

16-22 March 2012
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Egypt



Arabist

- New Blog Post by Issandr El-Amrani: "**Sinai's Bedouins and the MFO** "
  http://www.arabist.net/blog/2012/3/16/sinais-bedouins-and-the-mfo.html
  "Sinai's Bedouins definitely have legitimate grievances and have suffered from much injustice and neglect, but they shouldn't get to live by their own "desert" rules–they should live under the same rules as everyone else"

- New Blog Post by Issandr El-Amrani: **The UAE-MB War of Words**
  http://www.arabist.net/blog/2012/3/20/in-translation-the-uae-mb-war-of-words.html

- **The Rise of Informal Islamists**
  http://www.arabist.net/blog/2012/3/20/the-rise-of-informal-islamists.html?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter

  "*While many are preoccupied by the "rise" of the Muslim Brothers and the ultra-conservative Salafis, "informal" Islamists are stepping into politics vigorously and freely"[....]"Moreover, whereas "formal" Islamists, for example, the MB, ad-Dawa al-Salafiyya, and ex-Jihadists, rushed to formal politics, "informal" Islamists prefer to play outside the official framework. They vividly operate in the new and expansive religious market that has flourished in Egypt since the revolution"*



Hany Farouk Ghoraba

- New Blog Post by Hany Farouk Ghoraba: **And then there were none: Egyptian Liberals in peril**
  http://www.wespeaknews.com/world/and-then-there-were-none-egyptian-liberals-in-peril-36519.html



Cairo Wire

- **Drafting Egypt's New Constitution**

  http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/papers/2012/0312_egypt_constitution_moustafa/new1%20Drafting%20Egypts%20New%20ConstitutionEnR03.pdf



Ahmed Awadalla

- New Blog Post: **"Rural women in Egypt: Can we afford to neglect them?** http://rwac-egypt.blogspot.com/2012/03/rural-women-in-egypt-how-much-can-we.html

Sada Journal

- **Shades of the Sinai's Instability** http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2012/03/15/shades-of-sinai-s-instability/a32u

"In the power vacuum, Bedouin have undertaken increasingly bold and open forms of militant resistance. What are the underlying motivations of this violence and what are possible solutions?"



- **Is the Government-Church Alliance a "Coptic Marriage"?**

http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/index.cfm?fa=show&article=47343&solr_hilite=Avi

*"The church is underestimating **the damage these SCAF ties are inflicting on its relationship with its young membership**. As Coptic activists become increasingly defiant, the church may find it impossible to contain its adherent" [...] "The best way forward is for the church to withdraw from political maneuverings and salvage its spiritual roles"*

Two days conference on taking stock of first year Arab Spring, the future of Arab democracy



Abdulkhaleq Abdulla (*Professor of Political Science – Dubai)*

- Of the **85 million Egyptians 40 million are illiterate and 40% live under poverty line. Cairo's population exceeds 20 people.**
- 1. I asked the airport taxi driver: Has the revolution changed Egypt? He said **the revolution has changed the Egyptians not Egypt**.
- 2. We are no longer afraid sir. We are no longer intimidated sir. And despite hardship we are happier sir. We are one nation again sir.

- The Q discussed in the first session of taking stock of the first year Arab spring is what has changed in the Arab World during 2011?
- Answer: **People of the region are several inches taller and regimes/leaders in the region are several feet shorter** than they were a year ago.
- There is an agreement among participants in the conference that the **Arab Spring is one step forward not one step backward** in Arab history.
- Here are some high lights from my 3 days visit to Egypt where I was attending a conference and met academics, activists and officials.
- **1. Egypt faces formidable and heart breaking challenges: 40 million under-poverty line, 36 million illiterate, 25 million unemployed.**
- 2. The transition to democracy is long, cumbersome and much more complicated than Egyptians thought. Life is barely livable in new
- 3. Many blame SCAF for mismanaging the transition period. It made some stupid mistakes. the faster it hands over power the better off
- 4. **Muslim Brothers are visible and in the driver's seat but Egypt can't be ruled by MB's alone. It is too precious to be left to the MB**.
- 5. **Egypt needs financial assistance urgently and desperately but will not succumb to political black mail**. It values its independence.
- 6. **Informed sources say Iran offered Egypt $10 billion in soft loans but it was turned down. Iran is flirting but Egypt is not responding.**
- 7. **Presidential election and the new constitution are the topic of the day** for the elites in Egypt but people want job and descent life.
- 8. A year into the revolution the looming question of identity: Is Egypt becoming more democratic or more Islamist? Or is it both?

Lebanon



Makram Rabah

- **What will happen to Lebanon?**
  http://www.egyptindependent.com/node/712196

Morocco



Hisham Almiraat

- Now: Moroccan activists converge toward capital for a sit-in to protest law that lets rapist avoid prosecution by marrying victim. #RIPAmina



- **#RIPAmina: Live Updates from the Sit-in**
  http://www.almiraat.com/

  "Activists organize a sit-in in front of the Moroccan parliament to protest a law that lets rapist avoid prosecution by marrying his victim. Social media went abuzz with live updates from the protest"



- **The Facebook page in support of Amina - a rape victim who committed suicide after being forced to marry her rapist**



Mohamed Daadaoui

- New Blog Post by Mohamed Daadaoui : **#RIPAmina**
  http://maghreblog.blogspot.com/2012/03/ripamina.html?spref=tw

Jadaliyya

- **Morocco: A "Democratic Moment"** by Younes Abouyoub
  http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4750/morocco_a-democratic-moment

  *"For better or worse, the major achievement of the recent political developments in Morocco is locating the 'political' in wider society. After decades of stifled political debates, heterodox opinions are finally being voiced, and contention is in the agora. That is exactly what Moroccans should cherish and protect**. It is up to the people to make sure that this "democratic moment" is not evanescent but permanent.**"*

Kurds



Kurdish Rights

- New Blog Post by Ruwayda Mustafah Rabar: **Riot Police Attack Kurds Celebrating Newroz in Turkey** http://kurdishrights.org/2012/03/18/riot-police-attack-kurds-celebrating-newroz/



Saudi Arabia



Ahmed bin Rashid bin Saeed (Professor of Political Communication at King Saud University – Riyadh)

- It is difficult to gauge how many Saudis use the micro blogging service. **Some Saudi religious scholars count more than 600,000 followers**
- **Issues that Saudi(s) usually only whisper about are discussed in the open in a cyber-world where they can escape censure and retribution**
- **The growing use of Twitter is a result of the wider political turmoil in the Arab world which has encouraged Saudi(s) to break taboos**
- **In Saudi Arabia, prince & religious scholar, government official & political dissident, all tweet their messages triggering a war of words.**
- Some observers view the growing use of Twitter as a consequence of the Arab Spring which has bolstered the power of social media Saudi**.**
- **The Saudi interest in Twitter has expanded enough to provoke the ire of the religious establishment**. The Mufti lashed out against Twitter

Iran

Tehran Bureau

- **The end of Ahmadinejad? An assessment of Iran Elections**
  http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2012/03/assessing-irans-parliamentary-election.html

  "The most important result of this election was the rise of a new generation of hardliners. It did not have a serious presence in parliament before the election. The new hardline faction is led by Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi. It has strong ties to the intelligence community and Revolutionary Guards"

- **'We Will Never Bomb Your Country': The Israeli-Iranian Peace Web** - *Netroots effort launched by Tel Aviv couple inspires thousands.*
  http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2012/03/feature-we-will-never-bomb-your-country-israelis-iranians-online-for-peace.html

Syria

Scott Creighton

- New Blog Post by Willy Loman: "**Fox and ABC Spread Disinformation about Russian Anti-Terrorism Team in Syria while HRW Condemns "Activists" for Kidnapping, Torture, and Executions of Civilians**"
  http://willyloman.wordpress.com/2012/03/20/fox-and-abc-disinformation-russian-anti-terrorism-team-in-syria-hrw-condemns-activists-for-kidnapping-torture-and-executions-of-civilians/

Al Majalla

- **Extensive interview with Mohammed Riad Al-Shaqfa the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria** by: Roshan Kasem
  http://www.majalla.com/eng/2012/03/article55230039





- **Exclusive Interview with Leader of the Free Syrian Army, Riyad Al-Assaad: All Will Be Over In Three Months** by: Roshan Kasem
  http://www.majalla.com/eng/2012/03/article55229802

Palestinian



Occupied Palestine

- **A list of Palestinian martyrs since 2011.**
  http://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com/irememberthevictims/



Jadaliyya

- **An Ongoing Nakba - The plight of Palestinian Refugee In Iraq**
  http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4264/an-ongoing-nakba_the-plight-of-palestinian-refugee

- **The Unknown Hell of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon**
  http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3490/the-unknown-hell-of-palestinian-refugees-in-lebano

Iraq



Lebanon - Bourj al-Barajneh



UNRWA Palestine refugee youth conference
Participants are from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan & Palestine (West Bank & Gaza)



Abir Kopty

- 60% of the refugees are marginalized youth politically, economically and socially
- **70% of Palestinians are below the age 24!!**
- By 2020 UNRWA expects 1.5 Palestinian refugees between 15 to 29, 25% of them expected to be unemployed.
- 60% of the refugees are marginalized youth politically, economically and socially.
- Palestinian refugees don't need charity. They want their RIGHTS - above all the right of return - to be upheld
- **Palestinian refugees in camps say they are seen as cheap labor but not economic force.**
- **The main demand of Palestinian youth refugees is the right of return.**
- **Now Nasser Judeh, FM of Jordan, Jordan has 2 million Palestinian refugees.**
- Nasser Judeh, FM of Jordan says **it's a mistake to think that Arab spring has nothing to do with the issue of Palestine**



Abir Kopty

- **This is Palestine: Social Media and Palestinian activism**
  http://abirkopty.wordpress.com/2012/02/07/this-is-palestine-social-media-and-palestinian-activism/

  "These activities contribute to reviving Palestine. Many are engaged in photographing what is happening in real time, by live steaming or live blogging or via Facebook and Twitter, etc. This way the occupation is in a losing battle. ***Those who follow social networks know that the Israeli propaganda is not yet able to neutralize or fight the social media "army" who support the Palestinian cause****"*



Oregano & Olive Oil

- **How Has Social Media Affected Palestinians**
  http://www.paltelegraph.com/palestine/palestinian-refugees/10531-how-has-social-media-affected-palestinians.html?utm_source=PalTelegraph&utm_medium=PT

"I wish to look at it as a platform of debate and so do many else, we must recognize that even in debates you have a winning side and a losing side, ***the biggest battle/debate right now that faces Palestine is the One-State VS Two-State****, if you wish to learn the public opinion go online and find out for yourself"*