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Morsi's Christian Problem: More Violence Less Protection



Sendmonkey

Morsy's Christian Problem

The Coptic cathedral was attacked after a funeral for four Christians who were killed two days earlier in sectarian clashes in the town of Al-Khosous that also left one Muslim killed. The funeral was attended by hundreds of Christians and sympathetic Muslims, who started chanting for the removal of Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood buddies from power, which apparently was unacceptable to "some people". Those "people" started attacking the emerging mourners the moment they stepped out of the cathedral, and shortly after, they were joined by riot police with armed vehicles, who stood next to the attackers and shot teargas canisters into the cathedral. So, not only was the cathedral not getting protected by the Egyptian police as it was being attacked by thugs, the police were actively providing cover to the attackers, and tear-gassing the trapped inside mourners. The country was watching, half in horror and the other half probably in glee, as the police of the Islamist state of Egypt actively joined a mob in their attack on the cathedral" [.....] "During those clashes, European Union officials were in Egypt discussing with the president and opposition figures the parliamentary elections and how they intend to monitor them, with the Egyptian newspaper citing Catherine Ashton promising to help Egypt get that IMF loan, so that the EU, alongside the US can continue to prop the Muslim Brotherhood regime as it continues its reign of terror. I have a suggestion, EU: ***How about we resort to your magical ballot box to solve Morsi's Christian problem once and for all? We can start a referendum asking whether or not to burn all of Egypt's churches and kick all the Christians out. I am positive it will pass with a stunning rate, and then the state can persecute the Egyptian Christians and attack their churches legitimately. After all, the ballot box has spoken. Dear EU, you can monitor that if you like****"*

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Salama Moussa

Attacks on the Abbassyia Cathedral: The Price of Violence Against Egypt's Copts

"Long decades of unjust suppression of Islamists have allowed them to develop a dishonest narrative of their ideology. Now, at the threshold of

power, they are unable to escape providing honest answers to critical questions. Can political Islamism govern in a free and democratic fashion, never mind liberal, with 10% of the population in effective second-class status? Liberal opposition to the Islamists is weak, but that has not redounded to their benefit. In an electoral field dominated by Islamists of one stripe or another, the risk is of competition based on the most restrictive and coercive version of political Islamism. ***Can a country flourish in such environment, especially one poor in natural resources and in need of massive foreign investments to support growth? Violence against Copts carries a high price, both for the safety of Copts and the prosperity of all Egyptians. Political Islamism is now facing its internal contradictions, and it is not fanciful to believe that Copts may be the rock on which the surging wave will break****"*

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Rana Allam

"Please be nice!"

"Forget tolerance when you have a president insulting followers of a religion his constitution accepts. ***I am positive that if one digs a bit deeper, one could find hate speech from Morsi against Christians not very different from that notorious one against Jews.*** *But of course, the time is not right for such a video to appear, if it exists. If you listened to what Brotherhood supporters say about Christians, you would have no doubt that their president has no respect for Christianity, to say the least. In fact, the president seems to have no regard for anything except his extremist group of Islamists. They are the only ones allowed to practice their version of religion, and attempt to enforce it on the rest of Egyptians.* ***And I say: enough with the marketing campaign that the Muslim Brotherhood are moderate Muslims- they are not. Listen to what they say, to what their supporters believe, and relate that to the rise of the extremist Salafis in the political arena****" [.....] "****A security apparatus that got away with many crimes against Egyptians is now supposed to respect and uphold the law. What a farce this is! It is time to harshly and severely uphold the law!****"*

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Sarah Carr

Rooted in Religion

A funeral march from the Abbasseya Coptic Orthodox cathedral for Christian victims of violence in a place about an hour outside central Cairo

had been attacked. As usual there has been intense and pointed enquiries about how events at the cathedral started (the story goes that some of the mourners themselves attacked parked cars, provoking a response from Abbasseya locals who rarely tarry in neighborhood watch duties), but less critical analysis about subsequent events — when security forces joined forces with a crowd attacking the cathedral" [....] "The interior minister himself turned up at the cathedral over six hours after events began and went on a brief, heavily guarded walkabout. It is not clear whether he ventured into the side streets leading to the cathedral which were covered in broken glass bottles twinkling under the streetlights and where a group of young men were firing starting pistols at some unknown target and the sound of gunfire reverberated through the dark, narrow alleys. In any case he left, and by the next morning calm had returned, as it always does, and along with it the cathartic escape of explaining away the events as conspiracies and plots. ***The question of why even if some shadowy, nefarious group is orchestrating sectarian events it finds such an enthusiastic response from ordinary Egyptians is not being asked****"*

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A Country in Search of A New Leadership



Karim Shafei

Are the MB Going to Fall Soon?

"With a few more months in power, additional appointments in the government and a some tailor made legislation, if the pressure eventually mounts too much, they will be willing to step down from the presidency after having secured a) a majority in the parliament giving them leverage over the Prime Minister and b) a quasi-Ikhwan presidential candidate that will ensure that things will – to a large extent – remain the same. In the meantime, what the MB are doing is trying to fit as many legislation and appointments in the government as they can in order to ensure that when / if the pressure mounts they can step down from some of their positions but retain power. This – in my opinion – can work well for them in the medium term. Knowing them, they couldn't care less about the long term. They are all about winning small battles, one after the other. I think that this will eventually be the reason for their downfall but it might not be anytime soon. So, ***the bottom line is, if things deteriorate fast enough, we could see an uprising against Ikhwan which could trigger an interference by the generals (who have in more than one occasion hinted they would do so), however, if the MB manage to sail***

through the coming few months and force some form of normality, we could be in for a good few years"

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Hisham El-Khazindar

Egypt in Crisis Needs Inclusive Leadership

"The events of the past two years have shown time and again that Egypt has changed. Egyptians will no longer accept strongman, top-down diktats or a monopoly on power by one group or another. We are out of time. The country is on a downward spiral of continued devaluation, high inflation and erosion of incomes. There is only one way out: ***inclusive leadership that moves us beyond political deadlock and brinkmanship. Leadership that is not afraid to co-operate, collaborate and share power with Egyptians of a different creed or ideological colour. Leadership that embraces the best talent and assets to unleash the potential of this great nation at the crossroads of east and west****. Leadership that does not let us forget that for 18 days from January 25 2011, Egyptians peacefully came together – poor and rich, Muslim and Christian – in pursuit of freedom, dignity and justice, and together changed the country's history"*

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Koert Debeuf

The Suicide Mission of the Muslim Brotherhood

"For the average Egyptian the cost of living is becoming a nightmare. The anger is clearly growing. And instead of seeing politicians working hard to improve this situation, they see them fighting and taking decisions about blocking porn on the internet or allowing police officers to grow a beard. Instead of creating an investment friendly environment, the Muslim Brothers are targeting activists, journalists and comedians for insulting the president or insulting religion. The question is not if but when it will explode. It is hard to overestimate the anger and the fear of the Egyptian people. You could compare it with a room full of gas. It only needs one spark in order to make it explode. That spark could well be the subsidies for bread and energy that need to be reformed. The last time Egypt tried to cut subsidies was in 1977, under Sadat; it immediately lead to the only uncontrollable riots ever. If we see the anarchy today in cities as Port Said, Suez or Malhalla, it is clear that no party will be able to control the streets if the situation explodes" [.....] "The only thing that is needed is parties and politicians forgetting their ego

and their honour and start a real dialogue about solving problems together. The last window of opportunity is closing rapidly. Dear politicians, for the sake of the people of Egypt, don't miss this last chance. Otherwise, there will be no winners left"

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H.A. Hellyer

As Mubarak Sits in a Cage, Egyptians are Moving On

"Had Mr Morsi not been elected, he would not be in power to show the Egyptian nation how utterly bankrupt the Muslim Brotherhood is. Under a Shafiq government, the Muslim Brotherhood's popularity would probably have broken all records by now.Under Mr Morsi, Mr Shafiq's supporters do exist and may even increase in number. But really no non-Brotherhood leader could reveal the policy impoverishment of the Brotherhood project better than Mr Morsi is doing.Mubarak may think he has been proven right (and judging by the smug grins in court this week, he does). But in the end it is he who is in a cage. ***Egyptians are now free to take on not only him and his system, but also the Brotherhood - a struggle that had to happen at some point, if only to show that Egypt has other options, better than either the Brotherhood or a return to dictatorship and autocracy****"*

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Nervana Mahmoud

The Week of Kheba (Epic Failure)

*"**The poll conducted by Baseera on presidential job approval ratings, and the performance of the opposition has revealed that the percentage of Egyptians who disapprove of Morsi's performance has reached a record high of only a 37% approval rate; however, two-thirds of his opponents can't name an alternative**. It also shows that the percentage of supporters of the National Salvation Front decreased. That pretty much sums up the current situation in Egypt; yes, Morsi is unpopular but there is no better alternative to him. Even if the result of the next poll is 20%, it doesn't really matter;* ***as long as the opposition is scoring worse, the Brotherhood will be content with the poll results****"*

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Abdel Bari Atwan

Egypt is in a state of political paralysis

As he enters the 10th month of his presidency, Mohammad Mursi must be reflecting how much easier it is to be in the opposition rather than in the driving seat. Egypt is in a state of political paralysis, with Mursi's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) — the Muslim Brotherhood's political wing — the opposition National Salvation Front (NSF) coalition and remnants of the former regime, consumed by their battle for power" [.....] "Mursi's liberal critics accuse him of extremism and, while he has condemned the violence, little has been done to prevent further sectarian attacks. There have been five major incidents on his watch, only one has been investigated and there have been no prosecutions. National Unity is the elusive prize all so-called 'Arab Spring' countries yearn for. Without it, ***Egypt faces three possible future scenarios: An all-out sectarian civil war; a military coup or a popular revolution by the poor.*** *If Mursi's presidency is to survive, he needs to become more flexible and include a wide diversity of people in the decision-making process"*



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Egypt's Borrowing Fever



Bassem Sabry

Why Qatar Supports Egypt, Why Many Egyptians Aren't Excited

*"**Qatar announced $18 billion in investments in Egypt over the next five years,** including a $10 billion North Sea tourist resort and $8 billion of investments primarily in oil and gas" [....] "So why is Qatar actually doing all of this? Some are attributing the recent financial aid to Egypt as plain and simply realpolitik to establish a degree of inevitably handy influence over a still-influential Egypt during a complex time in the*

Arab region when any reforms or policies Egypt's post-revolution government undertakes would have significant reverberations in the region, and when few want Egypt's new Islamist administration to undergo any risky foreign policy adventures (and the list of reasons goes on.) ***Qatar wants to be more powerful and domineering in the region, the argument simply posits. Others link the support particularly to the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamism in general, and argue that it is less a matter of pragmatism and more of an ideological and political kinship of some sort that ties the emir and the Brotherhood in Egypt, with Qatar determined not to let the Brotherhood fail*** *(and Al Jazeera's allegedly biased coverage would come into play). Of course, some also suggest the recent batch of aid in particular was a decision taken by Doha solely to prove to other Arab countries that it is a dependable ally that would stick with them till the end, bolstering its attractiveness as a pole of regional power" [.....] " In the long run, there is only one thing to do.* ***The national political conflict has to be resolved, the economy stabilized and geared back into growth, and a far-sighted economic policy agreed to with a sufficient consensus must be set up and put into place in order to try to increase national independence. Government and economic transparency will become of even more paramount importance. And elected political representatives will eventually have to carry the responsibility of dealing with such controversies. In the short run, however, those who insist that Egypt find an alternative course to such aid need to audibly voice their suggestions****"*

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The Big Pharaoh

It's the Politics, Stupid!

To the disappointment of both the MB and the West, the IMF loan will not revive the Egyptian economy for two reasons. First, ***Egypt's poor, who constitute the vast majority of the Egyptian population, will be the ones bearing the brunt of the austerity measures dictated by the IMF****. No matter how much the government tries to "direct subsidies" toward the needy, such efforts will not work in today's chaotic and lawless Egypt. The logistics are far too difficult to implement in the current environment, meaning the result will be increased pressure on a population already struggling to make ends meet. Second,* ***assuming Egypt does get the IMF loan, how long is it expected to keep Egypt afloat?*** *Realistically, it would hold the economy for about 3 to 4 months. Then what's next? The MB is working to get this loan in order to prove to international investors that Egypt is a trusted place to conduct business. This is yet*

another fallacy of an organization that only believes the convenient "truth." ***With such political instability, hardly any sensible investor would risk putting his or her money in Egyptian business****"*

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Wael Gamal

What the Foreign Debt Trap Means for Egypt

"Concluding a deal with the IMF (in the range of $6 billion plus another $14.5 billion the Europeans, US and Arabs attached to it) would raise foreign debt by the end of the year or mid-2014 to $63 billion. This is about double the foreign debt when Mubarak was overthrown, which is problematic, especially since we do not know how these funds will be used. If we add other funds expected to be collected after the bonds law passes, the figure could jump even more" [.....] "The debt trap allows major world capitalist countries and companies unlimited intervention in our economic affairs forever. Thus, ***the IMF will come and stick its nose into every detail; it will decide how much the next civil servant is paid and how he will live, who will pay taxes, and to whose advantage the wheel of production will turn. All this under the pretext of guaranteeing that Egypt will make its payments to lenders, whether banks or countries. This is the trap being set for us now****"*

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Morsi's Presidency: 10 Months Later..... Miscalculated Decisions & Epic Failure



Nervana Mahmoud

Essam el-Erian: Mr.Conspiracy

"In a contrast to the formal statement made by the Muslim Brotherhood condemning the Boston bombing, Essam el-Erian, the vice chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice party, sparked widespread controversy when he posted a long comment on Facebook, later translated into English, in which he connected the twin blasts in Boston to an alleged anti-Muslim conspiracy that spans the globe. He also linked the bombings to the French military action in Mali, the



conflict in Syria, and what he described as the "faltering" peace process between Turkey and the rebels in the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK)" [....] ""Unfortunately for el-Erian, ***the Arab awakening has aided the rise of many reform Muslims that reject the Islamists' shameless use of religion in politics and has also rejected the justification of terror under any conspiracy theory****. Regardless of who is behind the blasts in Boston, Islam as a faith will not be affected; in fact, the opposite is true, as the vast majority of Muslims in their stand against terror reject conspiracy theories, whether el-Erian likes it or not"*

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Mokhtar Awad

Morsi's Presidency Ten Months Later: A Series of Miscalculated Decisions

"Ten months of political sideshows, ideological bickering and violent protests have left many Egyptians disillusioned and unmotivated to follow the leadership of either President Morsi or the opposition. In fact, a recent poll puts public disapproval of Morsi's performance at a record high and shows that nearly a third of Egyptians never even heard of the opposition group the National Salvation Front—let alone approve of its performance. Some have also argued for the need for Morsi to show new leadership and ask the Egyptian people in a referendum their opinion on early presidential elections within the next six months. Provided a free and fair referendum is held, this could be an opportunity for Morsi to reclaim his mandate and prove to his adversaries that the solution is through consensus and not a premature end to his term. Morsi needs to recognize the common ground with the opposition and listen to their overtures that they do not wish to see Egypt's first democratic experience fail, for they too will have to incur a heavy cost if that happens. Ultimately, ***the president must have the leadership necessary to initiate a breakthrough with the opposition's National Salvation Front, and hold public and private talks with clear guidelines and expectations, leaving it for the Egyptian people to decide which actors are serious in their efforts to reconcile and those who are only interested to play the role of spoilers****"*

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The Use of Chemical Weapons in Syria



Hassan Hassan

Did the Syrian Regime Use Chemical Weapons?

"Is the regime foolish to use chemical weapons? Will that not invite foreign intervention? Even worse, will that not implicate Assad in war crimes in the future? Many people ask these questions to suggest that the Assad regime is unlikely to have used chemical weapons. But such conclusions ignore the reality on the ground. For more than a year, before talk of chemical weapons became the thing in western media and diplomatic circles, the regime's rank-and-file officers had the habit of repeatedly threatening people that they would be "wiped out with chemical weapons" if they did not surrender. People from Al Bukamal, where I come from, were told this on more than one occasion especially as the regime was quickly losing ground around October and November. The point is, while the use of chemical weapons might not serve a strategic purpose for winning a war, they can be used as a scare tactic to terrorize people. The regime is likely experimenting with some type of the weapons to send messages while at the same does not implicate itself and cause an international outcry. If the world shows leniency once again, the regime will just raise its weapons of terror a notch or two, as it has been doing over the two years"

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The Narrative: Civil War, Proxy War, Revolution, Sectarianism & Unity



Hassan Hassan

Will the Muslim Brotherhood Rule Syria?

"For the Brotherhood themselves, the question currently is not whether they can rule Syria democratically but whether they can steer the country after the downfall of the regime and thereby asserts its control over the state in the future. Put simply, the group's policy is to buy loyalties and create a sense, for outsiders and the opposition, that it represents a large percentage of Syrians. Forming front groups that it would use to beef up its political representation is one of its trademarks. In response to the Brotherhood's ability to 'hijack', people often say it is the failure of non-MB groups to counter its influence that is to blame. Of course but that is not the point here. The point is that the group's policies are harmful, divisive and perpetuating

the conflict. How? When the Brotherhood's members and their allies, for example, form groups that claim to represent certain people or groups or areas. But such groups represent the Brotherhood not the people they claim to represent, and those falsely represented feel they do not have a say because, well, there are no true or proper representatives for them in the political bodies. Mis-representativeness is one of the Brotherhood's well-known methods to monopolise the political process, to compensate for its little presence in Syrian society"

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Nader

What is a Proxy War?

"It is a civil war in that both sides involved are from the same country and fighting against each other (although, as in Spain, there are internationals fighting on both sides, notably, Iranians and Hezbollah militants with the Assad regime and foreign Sunni jihadists with the opposition). It is a proxy war in that each side in the civil war has foreign state backers (Iran and Russia for Assad, the West and the GCC states for the opposition). And, finally, it is a revolution in that a large percentage of the population wishes to overthrow the regime and replace it with another. But it also is a social revolution, in that we have seen an unprecedented eruption of the "Syrian street," whereby the elite no longer holds a monopoly on art and culture. This reclamation of the public space, exemplified by facebook pages, videos, songs, parodies, and witty signs, is in itself a revolution. And it is "popular" in that this eruption involves segments of society that were historically subaltern and excluded from the cultural and public life of Syria. Just as the Spanish revolutionaries were reclaiming their workplaces, the Syrian revolutionaries are reclaiming their voices, and this is Syria's own "revolution within a revolution."

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SJAC

Sectarianism, Transition and Unity

"Ethnic determinism is a dangerous and counterproductive way to view the Syrian conflict. To assume that all fault lines mirror ethnic divisions misses opportunities for cooperation and exacerbates existing tensions. As Bashar Al Assad is all too familiar, invoking ethnic narratives can even create ethnic divides on issues where none exist and generate self-fulfilling prophecies. But

however ethnic tensions have been constructed and manipulated, they do exist in Syria today. Some Shiites fear their Sunni neighbors just as some Alawites fear retribution for perceived loyalty to Al Assad. Given the prominence of ethnic divisions, some see transitional justice efforts as naively irrelevant right now. How can anyone imagine accountability processes at a time when rebel groups compete for influence and factionionalism plagues opposition unity? Admittedly, the particulars of any processes hinge on the post-conflict power structure and the desires of the Syrian people. Nonetheless, there is work to be done now. Syrian groups can outline their commitments to accountability, articulate support for potential transitional justice mechanisms, and emphasize their adherence to wartime codes of conduct. When words are backed up with actions, it helps groups to signal early on to the Syrian people what kind of leaders they might be"

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Syria's Jihadists Heaven..... Is It Really?



Hassan Hassan

Syria's Conflict is Rich Fodder for Anti-Islamist Propaganda

*"Tunisian media has reported that over 3,500 fighters from Tunisia have gone to Syria, driven by fatwas by Tunisian extremists. Clearly this figure is exaggerated. But the media focus on Tunisian radicals in Syria is meant to undermine the Islamist government at home more than anything else. Such propaganda, which can be viewed in Egyptian and Turkish media as well, underscores the failure of opposition forces inside these countries to win popularity at home through political programmes. Resorting to propaganda that obviously plays into the hands of a ruthless dictator in Syria betrays the values of the Arab revolts that began in Tunisia" [.....] "**The portrayal of the Syrian struggle in such light betrays the values such activists are fighting for. Syrians are being slaughtered by a regime that denies them the right to demand change. Their struggle is just and, while Syrians themselves are concerned about the rise of extremism, no one has the right to justify their failure by snubbing Syrians' sacrifices**"*

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Mohamed Fadel Fahmy

Egyptian Fighters Join The 'Lesser Jihad' in Syria

"Most of the Egyptian jihadists in Syria are not part of the Islamic movement in Egypt. They are independent, well-educated people with no financial or social problems; their motivation is based on true jihad that knows no borders and calls for the protection of Muslim women and children who are killed and raped on a daily basis in Syria" [.....] "Zawahri, who has re-emerged as the head of the Salafi Jihad movement in Egypt, insisted that there is no official entity in Egypt that sponsors young fighters hoping to fight in Syria. "We get young students all the time approaching us for advice on traveling to Syria to join the 'lesser Jihad.' I don't discourage anyone from going to fight for God's word, but I remind them that we have an uncompleted jihad here in Egypt to spread the true Shariah, the world of Allah," Zawahri said

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Hizbollah's Strategy in Syria



Hassan Hassan

Hizbollah's Strategy in Syria will Accelerate Sectarian War

"It is unclear whether Hizbollah intends to de-escalate its members' activities in Syria or continue to allow their flow. It is possible that the Syrian regime has asked Iran and Hizbollah to assist its troops in that border area, considering that Homs in general is crucial for the regime, perhaps the most important area after Damascus, because it is a choke point between the coast and other areas. ***The involvement of Shia fighters must be alarming to everyone and serves as a reminder that the Syrian conflict needs to end sooner rather than later****"*

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Elie Hajj

Is Hezbollah Exaggerating Jabhat al-Nusra's Strength?

"*He dismisses Jabhat al-Nusra's size and its significance, even in Syria, considering this radical Islamist group "practically nonexistent," with some 3,000 members at most. They are of various nationalities and traveled to Syria to perform what they call a "religious jihad," which is similar to the*

"jihadist duty" that Hezbollah has adopted, allowing it to mourn its own "martyrs" killed in Syria" [.....] "Its members will be induced to leave it as soon as the financial resources become available. And the core of the group, which is about a couple of hundred fighters, will no longer have a significant presence. ... Until that time, Hezbollah will try to benefit by exaggerating the size of Jabhat al-Nusra, which has no presence in Lebanon. It is in that context that I put the discovery in the southern suburbs of a bomb on which was written 'Jabhat al-Nusra.' The matter is clear and does not fool those who are following Hezbollah's involvement in Syria. It is an involvement that I assert has reached a level where the party has established a passage from the Lebanese Bekaa to Homs in order to help the Syrian army. ***This means that most regular Hezbollah fighters are now outside Lebanon and are helping President Assad in the region stretching from Lebanon's north to Homs. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard are in Damascus too. And Hezbollah's permanent readiness****"*

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Kuwait

Musallam al-Barrak: Kuwait's Opposition on Trial



Mona Kareem

Kuwait's Opposition on Trial

Earlier this week, Kuwait's court sentenced the opposition front man Musallam al-Barrak to five years in prison for insulting the emir, an act criminalized by the Kuwaiti constitution" [.....] "Al-Barrak is no longer a representative of the parliament. He no longer enjoys parliamentary immunity and has become a symbol of 'instability' for those who are not interested in pushing for change through mass mobilization. Last December, the opposition decided to boycott the elections to protest the voting law that the emir amended using an "emergency decree." The country witnessed its largest protests that included anti-opposition Kuwaitis who did not approve of a change in the voting law from outside the



parliament. That change was the perfect trap for the opposition" [.....] "What about Musalam al-Barrak? What does the world know about him? After successfully bringing down the former Prime Minister Nasser al-Mohammed al-Sabah during the November 2011 protests, foreign media attributed a number of labels on al-Barrak, including referring to him as one of the most powerful politicians in the region. To confront this image, there are two important details to know about al-Barrak: ***his political ideas and position towards the Bahraini uprising. Al-Barrak is not a 'moderate' politician in the classic definition of the word, but rather a conservative"*** *[.....] "This brief explanation of who al-Barrak is might explain the political challenges Kuwait is experiencing. On one side, you have a state ruled by its police and political trials that aim to wipe out the political opposition and free speech. On the other side, you have politicians incapable of having an agenda free of sectarianism to appeal to minorities, as well as those who support reforms without any clashes, retaining the emir as a symbol of the state and a stability that other Arab revolting countries are lacking"*

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Impatient Bedouin

Musallam al-Barrak Raises the Stakes

"On Wednesday, former MP Musallam al-Barrak attended an impromptu rally at his diwaniyya accompanied by thousands of tribesmen firing machine guns into the air as if they were ready for battle against the regime. Three times since his sentence on Monday to five years in prison for alledgedly insulting the Emir, Barrak has evaded capture. The first two times the police went to his diwaniyya and he insisted that he would surrender to police if they produced the original arrest warrant, and he said they only had a copy. There were hundreds of his supporters present and the police decided not to risk a confrontation. Then, on Wednesday commandos were sent to raid his house, where several of his relatives were allegedly beaten. Up to 10,000 protesters responded by marching on the police station in Andalus, where they were repelled by riot police using tear gas and stun grenades. A fire was set to a vehicle belonging to the interior ministry and to a nearby market in Andalus, with several injuries reported. Following this, al-Barrak defiantly appeared again at his diwaniyya,



*stating once again that he was prepared to give himself up. After initially hesitating, his supporters marched towards the police station, setting off fireworks in response to the use of tear gas" [....] "**Through his actions following his sentence, Musallam al-Barrak has raised the stakes in Kuwait's ongoing political crisis. In February 2012, in elections that have since been annulled, he received more than 30,000 votes, more than any candidate anywhere in Kuwait. By comparison, the candidate who was elected in first place in the 4th constituency in the boycotted December election received less than 3000**"*

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Kristin Diwan

The politics of transgression in Kuwait

***"This new political environment, further energized by the street politics of the Arab uprisings in 2011, provided a natural platform for the hard hitting Barrak. The emir's decision to unilaterally change the electoral system after the dissolution of a strongly oppositional parliament in 2012 on a technicality by the constitutional court, proved the trigger for his biggest transgression of all: a direct challenge to the emir**. In a blistering speech in October 2012, he shattered the political norm elevating the emir above the political fray and safeguarding his unquestioned authority, declaring: "We will not let you, your highness, take this country into autocracy." The audacity of the phrase has since been repeated at rallies and rhythmically sounded out on car horns. But it also substantially raised the fear of many urban Kuwaitis who question his judgment and lament his willingness to drive the country further into crisis. It also landed Barrak in the legal predicament he is now facing. As the government contemplates what to do with Barrak, the question is raised: Will time in jail elevate his national stature, marking him, as some supporters have proposed, as Kuwait's first elected prime minister? Or will his penchant for escalation and his tribal support turn the urban populace against the Opposition Coalition composed of the Popular Action Bloc, the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic Constitutional Movement, unions, and student groups and its call for an elected government?"*

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No Alternative to Hamas, Yet..... In the Palestinian Universities



Dr.Adnan Abu Amer

Palestinian Student Elections Show Support for Hamas

Palestinian universities have witnessed in recent weeks consecutive elections for their student councils. Rivalry has been heated between two blocs affiliated with the two main traditional rivals in the Palestinian arena. Fatah was represented by the "Fatah Youth Organization," while the "Islamic Bloc" represented Hamas.The election results varied between universities. Hamas has won the majority of the student council's seats in the Islamic University in the Gaza Strip — its historic stronghold, while in Birzeit University in the West Bank it has won 20 seats against 23 for its rival Fatah. In the Palestine Technical University, Hamas won nine seats" [.....] "it should be noted that ***Hamas is well aware — even if it does not declare it publicly — that its influence in universities does not actually suggest its increasing popularity. Its triumph has been the result of the differences between the PLO factions due to the PA's poor performance, and the fact that some of the members of the national movement have voted for Hamas without joining its ranks.*** *This has undoubtedly tipped the balance in Hamas's favor.* ***This is known as the "punitive vote," as some of the students have cast ballots in favor of the Islamic Bloc out of their hatred for its Fatah-affiliated rivals and not out of their ideological conviction. This was also the case in the 2006 Legislative Council elections. However, this does not mean that Hamas' popularity is declining, especially in light of the continuous failures on the part of the PA****"*



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The End of Fayyadism



Daoud Kuttab

Who Will Replace Salam Fayyad As Palestinian Prime Minister?

"If Salam Fayyad's departure had to do with over-dependency on Western aid and a desire to seek Arab funding, the next Palestinian prime minister could be someone like ***Rami Hamdallah, the president of the largest Palestinian university, in Nablus****, who has been successful in raising funds for this institution of higher education from Arab sources" [....] "if the issue was more Salam Fayyad's style than his policies, it is likely that his replacement will have similar political and policy attitudes. In this regard, Western-trained and* ***former IMF official Mohammad Mustafa could be the next prime minister****. Dr. Mustafa, the chairman and CEO of the Palestine Investment Fund, is a technocrat with a CV that would address the desires of Western countries" [.....] "if the demise of Fayyad was a result of pressure by the Fatah leadership, then the most probable choice of prime minister would be someone like* ***Mohammad Shtayeh, a member of the Central Committee of Fatah and a member of the Palestinian negotiating team since the Madrid talks****" [....] "The Doha Agreement between Fatah and Hamas calls for a national unity government to be headed by Mahmoud Abbas himself. If this happens, it is likely that Abbas will appoint a deputy prime minister (possibly from among the top three candidates) who would handle the day-to-day work of the government.* ***It is also possible that one of the wealthiest Palestinians living in the West Bank, Mounib al-Masri, who has been active in reconciliation meetings as a representative of independent Palestinians****, might be asked to take the position of prime minister"*

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Hugh Naylor

Fayyad's Departure May Signal Comeback for Old-Style West Bank Politics

As last year's economic crisis worsened, it became more difficult for Mr Fayyad to stay on, an official close to the outgoing prime minister said. Fatah and the trade unions it controls began orchestrating demonstrations against Mr Fayyad over the rising prices of food and petrol in the West Bank, including one protest in September where protestors burnt effigies of him. The official called this a diversion from the main impediment to Mr Fayyad's policies - Israel's settlements, financial punishments and general

restrictions on Palestinians. "He is not the cause of these problems," said the PA official. "But no PA prime minister can survive without the backing of factions within the PLO."

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Juan Cole

Palestine PM Fayyad Resigns, a Victim of Israeli and US funding cut-off and backlash against Austerity

"Fayyad had become extremely unpopular in the West Bank not only because of his helplessness and perceived good relations with Israel and the United States but also because of high inflation and widespread indebtedness. Many Palestinians are deeply indebted to banks. The Palestine government's lack of funds, imposed by Washington and Tel Aviv, contributed mightily to the economic crisis" [....] "Some analysts think that ***President Abbas wants to move to a national unity government with Hamas, and that Hamas's rejection of Fayyad as prime minister was an obstacle to that step****. After that, Abbas is said to want to move to new elections. The Israeli right wing will squawk about Hamas, but then they should not have undermined Fayyad"*

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