



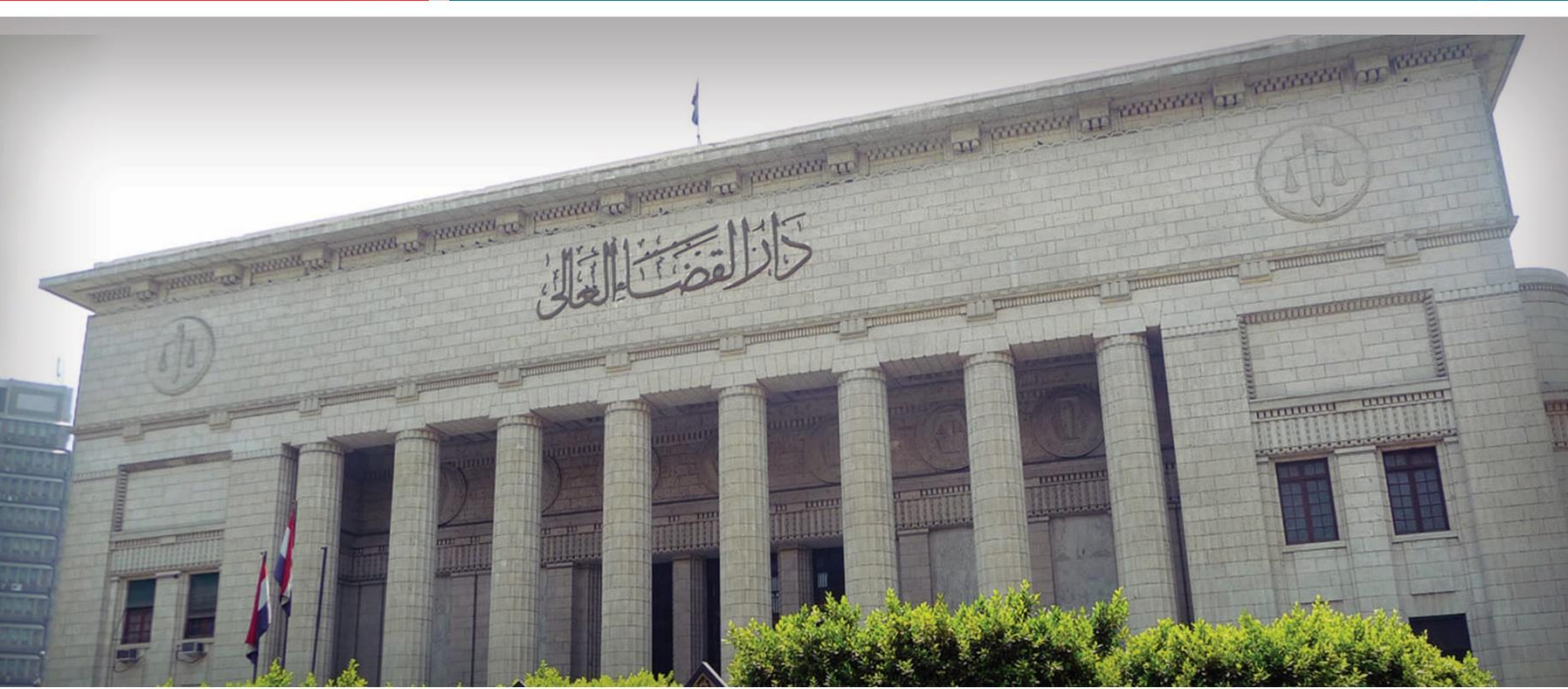
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Transformations of Judicial Verdicts in Egypt

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Transformations of Judicial Verdicts in Egypt

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The involvement of heads of major judicial bodies in the ongoing political conflict in Egypt was an explicit sign to judges to act freely without fear of being subjected to any kind of accountability. Looking into most judgements issued after July 3, 2013, against Sisi opponents or prominent figures of the Mubarak regime, we can clearly find out that the Egyptian judiciary is no longer a neutral body. In fact, it has become a tool that the regime uses in abusing and cracking down on opponents, starting from the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters, through other opposition forces, up to everyone related to the January 25 revolution (2011), while at the same time acquitting all prominent figures of the Mubarak regime.

Acquitting Mubarak regime figures and immunizing officers

1- The series of acquittals granted to figures of the former regime of Hosni Mubarak started early in 2012 and 2013; but they have been confirmed through final judicial verdicts in the era of Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. These acquittals included cases of murder such as the killing of demonstrators during the January 25 revolution and cases of financial corruption amounting to billions of Egyptian pounds. Among those acquitted by Egyptian judiciary were: Mubarak and his children Gamal and Alaa, Mubarak's Interior Minister Habib Al-Adli and his men, Ahmed Ezz, a prominent businessman, and his gang, Mubarak's Information Minister Anas al-Faqi and his crook, in addition to Mubarak's Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif and his entourage; Zakaria Azmi, the presidential chief of staff during the Mubarak era, and Mubarak's last prime minister Ahmed Shafiq and others.

2- During the era of Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, two billion pounds were re-funded to Nasif Sawiris, a businessman, that he had paid to the state treasury during the era of President Mohamed Morsi within the framework of a settlement in a case known in the media as “tax evasion”; where he was supposed to pay seven billion pounds in reconciliation instead of 14 billion pounds. However, Sawiris was exempted by Sisi’s government from payment of the seven billion pounds completely, including the refunding of the previously paid two billion pounds.

3- The police officer accused in the case known in the media as “Abu Zaabal Deportation Truck” – where 37 anti-coup opponents were killed and 8 others were injured in a police deportation truck in Abu Zaabal prison – although a non-commissioned officer testified to the prosecution investigations against the officer accused of the crime. Perhaps, the police officer’s acquittal was a result of a phone call from Maj. Gen. Mamdouh Shahin, member of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) at the time, to the competent judge according to the leaks on this case. [Leaked recordings from the office of Major General Abbas Kamel, Sisi’s chief of staff, during the first half of 2014, showed Major General Mamdouh Shahin, SCAF member at that time, while promising Abbas Kamel that he will interfere in the trial of the son of a military colleague, a young police officer accused of gassing to death 37 prisoners inside a [police truck](#). The policeman was later [acquitted](#).]

4- No army officer, police officer, or even recruit was convicted; but they were all acquitted.

Convicting and abusing and Sisi opponents

1- While Mubarak and his supporters, including the prominent officials during his era, were acquitted despite the documented evidence in the cases of killing demonstrators

during the revolution as well as the financial and administrative corruption, the situation is very different with the opponents of the July 3 regime. In fact, we can monitor a qualitative shift in the judicial verdicts against the Sisi regime opponents compared to the Mubarak regime officials or police officers. The Egyptian judiciary targeted ant-regime opponents harshly and exposed them to unfair mass trials using unprecedented farcical charges and issuing unfair judgements. On 23 March 2014, an Egyptian court in Menya, Upper Egypt, sentenced 529 opponents to death within a few minutes for alleged involvement in an attack on a police station. There are hundreds of other court sentences ranging from life imprisonment to aggravated imprisonment against opponents based on farcical charges.

2- Activists who are not members of the Muslim Brotherhood or Islamic movements have not been spared these crushing verdicts. Ahmed Maher, the founder of the April 6 Movement, and political activists Ahmed Duma, Mohammed Adel, Alaa Abdel Fattah and others were sentenced to imprisonment for periods ranging from 3 years to 15 years for being convicted in various cases, some of which tracing back to the events of the January Revolution. Activist Ahmed Duma and 270 others received sentences ranging from life imprisonment to 10 years in prison for conviction in a lawsuit known in the media as “the cabinet events” in 2011, and they were required to pay 17 million pounds in bail. Sixteen youths and seven girls were sentenced to three years in prison on October 26, 2014 for a demonstration in front of Al-Ittihadiya Palace to demand for repealing the protest law.

3- Journalists and media outlets were not an exclusion: From the early moment of the military coup on 4 July 2013, all anti-coup TV channels were closed, journalists, media men and correspondents were arrested, and about sixteen journalists, correspondents

and photographers were martyred, while more than 40 journalists remain behind bars on various cases. Twenty journalists were handed prison sentences, ranging from 10 years to 7 years, including four foreigners: an Australian, two British, and a Dutchman, in the case of Al-Jazeera TV transmission.

4- Expansion of the issuance of judgments on the confiscation of private funds and property, including hundreds of charities belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood, in addition to dozens of schools, hospitals, and hundreds of food companies.

5- These verdicts extended to entities not involved in the political scene, such as the Jam'iya Shar'iya and Ansar al-Sunna.

6- The same measures were taken for terrorizing a number of celebrities in the fields of sports, economy, journalism and media: For example, the funds of Mohammed Abu Treika, a famous football player, were confiscated. This measure also was applied against some senior businessmen such as Safwat Thabet, Chairman of Juhayna Company. Also, funds of the chief editor of Al-Borsa (Stock Exchange), a newspaper specialized in the economic field, were seized. The headquarters of Masr Al Arabia website as well as a number of publishing houses and libraries were also seized. The regime later developed its way of dealing with media platforms through adopting a more coarse and blunt approach through "collective blocking" of dozens of websites. The social networking sites have not been excluded from electronic blockade; as the regime issued a law granting the government power to monitor and block these sites and prosecute their owners.

7- The regime's restricting measures greatly expanded with respect to the so-called "travel ban lists" and "pre-arrival screening lists". This method has been used to terrorize hundreds of thousands of citizens at home and abroad, as well as hundreds

of political and cultural prominent figures based on ridiculous charges. These measures and judicial verdicts against opponents of the current regime compared to the judgements that were issued to acquit the Mubarak regime prominent figures show clearly how far the Egyptian judiciary has gone with respect to achievement of justice.

*Read the complete text of the study in Arabic [here](#).

