "absolute "and" those who perform them should respect the beliefs and customs of the people."

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Update on Salafi attacks in upscale Tunis suburb of La Marsa

"It was only moments after I posted this article that the Tweets started rolling in. Something big was happening in La Marsa related to the art exhibit that had been attacked yesterday" [....] "The rioting continued for the next several hours (it's still going on as I write). Curious and concerned onlookers would give each other reports from friends and family, mostly about the expected arrival of reinforcements from nearby cities, especially

La Goulette and le Kram, to coastal towns known for Salafi activity" [...] "The pity of tonight's protests, on top of spreading intolerance and polarization, is that it is exactly what the country does not need at this point. Tourism is only just recovering and foreign investors have held on tenuously to their ventures in the country, waiting for a return to stability. Rioting in the hometown of most of Tunisia's business community as well as a symbol of its summer beach culture will do no favors to either industry"

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After Extremists Riot, Political Brinkmanship Creates Major Risks for Tunisian revolution

"A shocking display of political brinkmanship is underway in Tunis this week. While commentators, including myself, have called attention to the culture wars, ***the real power play is a political one, pitting the three major political forces, Islamist, secular, and former regime, against each other****. The sight of riots consuming entire neighborhoods around the Tunisian capital, and the systemic violence against civil institutions has created shock waves throughout Tunisia" [....] "With reports of protester deaths coming in this morning****, there is a risk that events could spiral beyond the control of the much-weakened police apparatus****. One also gets the impression that pushing things to the brink is exactly what many politicians here are eager to do"*

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Erik

Who is behind the violence in Tunis?

"Following clashes between rioters and security forces in Tunis over the past two nights, which have resulted in at least one death, residents of the capital are wondering who is truly behind this violence. While many suspect this is the work of Salafi Islamists, who had already attacked an art gallery on Sunday, others say they saw only young troublemakers in the streets"

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