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Introduction

The leadership of the military institution has dominated the Egyptian political scene and large sectors of the country's economy since the army took power after the coup d'état of July 03, 2013. The practices of the current army commanders, who are heading Egypt's military institution arouse a state of dissatisfaction among officers of different ranks within the structure of the Egyptian army. In addition, Al-Sisi represses anyone who wants to change inside and outside the military, under the pretext of preventing the spread of Islamic extremism and potential chaos.

Since the military coup on July 3, 2013, individuals and groups within the army have tried to change the status of the institution under its current leadership for several reasons, most notably:

- The turbulent political situation witnessed by the Egyptian state,
- The wrong policies adopted by the regime, which implicated the army in governance and administration,
- The regime's handling of the situation in the Sinai Peninsula,
- The successive losses and casualties among the Egyptian army ranks during these confrontations,
- The waiver of the two islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia, and
- The regime's tendency of changing the military doctrine of the Egyptian army.

In the last five years since the coup d'état of July 2013, the period covered by this study, there have been different attempts seeking change within the military by groups and

individuals who reject the practices of the current army commanders. The study seeks to answer the following main questions:

- What are the main forms of change within the Egyptian military institution during this period? What are their implications? and What are their future paths?

In order to answer these questions, the study proceeds as follows:

First: Legal and constitutional forms of change

This level of change is based on adherence to and maintenance of the military institution. Owners of this trend believe that the legal and constitutional procedures could bring about the change that they want, and could help them get rid of the current commanders of the Egyptian army, whom they believe have abducted the military institution. Individuals within the military started to take steps for conducting such change within the army by announcing intention to run for the upcoming presidential election in March 2018 against Sisi.

These individuals included:

1) Colonel Ahmed Konsowa

On November 29, 2017, Colonel Ahmed Abdel Ghaffar Hassan Konsowa (42), a military architect and teacher of architecture, announced in March 2018 in a statement through his YouTube channel that he intends to run for president.

The most important points in his statement were as follows:

a- He worked to complete all legal procedures in order to be able to practice his political rights and run for the coming presidential elections, including repeated attempts to resign from the military for more than three years. He said since he submitted his first resignation in March 2014, he "was struggling in a very disappointing legal battle to get my political-participation constitutional right to run



for various elections." "Consequently this time I have decided to put the whole thing in front of the people through this simple announcement," he said.

b- He said he filed 11 lawsuits against the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, the House of Representatives' Speaker and others in their official capacity, including 3 lawsuits before the judicial committees of the armed forces, and 7 lawsuits before the courts of the Council of State, and a single lawsuit before the Supreme Constitutional Court. He said he remained committed throughout his service to the armed forces performing all the requirements of his work without any shortfall.

c- Konsowa said he announced his candidacy for elections in the example of Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, who declared his candidacy wearing his uniform and then resigned" as defence minister.

d- He said he was still in the armed forces and affirmed that he values his service, that he was proud of his job, stressing that he was not a rebel. "I am not a rebel, a dissident or disobedient of military commands. I am proud of my work and will continue to do it as well as I can until this unlawful legal status is changed."

e- Konsowa condemned everyone who may understand his declaration of candidacy as a rebellion or an invitation to take any individual or collective position within the ranks of the army.

f- Talking about the January Revolution, Konsowa said it was a dream of rights and freedoms and that he felt sorry that some wanted to make people forget all about it, expressing hope that the Egyptians will fulfil the objectives of the January revolution. Egypt "cannot wait anymore to join the developed world and to abide by human rights standards and global values of citizenship and transparency, as well as the rule of law," he added in the statement.



g- Konsowa confirmed that the Egyptian people are suffering severely in a clear evidence of social imbalance. He also condemned terrorism and said it claimed the “lives of innocent civilians and the most beloved comrades in the army and police.”

h- Konsowa said that the time duty is not to leave the arena to suspects, including “the ignorant, the corrupt, or the traitors”. He called on institutions to allow people to engage in free and transparent elections.

i- Konsowa did not overlook the security situation and the injustices that many Egyptians are exposed to such as physical liquidation, disappearance of minors, and violation of people’s privacy through official leaks disclosing opponents’ personal calls.

j- Konsowa emphasized that he does not belong to any existing established party, but instead belongs to “the comprehensive mainstream of the Egyptian people.”

The statement revealed that Konsowa sought to change from inside the military institution through legal and constitutional means, taking into consideration maintenance of the Egyptian state, and avoiding causing a rift within the army structure. He said he was proud of the military institution and tried to highlight in his statement that there are groups within the state institutions that believe in changing the critical situation experienced by the country as a result of the practices of the current "military" regime.

After Colonel Ahmad Konsowa announced his plans to run for the country's 2018 presidential election in a statement which some saw as expressive of a substantial sector within the army, the Military Prosecution summoned Konsowa and ordered his arrest and sent him for 15 days in custody. Konsowa was detained on suspicion of alleged "behavior that harms the requirements of the military" because he "published a video and stated political views," said his lawyer, Asaad Heikal. Afterwards, a military court sentenced Konsowa to six years in prison for announcing his intention to run for

Egypt's upcoming presidential elections, his lawyer said. Konsowa is now serving his imprisonment sentence after a military appeal court upheld the sentence against him.

2) Lt. General Ahmed Shafiq

On the same day when Colonel Ahmed Kansowa announced his intention to run for president, Lt. General Ahmed Shafiq - who served as Chief of Staff of the Air Force in 1991, and was appointed Commander of the Air Force in April 1996, remaining in office until 2002, when he was appointed as Minister of Civil Aviation – also announced that he intended to run for the upcoming presidential election “I’m honored to announce my will to run in the upcoming presidential elections in Egypt as a choice to be president of the country for the next four years,” he said in the statement from the UAE in which he highlighted his time in the air force. "Egypt is grappling with many of the problems that have affected all aspects of life, which have led to the deterioration of all services," Shafiq said, calling for true democracy and human rights. "Any success, big or small, will not happen in Egypt without an ideal civil democratic regime that is capable of accepting criticism," Shafiq said.

But Shafiq later told pan-Arab TV channel Al Jazeera that the United Arab Emirates, a close ally of Egypt's where he was living, had barred him from traveling. “I was surprised that I was prevented from leaving the UAE for reasons I do not understand,” Shafiq said, adding that he thanked the UAE for its hospitality but wished to depart.

He was then deported by the UAE following his arrest and his family reported being unable to contact him after his arrival in Egypt.

After Shafiq's arrival at Cairo airport, he was reportedly escorted by the military intelligence to a hotel in Cairo against his will, and put under house arrest. He was exposed to pressures to retreat from candidacy for the presidency. He was also threatened to face charges of corruption and other personal files. Hours later, he gave



an interview on Egyptian television in which he denied speculation he'd been kidnapped and said he was reconsidering his decision to run against Sisi.

His family raised concerns of foul play, and said he was being held against his will at a Cairo hotel. Later, Shafiq confirmed in a post on Twitter that he would not run, saying he felt he was not the ideal person to lead the country. "My absence of more than five years perhaps distanced me from being able to very closely follow what is going on in our nation in terms of developments and achievements despite the difficulty of the conditions," he wrote. "I have seen that I will not be the ideal person to lead the state's affairs during the coming period. Thus I have decided not to run in the upcoming 2018 presidential elections."

3) Lt. General Sami Anan

Lt. General Sami Hafez Anan, former chief of staff of the Egyptian army, never disappeared from the scene after his departure from service in August 2012. It is noteworthy that he remained a member of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) in accordance with a decree issued by the military council after the January 25th revolution, 2011 – considering SCAF members at the time as subject to call-up commitment, which stipulates that members of the military council during the January revolution will maintain SCAF membership even if they were removed from service; and therefore it is not possible for any former military commander to make a decision on his own, including running for parliamentary or presidential elections, except after obtaining permission from the Military Council.

Before the presidential election of May 2014, people then talked about Anan's intention to run for president, and that he discussed this matter with the SCAF at that time. Despite his proposal was rejected, Anan announced his candidacy for the presidency in February 2014. However, 29 days later, on March 13, 2014, he held a press conference at his campaign headquarters in Dokki to announce his withdrawal

from the presidential race under the pretext of meeting “national interest requirements”, adding that he was keen on the cohesion of the army and the unity of the nation. At the end of his statement, he said that the fighter, Sami Hafez Annan would remain faithful for Egypt.

Before his withdrawal from candidacy for the presidential election in 2014, his election campaign at the time confirmed that he was subjected to an assassination attempt, and issued a statement including full details. However, the Interior Ministry spokesman at the time, Major General Hani Abdel Latif, said that the security services did not receive any reports on what was raised about Annan's assassination attempt after leaving his office in the Dokki suburb of Giza.

Since then, Lt. General Anan has not disappeared from the scene; but from time to time he used to comment on the important political and security events in Egypt. After the maritime border agreement that was concluded between Egypt and Saudi Arabia in April 2016, Anan commented saying, "It is not important now to prove that Tiran and Sanafir belong to Egypt as this is out of question. The question is whether those who deny this are really Egyptian."

However, Anan's most prominent comments came after the Al-Wahat militant attack in October 2017 that left dozens dead in the ranks of the Egyptian police. Anan then wrote on his Facebook account: "A great incident hit Egypt in the finest and most efficient forces. Please, put emotions aside; the language of mind and reason is what we need now. Look for the reasons and motivations and put them in their proper context. Diagnose the disease rationally, and be aware of the magnitude of the disaster we are experiencing at present." Anan then suggested that treason and security negligence led to losing “some of Egypt's finest sons in terms of their efficiency and abilities.”



On January 20, 2018, Anan surprised everyone by announcing his candidacy for the presidential election, scheduled in March, about two hours after Al-Sisi announced his candidacy for a second term. Anan also called on civil and military institutions to be neutral during the presidential race.

Anan attributed his decision of candidacy to the deterioration of conditions and the suffering of the Egyptian people. He said Egyptians were getting worse day after day as a result of wrong policies that led the armed forces to bear alone all responsibility of administration, while marginalizing the private sector and hindering its role.

Less than 72 hours after Anan had announced his candidacy for the presidency, he was arrested by the Egyptian security forces. The arrest came after the Egyptian army command said in a statement that the former general had announced his candidacy “without getting permission from the armed forces” and accusing him of failing to formally leave the military before entering politics. The text of the army statement blasting Mr Anan was broadcast on state television in Egypt. “The armed forces will not overlook the blatant legal violations [he] has committed which are a serious breach of the laws of military service.” Soon after that, Anan was arrested and was pulled from his car in the street.

Not only did the commanders of the military institution abuse Sami Anan, but has also arrested more than 23 army officers who were said to have been in contact with Sami Anan.

The Middle East Eye has recently revealed that a few days before Ahmed Shafiq announced his short-lived run for the Egyptian presidency, a meeting was held in Cairo to decide who should mount a serious campaign to unseat the incumbent, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. A number of former senior army generals and civil society figures were present, including Sami Anan, the former chief of staff. Also present were Magdi Hatatah, one of Anan's predecessors as army chief of staff, and Ossama Askaar, the

former commander of the third army. The meeting talked at first of backing a civilian candidate, but could not agree on one. They agreed then to support Shafiq. Anan kept silent. When Shafiq's candidacy crashed in flames (he and his daughter had been threatened with corruption smears) the group who attended the meeting shifted their support to Anan. Anan swiftly amassed a wide spectrum of supporters. They included the political and business clan around former president Hosni Mubarak and his son Gamal and figures in the Egyptian opposition.

However, Sisi's nerves were also set jangling by a continuous series of leaked conversations, which he attributed to opposition to him from within the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), the rival intelligence service to military intelligence and the only institution powerful enough to tap mobile phones of the president's inner circle. Sisi's camp correctly assumed that the dissidents inside the GID, who had been doing their best to undermine him, would support Anan. This mostly was behind dismissal of Khaled Fawzi, the GID director, by Al-Sisi.

Also, the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) decided to suspend Samir Sami Anan, son of Lt. General Sami Anan, and refer him to investigations over posting opinions and comments through his account on a social networking site.

Thus, Sami Anan was not excluded from Al-Sisi's repression and abuse despite belonging to the military institution. He has been punished for attempting to conduct change within the military, and finally the former army chief of staff was arrested and sent to prison.

Second: Forms of change by force

1) Through a military coup

The practices of the military commanders over the past few years, including acts of killing, forced disappearances, and assassinations as well as the deteriorating economic conditions led to the emergence of groups that adopt ideas for conducting change by force. For example, some wanted to follow the same method used by Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi and carry out a military coup, most notably an attempt on June 16, 2015. Some 26 Egyptian officers, including two Brigadiers, four Colonels, and three Lt. Colonels, seventeen Majors and a Captain, were then arrested and disappeared. Later, a military court sentenced the 26 army officers to jail, after convicting them on charges that included plotting for a military coup. The officers were given sentences ranging from 10 to 25 years. Other charges included disclosure of military secrets, and membership of the Muslim Brotherhood, which the Egyptian government after Al-Sisi's military coup against Morsi classified as a terrorist organisation. Two members of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hilmi al-Jazzar and Mohamed Abdel Rahman, were both sentenced in absentia to 25 years in prison. This was the first time that military officers have been indicted for plotting a coup against Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who, then serving as head of the army, seized power in a military coup against the country's first elected leader Mohammed Morsi. Details are scarce regarding the arrests, which took place in late May. Egyptian media were ordered by the government not to cover the arrests, but al-Sharq TV, an opposition channel based in Turkey, released a video at the time titled, "Al-Sisi turns against the army." A video aired by al-Sharq TV, at the time included a list of charges and said that Sisi had arrested 26 officers to "eliminate internal opposition against him".



In addition, sources disclosed on December 22, 2015 that the military judiciary sentenced three army officers to death. The sources then explained that the three officers were charged with involvement in the preparation of a military coup, and planning to assassinate Sisi. According to the sources, the three officers planned to kill al-Sisi, create a state of chaos, and pave the way for mobilizing people to the streets under the leadership of parties within the armed forces. However, another source alleged that "the three officers were preparing to blow up Al-Sisi's plane during one of his travels abroad. Some sources pointed out that the officers involved in that case were more than one hundred officers of different military ranks. Those groups that tried to follow this model of change have not been able to achieve any successes over the past years. Instead, they were repressed and sent to prison.

2) Jihadist Action

The practices of the military commanders also convinced some members of the military that jihadist action could be a good method and means for conducting any change. This method was one of the approaches adopted by some officers of the Egyptian army in fulfilling the change they wanted. In fact, there are some army and police officers who adopted jihadist action in Egypt during the past few years. Some of them had joined armed groups and some of them had established their own armed entities to confront the regime.

One of those officers was Ashmawi or Abu Omar Al-Muhajir, a former officer in the Egyptian Commandos, who received advanced training on special operation tasks in main US training institutes. Later, he became the operations engineer of Ansar Beit al-Maqdis and in charge of the most important qualitative operations carried out in Sinai, Cairo and Al-Farafra oasis. Ashmawy was born in 1978, and graduated in 2000 from the military academy, where he was a distinguished officer and joined the Special Forces unit. He served in Sinai for 10 years and witnessed the bombings of Taba, Sharm



El-Sheikh and Dahab. In 2007, a military court transferred Ashmawy to an administrative post and then referred to retirement in 2009. He was completely expelled from the army in 2012. In 2013, Ashmawy then moved to Sinai where he became in charge of the military wing of Ansar Beit al-Maqdis. He started to develop the performance of the group, improving their militancy skills. A year later, Ashmawy emerged as a key operative, heading a cell that taught fighters how to carry out suicide bombing missions, assemble roadside bombs and shoot soldiers. Since the failed assassination attempt of former Interior Minister Mohammed Ibrahim in May 2013, which was allegedly planned by Hisham Ashmawi and Emad Abdel Hamid and carried out by Walid Badr (all three are former army officers) Ashmawy was linked to a large number of attacks that were carried out by Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, whether through planning or implementation. The most prominent operations conducted by Ashmawy included the attack on the military intelligence headquarters in Ismailia in October 2013, the bombing of the Security Directorate of Al Dakahlia in December 2013, the bombing of Cairo Security Directorate in January 2014, the attack on a military unit in Farafra oasis in the Western Desert in July 2014, the attack on armed forces in Karm Al Qawadis in Sinai in October 2014.

In July 2015, Asmawy announced in a statement that he became the emir (leader) of Al Murabitun group. Al Murabitun is another turning point in Ashmawy's life. After the Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis announced in November 2014 its allegiance to the Islamic State (ISIS), Ashmawy refused to pledge allegiance to ISIS.

On October 20, 2017, an armed group, called Ansar al-Islam, claimed responsibility for Al- Wahat attack that took place 135 km outside of Giza and resulted in the death of about 55 police personnel. The armed group issued a statement recounting details of its initial attack, in addition to announcing the death of its leader, Emad Abdel Hamid, a former Egyptian military officer-turned-jihadist, in a counter strike by security forces



on October 31. “We began our jihad with the Lion’s Den operation in the Wahat al-Bahariya area on the outskirts of Cairo, and we were victorious over our enemy’s campaign,” read the group’s statement. According to Ansar al-Islam, armed jihadists attacked a convoy consisting of three armored and five unarmored vehicles, “showering the convoy with bullets,” and destroying one of the armored vehicles with an RPG. It added that security forces personnel took cover under their vehicles as they called for aerial assistance, and that two armored vehicles fled carrying some of the convoy’s dead and wounded. The statement mentioned the capture of an officer, Police Captain Mohamed al-Hayes, who was later found by security forces, and the killing of several other police personnel.

Not only army officers joined armed groups in the period after July 03, 2013, but also police officers joined them, according to the Interior Ministry reports in 2016, announcing that four police officers have disappeared since 29 April 2016 , and were suspected of involvement in killing 8 members of the police officers in Helwan. The Ministry of Interior said the suspect officers included Hanafi Mohammed Jamal, suspected of participating in Al-Wahat attack on 20 October 2017, Mohammed Gamal Abdel Aziz, Khairat Sami Abdel Hamid Mahmoud al-Sobki, and Islam Wiam Ahmad Hassan.

Based on this view, some say that this means that there are segments of different ages within the security and military institutions, in addition to officers like Hisham Ashmawi, who are close to the age of forty, criticize the method that the current regime follows in governance, have different opinions, and work to change the current situation through armed confrontation.

In recent months, hundreds of members of the security forces have been discharged because of their political or religious affiliations, the security officials said. Reasons for

dismissing officers included refusal to arrest protesters at a demonstration or anti-government social media posts.

According to a report by Reuters on January 30, three Egyptian security sources told the world-wide news agency that in recent months up to 30 more captains and lieutenants in the security forces have joined the Ansar Al-Islam network, which is headed by one of the country's most wanted men, former Special Forces officer Hisham al-Ashmawy. "They've got stronger," an officer in Egypt's National Security service told Reuters. "New numbers have joined, they have new weapons ... they focus only on big operations, so they don't use up manpower or firepower." Ashmawy has been mounting a recruiting campaign in recent years and that is now beginning to bear fruit in terms of numbers joining, two of the security sources said.

Summary

Some believe that all attempts of change within the military institution over the past few years have not been successful so far; but by closing all outlets to those who demand change from within the military through legal and constitutional means from their point of view, as well as the practices that were carried out against Ahmed Konsowa, Ahmed Shafiq, and Sami Anan - this form of change within the Egyptian army has become impossible. This may prompt the claimants of peaceful change within the Egyptian army to seek other ways for conducting the change that they want.

Therefore, some see that those who want to conduct change within the military now will have to follow one of the following three steps:

- 1) Officers who wish to conduct change may join armed groups or establish new armed entities to face the current regime by taking up arms and fighting against it. Some view the officers who are dismissed from service for political reasons may join these armed

groups in the coming period. Sources also reported that hundreds of members of the security forces were dismissed over the last few months because of their political or religious affiliations.

2) Such officers may remain inside the army structure, not identifying themselves, to provide the armed groups with information they may reach through people from within the army, as in the incident of targeting the helicopter of the ministers of defense and interior during a visit to Al Arish, and the Al-Wahat attack, according to sources from the Egyptian General Intelligence Service.

3) Staging a well-planned and decisively implemented military coup provided that:

- The participating forces include formations of some important units within the Egyptian army, specifically units from the Central Military Zone (Cairo, Giza, Qaliobia) for being near to the vital and important sites in the Egyptian capital, Cairo,
- The participating forces include units from the Second and Third Field Armies for supporting the forces of the Central Military Zone,
- The units to implement the coup include a variety of divisions to be able to confront the Rapid Deployment Forces, loyal to Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, who established them in March 2014, before leaving the position of Minister of Defense and his candidacy for the presidency.
- The participating forces include forces from the Northern Military Zone located in Alexandria to be able to face the Rapid Deployment Forces excessively deployed in Alexandria.

Day after day, and as a result of the practices of some military commanders, more segments from different military ranks will seek to change the current situation within the structure of the Egyptian army. Such segments are not likely to resort to legal and political approaches that have completely failed so far. They are expected to adopt more violent approaches in confronting the Egyptian military regime that used to

repress everyone who demanded change, especially after Al-Sisi declared that "whoever wishes to change must first get rid of me".

