

## Egypt's Offensive Against Muslim Brotherhood: History Lessons



The ongoing offensive against Muslim Brotherhood leading figures, businesses, financial interests and institutions represents new episode of oppression by the tyrannical and ailing regime in Egypt against its own people, their freedoms and basic rights. The regime's shortsighted vision makes it believe that the sweeping arrests among moderate MB figures and the reckless closure of their businesses and media outlets will cripple the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization and force it to give up its moderate ideology, which is the source of the popularity and support it enjoys among Egyptians.

History tells us that the regime policy of pre-emptive arrests and the undeclared economic war against the Muslim Brotherhood; has never succeeded to eradicate its ideology or undermine its organizational capabilities. On the contrary, after every massive crackdown there was always a major gain for the Muslim Brotherhood either in ballot boxes or through the public sympathy with our cause. Latest example was in 1995, when large numbers of MB leaders were illegally detained for several years, and a similar sweep against MB financial and economic institutions was conducted by Mubarak's regime; the result was a landslide victory for the MB in parliamentary elections and professional syndicates. The endless cycles of unjust detentions, intimidations and harassment by the regime against our movement has gained us momentum not only among the middle class but also among the intellectual elite if not the entire society.

History also tells us that a correlation always existed between the attempts to eradicate the MB moderate ideology and the rise and empowerment of radical and violent Islamic groups in Egyptian society. The targeting of publishing houses, bookstores and MB media outlets would only serve the spread of radical extremist thought among the

youth, especially under such an oppressive authoritarian rule.

Unlike the centralized and rigid nature of the Mubarak regime, the MB's organization and its resilient structure always allow for prompt adjustments to its leadership cadre and maneuvers in case of such major crackdown. The MB is part of the Egyptian society and it is unrealistic to attempt to chase it down through a number of arrests and detentions without causing harm to society. Such escalations prove even more the imbecile and slow learning capabilities of the Mubarak regime in dealing with its major political rival.

The regime's heavy-handed policies are not only directed against the MB, but against the whole political opposition. Mubarak regime has always resorted to dirty tactics to terrorize and intimidate political opposition.

Examples are the imprisonment of the Al Ghad party's chairman Ayman Nour; the torture of political activists whether Islamists or seculars; the sexual molestation of female protestors by security agents on the referendum day; the beating of judge, and the list goes on

The West has also its share of the blame for the ongoing escalation. The West's calls for democracy promotion in the region while it remains a major supporter of Mubarak's regime despite of its explicitly undemocratic practices and atrocities against his opposition; can only be interpreted as double standards. Such approach can have drastic consequences for the Egyptian society, and the world's in general.

The responsibility for the rise and growth of radical extremism in the Middle East lies in the hands of the regimes and governments that attempt to clamp down on the moderate Islamic factions such as the MB.

We, will stay the course and will not abandon our moderate ideology despite of the tremendous oppression and injustice we are suffering at the hands of tyrannical regimes. We will remain steadfast in our peaceful march for reform which we began more than three quarters of a century ago; hoping for dialogue even with our adversaries and working together to achieve peace, stability and prosperity for our beloved Egypt, so help us God.

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