



March 13, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

With the impending visit of Egypt's Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to the White House, we urge you to review the attached Executive Summary: **“America at a Crossroads with Foreign Relations to Egypt.”**

While el-Sisi claims to be a strategic partner in the U.S. war on terrorism, in the four years since he seized control of Egypt by coup d'etat, the ensuing state of tyranny and the lack of security and stability have resulted in a complete breakdown of Egyptian civil society and its basic freedoms and human rights—and this has only served to breed more violence and extremist terrorism than ever before. As a result, the United States and other Western countries have seen a surge of Egyptian refugees—all in search of a more secure and stable life for themselves and their families.

**Now is the time** for the United States Congress to weigh seriously the ramifications of the State's alliance with Egypt moving forward. The United States cannot afford to undermine its own commitment to democracy, freedom, and human rights by continuing to send unconditional military aid to Egypt, or to increase those funds as el-Sisi may be seeking during his upcoming visit with the President of the United States.

Thank you for taking the time to review our joint statement. Members of our coalition of human rights organizations are available to answer questions or further discuss this matter with you or members of your staff.

Sincerely,

Mokhtar Kamel | mokhtarkamel@hotmail.com | 703.501.1398  
Co-Coordinator, Homeland For All

Dr. Bahaa Afify | bahaaafify@aol.com | 703.347.5903  
D.C. Co-Coordinator, Homeland For All

Dr. Samia Harris | drsamiaharris@comcast.net | 703.304.6122  
Founder, Democracy for Egypt

Safei-Eldin Hamed | safeihamed@gmail.com  
Chair, Center for Egyptian American Relations (CEAR)

Medea Benjamin | medea.benjamin@gmail.com  
Co-Founder, CODEPINK

Missy Crutchfield | editors@bemagazine.org  
Co-Founder, Gandhi's Be Magazine & Gandhi Global Center for Peace

Melissa Turner | editors@bemagazine.org  
Co-Founder, Gandhi's Be Magazine

Mohamed Ahmed Ismail | madymh@hotmail.com  
Co-Coordinator, Egyptians Abroad for Democracy Worldwide

## **Executive Summary: America at a Crossroads with Foreign Relations to Egypt**

In the coming weeks, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt is expected to meet with the President of the United States during a state visit at the White House. While el-Sisi claims to be a strategic partner in the U.S. war on terrorism, in the four years since he seized control of Egypt by coup d'état, the ensuing state of tyranny and the lack of security and stability have resulted in a complete breakdown of Egyptian civil society and its basic freedoms and human rights—and this has only served to breed more violence and extremist terrorism than ever before.

As a result, the Western world has seen a surge of Egyptian refugees—all in search of a more secure and stable life for themselves and their families. According to Human Rights Watch, many Egyptians have been banned from their country, with their assets frozen, being labeled by the current Egyptian military regime as “dissidents” or “criminals” for their support of democracy and for speaking out against the human rights violations they have witnessed since el-Sisi took power in 2013. In the United States alone, the 2007 U.S. Census Bureau reported 195,000 Egyptian Americans and that number rose dramatically to approximately 450,000 in the 2013 U.S. Census Bureau report.

The impending visit of Egypt's Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to the White House should signal an opportunity for the United States Congress to weigh seriously the ramifications of the State's alliance with Egypt moving forward. The United States cannot afford to undermine its own commitment to democracy, freedom, and human rights by continuing

to send unconditional military aid to Egypt, or to increase those funds as el-Sisi may be seeking during his upcoming visit with the President of the United States.

### **Growing Concerns: Unconditional, Unmonitored U.S. Foreign Military Aid to Egypt and the Erosion of Basic Freedoms & Human Rights**

While the United States continues to send \$1.5 billion in foreign military aid to Egypt each year, these funds remain unconditional and unmonitored, according to a February 2015 report by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO). Increasingly concerning, GAO's 2016 report found that Egyptian officials have been hindering U.S. officials' efforts to confirm that military equipment was being used appropriately and vetted for human rights, as Egypt agreed to in 2011.

Until recently, former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry had praised el-Sisi for his leadership in Egypt and for creating a more stable political environment for the surrounding Arab region. However, following his visit to Egypt to meet with el-Sisi in March 2016, Kerry publicly announced how disturbed he was by the deteriorating condition of human rights in Egypt. "I am deeply concerned by the deterioration in the human rights situation in Egypt in recent weeks and months, including the reported decision this week by the Egyptian government to reopen an investigation of Egyptian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) documenting human rights abuses and defending freedoms enshrined in Egypt's constitution," Kerry released in an official statement from the U.S. Department of State.

Meanwhile, recent reports indicate Abdel Fattah el-Sisi may be lobbying the Egyptian Parliament for an extension of his term as president, potentially initiating a full relapse to the tyrannical government Egyptians had sought to escape following the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak and the first-ever democratic election of President Mohamed Morsi. In recent developments, according to news reports, an Egyptian lawmaker is currently collecting signatures for a motion to extend presidential terms and lift restrictions on re-election—a year before el-Sisi’s term is due to expire—essentially paving the way for el-Sisi to become president indefinitely.

### **A Closer Look: Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s Rise to Power and the Deteriorating State of Democracy & Human Rights in Egypt**

On July 3, 2013, Egyptian Army Chief General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi led a coup d’etat removing first-ever democratically elected President Mohamed Morsi from office. Morsi was imprisoned along with the former speaker of the Egyptian parliament and other top government leaders. Following the course of events, the Egyptian constitution was suspended.

In response, nonviolent protestors who supported the democratic process continued to participate in sit-ins at al-Nahda Square and the larger of the protest events, Rabaa al-Adawiya Square. The Egyptian military forces were unleashed on the protestors, leaving over 1,000 killed in July and August 2013, according to Human Rights Watch’s 188-page report “All According to Plan.” One of the most devastating events following the coup d’etat took place on August 13, 2013, when the Egyptian police and army methodically

opened fire with live ammunition on crowds of demonstrators, killing between 1,500 and 3,000 people during the “Rabaa Massacre.” Human Rights Watch Executive Director Kenneth Roth has called the massacre “one of the world’s largest killings of demonstrators in a single day in recent history.”



*Following Rabaa Massacre (Source: Daily Mail)*

Since the “Rabaa Massacre,” basic freedoms and human rights have only continued to worsen in Egypt. Mass trials and death sentences have been brought against more than 600 former government leaders, demonstrators, dissenters, and activists. Even journalists

with Al Jazeera have been imprisoned, including Australian Peter Greetings, Canadian-Egyptian Mohammed Fahmy, Egyptian Baher Mohammed, and seven others who were tried in absentia.



*The imprisonment of Al Jazeera Staff in Egypt set off a movement for #FreeAJStaff, sending the message that “Journalism is not a crime.” (Source: Al Jazeera)*

Amnesty International released a 68-page report “Egypt: Officially You Do Not Exist—Disappeared and Tortured in the Name of Counter-Terrorism” documenting an unprecedented number of men, women, and children have been victim to enforced disappearances, imprisonment, torture (including beatings, electric shock, and rape), and execution at the hands of the Egyptian military regime. According to the report, “A sweeping crackdown on dissent has put at least 34,000 persons – by the government’s own admission – and possibly thousands more, behind bars. Since the armed forces

ousted President Morsi in July 2013, tens of thousands of people have been detained without trial or sentenced to prison terms or to death after often grossly unfair trials.”



*Men, women, and even children have been victim to enforced disappearances, imprisonment, and torture under Egypt's Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's rule. Egyptian authorities briefly imprisoned this 3-year-old. (Source: CNN)*

From the moment General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi seized power, the first feeble steps Egypt had been taking toward freedom and democracy have quickly faltered and fallen into complete chaos and human rights violations of epic proportions. While he claims to be the United States' partner in the war on terrorism, the reality is since Abdel Fattah el-Sisi seized control of Egypt by coup d'etat, the ensuing state of tyranny and the lack of security and stability has essentially created a state of terrorism within his own country of Egypt and against his own countrymen, women, and children—and this only serves to breed more violence and extremist terrorism than ever before.

In a 2003 speech to the National Endowment for Democracy, President George W. Bush remarked, “Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty. As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export.”

With the impending visit of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to the White House, now is the time for the United States Congress to: 1) Suspend and review the \$1.5 billion in unconditional, unmonitored foreign military aid the United States sends to Egypt each year, 2) Investigate and demand an end to the gross human rights violations—including enforced disappearances, imprisonment, torture, and execution—that have occurred over the past four years, and 3) Implement and enforce conditions on any future foreign aid based on the release of all political prisoners incarcerated during the reign of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

### **For Further Information:**

Amnesty International report “Egypt: Officially You Do Not Exist—Disappeared and Tortured in the Name of Counter-Terrorism”

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/4368/2016/en/>

Human Rights Watch report “According to Plan”

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/08/12/all-according-plan/raba-massacre-and-mass-killings-protesters-egypt>

International Forum for Democracy and Human Rights “The Human Rights Situation in Egypt”

<http://www.bemagazine.org/pdf-international-forum-democracy-human-rights-human-rights-situation-egypt>

United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) 2016 report “U.S. Government Should Strengthen End-Use Monitoring and Human Rights Vetting for Egypt”

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/676503.pdf>

United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) 2015 report “U.S. Government Should Examine Options for Using Unobligated Funds and Evaluating Security Assistance Programs”

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/668448.pdf>

### **Current Petition**

Say No to Al Sisi

<http://www.codepink.org/sisi>