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Military intensifies Sinai presence

UNITS DEPLOY TO SECURE GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND ROADS INTO THE PENINSULA

By Ahmed Aboul Enein

A joint US-Egyptian military delegation arrived in Sharm El-Sheikh on Monday. German news agency DPA reported the delegation was there to inspect the security situation in Sinai, something the army denied.

The delegation included the head of the United States military cooperation office in Egypt as well as Egyptian military communications supervisor Major General Osama Abdel Aziz.

Military Official Spokesperson Colonel Ahmed Aly denied the American officers were in Sinai to inspect the security situation, which he described as a purely Egyptian matter.

Rather, said Aly, the delegation was there to check on the US personnel that serve in the Multinational Force and Observer, the international peacekeeping force overseeing the terms of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel to which the US contributes 700 personnel.

Egyptian military forces have been deployed across Sinai, with tanks, armoured personnel carriers and soldiers spread across the peninsula's main and international roads.

Military police units have taken over securing the governorate building in North Sinai. Other military units



Security forces continue to deploy in the Sinai peninsula

are securing police stations, roads, the court, tourism and traffic police stations as well as the Administrative Oversight Authority.

Roadblocks cover the routes into the governorate, where everyone entering has their ID cards checked.

The security directorate in South Sinai meanwhile has raised alert levels and placed patrols at the entrances and exits of the governorate in case militants from North Sinai try to escape southwards.

South Sinai Governor Major General Khaled Fouda said security in the gover-

norate is on alert and tribal elders met the commander of the Third Field Army last week to discuss their demands. At the meeting, Fouda said the tribal elders agreed to help protect Sinai.

The security intensification is a result of demonstrations in North Sinai

by policemen who retreated from their posts in protest at the killing of three of their colleagues at the hands of unidentified gunmen on Saturday.

The protesting policemen surrounded the North Sinai government building and were joined by revolutionary groups and North Sinai residents. The protesters demanded the removal of the chief of police, the governor, his deputy, and for the new governor to be elected.

They also briefly took over the governorate building but gave it over to military police, saying they were just making a point. Several groups discussed the formation of a 25-member council of local revolutionaries to run the governorate until a new governor is elected.

Minister of Interior Ahmed Gamal El-Din travelled to North Sinai and removed Major General Ahmed Bakr on Sunday, replacing him with his deputy, Major General Sameeh Beshady. The minister was meant to hold a popular conference with the protesters but abruptly left for Cairo, which instigated a new wave of protests, this time calling for his removal.

Military Official Spokesperson Colonel Ahmed Aly denied reports on Sunday that the Sinai was declared a military zone, calling the reports baseless rumours.

Additional reporting by Nasser El-Azzazy

Judges to investigate police assault

By Rana Muhammad Taha

Minister of Justice, Ahmed Mekki, mandated on Monday three appeals judges from the Cairo Al-Mansoura and Qena appeals courts, to investigate four assaults of citizens by police personnel.

The decision comes in response to a request sent by head of the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) Hossam El-Gheriany on Thursday to the minister, reported state-owned news agency MENA.

"I'm happy and grateful for such news, because we are going through an exceptional moment in Egyptian history," said Haggag Nael, director of the Arab Program for Human Rights Activists (APHRA), and one of the four citizens claiming he was assaulted by the police.

Nael stated a judicial investigation was needed, as he thought police investigations never amount to anything.

"We thought that after the January 2011 revolution the police would change for the better," Nael said, "yet the change is for the worse; the police are violent in the streets, alongside the Muslim Brotherhood."

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Members of parliament set demonstration date

Freedom and Justice, Al-Nour, and Arab Egyptian Socialist parties to participate

By Fady Salah

Members of parliament will hold a demonstration against the decision by the Supreme Constitutional Court to dissolve the People's Assembly.

The demonstration will take place on 14 November in front of the State Council. It is planned in conjunction with the council's consideration of a lawsuit raised against the Supreme Constitutional Court on this issue.

The lawsuit was raised by Anwar Sobhy Darweesh, ex-parliamentary candidate.

The demonstration was called for by Mohamed El-Omda, ex-member of People's Assembly, who said the Freedom and Justice party, Al-Nour party and the Arabic Egyptian Socialist Party will participate. El-Omda also mentioned Faisal El-Shebany and Hassan Abdel Aziz, independent members of the dissolved People's Assembly, will take part in the demonstration.

Ahmed Sobei, Freedom and Justice Party spokesperson, confirmed the participation of his party, saying they would "stand by the truth and will of the voters."

Major General Adel Abbas, chairperson of the Arab Egypt Socialist Party, also confirmed his party's participation. Abbas said the verdict issued by Constitutional Court is wrong. He claimed the court was



Answering the call of demonstrators in front of the Administrative courthouse, People's Assembly ex-member Mohamed El-Omda has called for a demonstration by fellow MPs demanding the resumption of parliament (File photo)

called to provide a legal opinion regarding the constitutionality of one third of the People's Assembly, but it ruled on the constitutionality of

the whole assembly instead.

In the controversial case, the Constitutional Court ruled unconstitutional the fact party members were allowed to

run for seats in one third of the People's Assembly. This third was supposed to be reserved for independent candidates.

Shaaban Abdel Alleem, a member of Al-Nour party's high board, said members of his party met with El-Omda, and eventually decided individually to support his cause. He asserted those members will discuss the issue with the party's high board, before this becomes the party decision.

"Some members will participate in the demonstration, which is not in opposition with the party stance. However, so far, this is not the decision of the whole party," concluded Abdel Alleem.

El-Omda added that it is no longer acceptable to treat Egyptians the same way Mubarak did and called for the sacking of court judges appointed by the former president.

"Two other lawsuits have been raised against the verdict, and even if they are all rejected we will hold a sit-in in front of the parliament," concluded El-Omda.

Ibrahim Darwish, constitutional law expert, said he thinks this protest is useless; asserting the People's Assembly has been dissolved by the power of law, which no one can override.

"No one can bring the dissolved People's Assembly back, not the court, not the government, and not the president, who already tried to do so before," concluded Darwish.

Panic as dog disperses protest

Sa'ad Al-Hosseini denounces officer who let a dog loose and criticises Popular Current

A dog was loosed upon protesting Kafr Al-Sheikh fishermen on Monday. Governor Sa'ad Al-Hosseini denounced the incident that occurred during local celebrations.

One of the military officers tasked with securing a port during the governorate's "National Day" released a police dog on the fishermen to disperse them in a scene which "caused panic among those present."

"Such practices should never take place," Al-Hosseini said in a statement released through his Facebook page.

"An investigation into the matter is in order," Ayman Hegazy, the governorate's media advisor, said, adding that the governor denounced the Popular Current's attempt to ruin the celebrations. The Popular Current had announced an anti-government

protest for Monday, days before the event took place.

"What happened is unacceptable," said Heba Yassin, media spokesperson for the Popular Current, adding that the current holds the governor responsible for the dog attack.

"The Popular Current did not clash with anybody or use violence during the protest," Yassin said, "we adopt the methodology of dialogue when resolving any conflict."

Yassin stated that the Popular Current has opened an investigation into the attacks to ensure that no one from their party contributed to heightening tensions. She also added that the current is speaking with those injured by the dog.

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A tortuous journey



African migrants arrested on the border of Egypt and Israel (File photo)

Demsas lives in Cairo with other men who escaped the torture house where they were held in the Sinai. He is scared to leave his apartment as he does not have residency papers. He did not even want to end up in Egypt, but he cannot go back to Eritrea.

He was only trying to go west and

find refuge in Sudan. Instead he was swept into a burgeoning trade that operates along the length of the Red Sea where the commodities are human, payments are in ransom, and torture is standard practice.

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Currencies	Buy	Sell
CHF	6.3697	6.6772
USD	6.1	6.13
EUR	7.6891	8.0603
GBP	9.5998	10.0632
SAR	1.618	1.6379

Egyptian Stock Exchange		
	Closing	Daily Change
EGX 30	5,470.31	0.38%
EGX 70	505.12	-0.97%
EGX 100	837.44	-0.54%
EGX 20	6,341.22	-0.05%

Commentary

Mahmoud 'Sandmonkey' Salem writes:
Like many Egyptians, I was looking forward to your government's attempt to implement its decision to close down shops at 10pm, out of the sheer comic value it would've presented

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أسود أصفر أحمر أزرق



Saudi embassy demonstration

FAMILY MEMBERS DEMAND RELEASE OF EGYPTIAN PRISONERS

By Basil El-Dabbh

Approximately a dozen protesters gathered outside the Embassy of Saudi Arabia on Monday holding pictures and signs of loved ones currently detained in the kingdom.

"We're here to demand the release of Egyptian prisoners in Saudi Arabia," said Salah Abdallah Sayed, "or for them to have fair trials, using the Islamic Shari'a that they value so dearly." Sayed said his brother Yasser has been in a prison in Saudi Arabia for three years and has not stood trial for any crime. "If they were criminals, they would have undergone trials," he said. "He left three children here without a father," added his other brother, Saleh.

"These people are unjustly detained and no one is doing anything," said Shahenda Fathy, the wife of detained Egyptian lawyer, Ahmed Al-Gizawy. "There are Egyptians who have been detained without any charges, and there are others who have served sentences and have not been released."

"And when a lawyer came to try to bring them justice and defend them, they arrested him and put him on trial," she said in reference to her husband. "We won't leave them and we'll stay committed to their cause, whenever they increase the injustice, there will be more of us protesting. We won't be silenced."

Ahmed Al-Gizawy was arrested in



Protesters demonstrate in front of the Saudi embassy demanding the release of Egyptian citizens detained in the gulf kingdom

April at King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah for allegedly trafficking drugs into Saudi Arabia. Demonstrations at the Saudi embassy in Cairo later that month resulted in its temporarily closing. Al-Gizawy's trial continues on 14 November.

Nadia Emira joined protesters, holding a poster of her son, Mohamed Ibrahim, who she claims was sentenced to three years and 300 lashes.

She says he has been detained for one year beyond his sentence.

"All we demand is that those sitting on chairs actually move," said Emira, pointing to the embassy behind her. "They take pleasure in torturing him," she claimed.

Egyptian Najla Wafa was arrested in September 2009 following a business dispute with a princess of the Saudi royal family. She was sentenced to five years and 500 lashes. Many

rights organisations have called for an independent investigation examining her arrest, trial, and the punishment to which she has been subjected, which many groups have referred to as "torture."

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry, which many demonstrators blamed for complicity in Saudi Arabia's treatment of Egyptians, could not be reached for additional comments.

Revised shop curfew law revealed

Revised version grants a few additional hours to most closing times

By Luiz Sanchez

Prime Minister Hisham Qandil has unveiled the latest schedule for closing times for shops, set to take effect in December. According to Sunday's statement, Qandil reached a compromise with the chairman of the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce (FECC).

The new plan will see all workshops, which produce excessive levels of noise and are located in residential areas closed by nine in the evening. Tire shops will be the exception to this rule.

Shops in villages must shut off exterior lights by nine pm and be fully closed by 11 pm. In the cities the shops must have their lights dimmed by 10 pm and be fully closed by midnight.

Restaurants, coffee shops and other such venues must have their exterior lighting reduced by midnight, followed by total closure two hours after. Under the new proposal, such venues will still be allowed to remain operational for delivery and take-away after closure.

The law excludes pharmacies and gas stations from having to shut their doors,

but maintains lights must be dimmed by 9 pm in villages, and 10 pm in cities.

The new law will be applied gradually from December and is expected to be fully implemented by the end of April 2013. The government has said this law is meant as an energy saving measure. Placing a curfew on shops will help reduce the cost and burden on Egypt's strained energy resources.

Earlier last month, the FECC president, Ahmed Al-Wakil, condemned the government's initial proposition, which would have seen all non-touristic shops close their doors by 10 pm. He had not opposed the law itself,

but said that every governorate has its own culture and operating times. Applying one rule across the board would be detrimental to business.

"It is hard to say who is right in this case," Ola Khawaga, a professor of economics at the Cairo University said. "On the one hand, the government says this will help with the traffic and the energy consumption, while shop owners say they will lose a lot of money."

Khawaga said there is a need to conduct an extensive cost-benefit analysis of such policies before making any decision. "According to such an analysis we can then decide what to do," she said.

The government's methodology, according to Khawaga, is very strange. Rather than passing a law and enforcing it, showing people that there is a rule of law, "they make a decision and then say they will review the decision, which is not the right way to do things."

"The consequences of their decision [to implement the law] have not been calculated," she added.

At the time of publication a protest was ongoing, organised by the Bahia movement, in support of the shopkeepers, who do not agree with the new law. The march was scheduled to begin at 5 pm in Bab El-Shariah, ending at the Cabinet building.



Revisions to the new law limiting shop and restaurant closing times have granted businesses more operating hours

Freedom for revolutionaries

Prosecutor general releases list of pardoned detainees

Prosecutor General Abdel-Meguid Mahmoud on Monday issued a list of pardoned detainees who were convicted during events surrounding the revolution.

The list was released in response to a law issued by Mohamed Morsy on 8 October, granting pardons to all those detained and convicted from 25 January 2011 until 30 June 2012 for crimes "in support of the revolution" according to state-owned MENA.

Adel Said, spokesperson for the prosecutor general, said, "this decision was made based on the previous decision of President Morsy granting amnesty for some crimes committed in support of the 25 January Revolution and the realisa-

tion of it's goals," reported MENA.

The prosecutor general ruled out granting amnesty to those who participated in acts of vandalism, theft, and destruction of state property.

Morsy issued the law at the beginning of October. It dictates that the public and military prosecutors publish the names of those pardoned within a month, in state run Waqa'e Masreya newspaper. The deadline for doing so was this Thursday.

Legal advisor to the president, GadAllah, confirmed to Daily News Egypt that the law does not distinguish between civilians and military citizens.

Allah added the law also allows for people who feel they were

wrongfully left off the list to file appeals to the prosecutor, or military prosecutors, within a month of the release of the list.

Activist groups welcomed Morsy's law, but questioned how the general prosecutor differentiated between those detained for "supporting the revolution" and those convicted of offences that fall outside the guidelines for a presidential pardon.

"The law is just empty words," said Malek Adly, an activist with the Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights. "Under the law, many revolutionaries such as Ahmed Douma aren't included."

"We rejected Morsy's amnesty immediately after its release,"

wrote activist Douma on Facebook. "We will not accept anything other than acquittals and the conviction of...both the criminals and killers."

Adly said that the law provides too many loopholes that allow the government to continue to detain certain activists, and claim they are being held for crimes not related to the revolution.

Appeals will be reviewed by a committee headed by the head of the Court of Cassation and judges from the Cairo Appeals Court, and the Supreme Court of Military Appeals.

Morsy's law followed his 6 October speech in Cairo Stadium, when he promised Egyptians that he would release more revolutionary prisoners.

POLITICS

A slap in the face

Leftist say they were shut out of Morsy meeting

By Connor Molloy

A meeting between political groups in Matruh on Sunday came to blows.

Ahmed Helmy Fathi Al-Hatimi, Matruh's new governor, hosted the meeting to resolve a dispute over who would be selected for a highly-anticipated meeting between President Mohammed Morsy and members of the Matruh community.

Thirty people were to meet with the president, but two lists of those chosen for the Matruh delegation ended up being created. The basic difference was that one list included members from the United Revolutionary Movement of Matruh (Takwa), and the other did not, according to 6 April and Takwa local political groups.

"We went to the meeting with the governor to decide who is actually going to go talk to Morsy," said 6 April representative, Ahmed Zakaria. "They only wanted to send people from Salafiya [a Salafi political party in Matruh], Muslim Brotherhood people, and some Bedouins. None of the Takwa Union, none of us, were to be sent."

This is despite the fact that the Takwa Union was under the impression they were responsible for presenting nine of the topics to be discussed

with the president. Zakaria himself was preparing to discuss healthcare.

Because of this confusion, the meeting became heated and yelling began. According to Zakaria and Khaled Al-Seminy, the spokesperson for the Takwa Union, Al-Seminy was at the microphone addressing the governor when former Al-Nour Party MP, Mansour Kawiya, tried to take the microphone from him. Then Kawiya's brother punched Al-Seminy in the face.

This is part of an ongoing rivalry between leftists and Islamists in Matruh. The governorate lies to the far west, along the Libyan border.

Zakaria said, "it is a big issue, they don't represent us, they don't represent the rest of the governorate," referring to the Islamist political parties. "We represent the moderate and liberal people, so we are not represented on the list. They are not concerned about the issues to be discussed; they do it just to make an appearance. They don't want to help people; they just want their own glory."

"This is not a fight," said Al-Seminy. "It is a war, between Salafiya and Takwa."

The Takwa Union plans to protest on Tuesday outside the presidential palace during the meeting with the delegation from Matruh.

Panic as dog disperses protest

Continued from page 1

ONTV channel anchor Reem Maguid reported that two people were attacked by the dog; political activist Rabeh Al-Shehawey, who filed a report against the governor, and fisherman Mohamed Mahmoud, whose injury is serious.

Hegazy said that upon hearing about the Popular Current's protest in Birollas, to coincide with the time and place of the celebrations, Al-Hosseini was advised by his team to move the celebrations to Kafr Al-Sheikh city.

"Yet, the governor refused, saying that the national day is to celebrate the Birollas battle which took place in Birollas and that any group has the right to express their opinions and hold protests," Hegazy said.

During the celebration, the Popular Current gathered in protest near Al-Hosseini and his delegation, an action which Hegazy described as "the Popular Current's attempt to block Al-Hosseini's access."

"The police offered to use force in order to disperse the protesters, yet the governor disagreed," Hegazy said.

The celebration then moved

to the Armed Forces field, where the governor was due to deliver a speech. Hegazy claimed that the popular current occupied the three front rows, chanting and interrupting Al-Hosseini while he delivered his speech.

The governor moved next to Birollas Tower port to talk to the fishermen and listen to their problems when, according to Hegazy, the fishermen started arguing among themselves as to whom would get to speak first.

"Some fishermen told me that the group of people present aren't really fishermen but members of the Popular Current," Hegazy said.

At that moment, the dog was released and panic ensued.

Hegazy said that the governor scolded the officer on the spot and asked him to remove the dog right away. The fishermen were invited to the governor's office on Tuesday in order to present their problems.

Kafr Al-Sheikh's national day celebrates the anniversary of the Birollas Lake battle, a battle which took place on 4 November 1956 during the Tripartite aggression against Egypt by Britain, France and Israel.

Missing teenager found showing signs of torture

Victim suffering from post traumatic stress

By Joel Gulhane

A 19 year old student from Dar Salam went missing on Friday but was found later the same day showing signs of being tortured. He is currently being treated in Ain Shams university hospital for post traumatic stress disorder.

Mostafa Abdel Maguid went missing after he had written on his Facebook page on Thursday that he would name the policemen who allegedly abused and raped him in August at an event he was planning to attend on Saturday.

Doctor Sally Tuma, who works for the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and is treating Abdel Maguid, said "when he was found on Friday his hair was burnt and was falling out in my hands. It seems as if an electric gun had been used. The hair around his penis and his back were also burnt. He couldn't remember a thing."

Abdel Maguid was first arrested by police for protesting outside the Syrian embassy in August. While he was detained he was allegedly

abused and raped by policemen. Tuma confirmed there were marks on his body that support this claim. Tuma also said Abdel Maguid was detained again a month later by police, who performed a rectal cavity search on him.

There is uncertainty over Friday's incident due to Abdel Maguid's mental state. Tuma said, "when people go through such trauma, it is common for there to be a psychological effect...it is still not possible to say that the police did this to him."

On the two previous occasions Abdel Maguid was seen being arrested by the police. In this incident no one has come forward to say they time saw this happen.

Abdel Maguid attended an event on Saturday with Tuma. She said, "about two hours into the event he turned and he began imitating a police officer. He presented a danger to himself and others. I admitted him to Ain Shams university hospital where his now recovering."

The Ministry of Interior was unavailable for comment.



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Egyptian Women's Front opposes constitution

THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION CONSIDERED A THREAT TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS

By Luiz Sanchez

The Egyptian Women's Front (EWF) has demanded the Constituent Assembly cease working on the draft constitution, as the assembly is not representative of the Egyptian people.

EWF member, Mona Abdalradi, said the organisation was established last month and consists of 15 political parties and organisations dedicated to defending the rights of women.

"We are extremely disappointed that we are left to defend the few rights we have struggled to gain over the past few years, rather than being able to pursue more," Abdalradi said.

Article 29 of the draft constitution deals with forced labour, slavery and the trafficking of women and children and has been hotly contested. Some Islamist members of the assembly have called for its removal, saying trafficking is a phenomenon that does not exist in Egypt and thus does not need to be covered in the constitution. Others felt the law would identify child marriage as human trafficking,

arguing that girls should be allowed to marry once they are able to have children.

Article 36 stipulates women's rights and equality. "The state is committed to taking all constitutional and executive measures to ensure equality of women with men in all walks of political, cultural, economic and social life, without violation of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence," it reads. There is little difference between the wording in the current draft and the 1971 constitution, but the issue lies with the final line regarding Islamic jurisprudence.

The current draft of the constitution is still under discussion and may not represent the final wording. Nevertheless, Abdalradi argued, the lack of female representation within the assembly is a clear sign that women's rights will not be defended in full.

"There are seven women in the assembly," Abdalradi said. "Five are Islamists and the other two are not," she added. "One of the non-Islamist women left and the other is ideologi-



Women protest in Cairo demanding greater representation in the Constituent Assembly (File photo)

cally aligned with the Islamists."

Sabah El-Saqqary, the women's secretary for the Freedom and Justice Party, said Shari'a (Islamic jurisprudence) is a demand by a large sector of female society. "Shari'a law does not contradict

women's rights socially, politically and economically," she said. In her opinion, under Shari'a women would not be stopped from running for president.

According to the Rafik Hariri Centre for the Middle East (RHC), the

constitution does little to guarantee women's rights in Egypt.

"While the new clause places the responsibility of women's rights in the hands of the state, women are still in exactly the same position as they

were with the 1971 constitution," RHC's associate director Nancy Messieh wrote in October. "Not only because of the adherence to Islamic law, but also since it says that the state will guarantee women's rights, while giving no details on how they will set about to do so."

Gaber Nassar, a constitutional expert, said the articles relating to women, "economically, socially, politically and in terms of security are not appropriate." He said the articles pertaining to women's rights should be changed, but due to the assembly being comprised of mainly Islamist members, he was doubtful. "The Islamists oppose change," he continued, "because they have a certain vision of women they want enforced."

The decision to create a women's front to combat the Islamist domination of the assembly, Abdalradi said, is because the Islamists are by and large united, whereas "the civilian forces are scattered and we want to unite them all."

Lavrov meets Morsy, Brahimi and El-Araby in Cairo

Russian foreign minister accuses other countries of taking sides in Syrian crisis

By Joel Gulhane

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with President Mohamed Morsy on Monday. During their meeting Morsy urged Lavrov to use Russia's political sway to help solve the crisis in Syria.

Presidential spokesman Yasser Ali said, "the president asked Russia to support the quartet initiative." The initiative is made up of Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran, who aim to help mediate on the Syrian crisis. Ali said, "the president asked Lavrov to use Russia's political power to stop the bloodshed in Syria."

During the meeting Lavrov extended a formal invitation for Morsy to visit Russia.

Lavrov met with the secretary general of the Arab League, Nabil El-Araby and Special envoy of the Arab League and the United Nations to Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, to discuss the Syrian crisis on Sunday. Lavrov accused other countries involved in helping to resolve the situation of ignoring the Syrian government and "only talking to the opposition," and encouraging further conflict. He also claimed there is not necessarily a need for a UN security council resolution.

In a press conference after their meeting El-Araby said that the meeting was held partly "to analyse the situation in Syria and revise what has been done until now and explore the ways of moving forward."

"Nothing has been agreed upon but the different dimensions and determinants of the situation have been studied."

Lavrov announced a new Arab-Russian partnership, with the first meeting to be held at the end of the year. He then talked about the Syrian crisis and acknowledged that "this crisis has negative consequences related to the stability of the region and the surrounding countries and we agree in principle that there is no military solution to the crisis."

Lavrov stressed the need to im-



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, right, speaks with secretary general of the Arab League Nabil El-Araby (middle) and Special envoy of the Arab League and the United Nations to Syria Lakhdar Brahimi

plement the agreements that were reached in Geneva at the end of June, namely to establish an interim governing authority comprising both the government and the opposition. He added "I think that Russia may be the only country that works with all of the Syrian parties, with the government and the opposition according to the Geneva declaration."

He then commented on the progress of the Syrian situation, saying, "sadly some of the countries that participated in the Geneva meeting have stopped talking with the government and are only talking with the opposition and they are even encouraging them to proceed with an armed struggle until they are victorious."

The Russian minister then highlighted the need to revisit the agreements made in Syria, "so that we can work on this foundation and to enable Lakhdar Brahimi to carry out his mission."

Lavrov said that a security council resolution might not be necessary because the Geneva agreements exist and a resolution could cause violence to intensify. He again accused other countries of turning against the

regime, saying "maybe the attempt of our western partners and colleagues to pass a resolution is to destabilise the situation, in order to create circumstances for them to be able to wipe out the regime."

Brahimi on the other hand stressed the need for a resolution. "I want what was stated in Geneva to be translated into a security council resolution, which would grant the power to implement a political project," he said.

He pointed out that the Syrian crisis continues to be violent. "The blood that is flowing is the blood of the innocent and this will not lead to the victory of either party."

Both Brahimi and Lavrov agreed "there is no military solution to the crisis in Syria." They both called for a political solution to the crisis and to implement the Geneva agreements.

Brahimi said, "there is no other way for this to happen unless the members of the security council can talk together and agree on a resolution and we look forward to that with all our hopes."

The Geneva meeting was held in June between the members of the

security council and representatives of countries neighbouring Syria. The main outcome of the Geneva meeting was the agreement to establish a transitional governing authority.

While Sunday's meeting was dominated by the topic of Syria, it also addressed other regional issues. Lavrov warned that by concentrating on the Syrian crisis other issues in the Middle East might get ignored, such as rebuilding Libya and the Palestinian issue. He said that one of Russia's main tasks in the region is to "build a zone free of mass destruction."

He supported the desire for change in the Arab world but said that this should not destabilise the region and create a focal point for terrorism and drug trafficking.

Russia and China have both used their vetoes as permanent members of the security council to block proposed sanctions against Syria.

Lavrov's next destination is Jordan where he will arrive on Monday to discuss strengthening bilateral relations between Russia and Jordan. He will also meet Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to discuss the Palestinian issue.

Moussa denies meeting with prominent Israeli

Calls for 'paradigm shift' in Israel and Palestine

By Connor Molloy

Amr Moussa has vehemently denied that he met with Israeli supermarket mogul Rami Levy in the Palestinian town of Nablus.

"There has been a lot of talk about that," said Lamia Kamel, a spokesperson for Moussa, "accusing him of collaborating."

Moussa was at an economic forum on Saturday in Nablus. The meeting was attended by 700 delegates from around the world including Munib Al-Masry the billionaire Palestinian. Al-Masry hosted the forum at his mansion overlooking the sprawling town of Nablus in the north of the West Bank.

"This was held under the auspices of the World Economic Forum in preparation for Davos," said Moussa's representative, Ahmed Salah Kamel, referring to the annual meeting held in Switzerland.

Kamel confirmed there were representatives from Israeli civic society present, but that Moussa did not individually meet with any of them, including Levy. "Of course it was a slander campaign," said Kamel who thought rumours were being spread about Moussa because he said the Israelis were not "partners in peace."

The title of the meeting was "Breaking the Impasse in the Palestinian-Israeli question." Moussa said this title was wrong, there was no impasse, but rather a total lack of a way forward. Instead, he argued at the forum, there needs to be a paradigm shift in how the region works toward peace.

The Arab Peace Initiative, created while Moussa was secretary general of the Arab League, was rejected by the Israeli side.

The Arab Peace Initiative was agreed upon by the Arab League in 2002. It calls for a withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories and a "just settlement" of the Palestinian refugee crisis. In exchange, Israel would be able to normalise relations with the Arab region.

In Nablus this weekend, Moussa asked the Israeli delegates what kind of solution it was that they wanted. Kamel reported Moussa saying, "you never work toward the two-state solution, you never promise a sovereign Palestinian state, so what do you want? If you want a one-state solution, then we need to begin to talk about that."

There has to be full rights for all citizens, including the full right of return."

Moussa went on to say that he was not only concerned on behalf of the Palestinians, but also on behalf of Egyptians. "The continuation of the status quo is only a recipe for disaster, it is so explosive it cannot continue and it will affect the whole region, not just Israel and Palestine."

The meeting was also attended by several Turkish delegations, members of the Palestinian Authority, and the United Nations. Hayat Abu Saleh from the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator of the Middle East Peace Process confirmed that her boss, Robert Serri, was a part of the meetings in Nablus as a representative from the UN.

One peculiar addition was a group of independent representatives from the United States. While the US was not officially represented, Kamel said the Americans present gave "an apologetic speech, saying they wished the US could have been a part of this."

While in Palestine, Moussa paid homage to the late Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, at his mausoleum.

Moussa also met with Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. "Fayyad complained that the Palestinians feel that the Arab Spring has consumed the Arab world and the Palestinian question is no longer important," said Kamel.

Moussa retorted that Palestine "is the key issue. Not because of emotions or nationalism, but rather because it is the linchpin for security and economic success in the region. It is of strategic importance and it has to be answered because it is destabilising the whole region."

Fayyad also stated the need for a greater European and Arab role in the reunification of the two Palestinian factions, Hamas and Fatah. Moussa agreed.

While the Moussa camp could not confirm Levy's presence at the meeting, Al-Masry has recently been meeting with Levy over a "public-private partnership for peace."

Levy has been the target of Palestinian and international protesters because his supermarkets operate in West Bank settlements. A 24 October protest at a supermarket in the Sha'ar Benjamin settlement was violently broken up by police.

Judges to investigate police assault

Continued from page 1

Nael said he thought there was an unofficial deal between the state and the police, where the state gives the police a free hand to assault and restrain freedoms, in return for relative calm among the ruling authorities.

"The authorities are busy establishing themselves in the state's institutions and creating a deep state through taking over parliament, the governorates, the Supreme Press

Council," Nael said. "Meanwhile, the police are free to assault activists."

Nael stated he doesn't feel completely optimistic about the outcome of the investigation, since he thinks nobody has been punished for their crimes since the January 2011 revolution. He added the media attention his case, as well as the three other featured cases, could be the reason for launching this investigation.

Nael says he was subjected to police assault over a month ago, when he

was called in to the Nasr City police department by one of his clients. He arrived to find his client bloody following a fight with a group of people Nael described as "thugs."

Nael says he was then forcefully detained for two hours after being charged with assault. He said he was released only when forced to sign a reconciliation agreement with the "thugs" who had attacked his client.

The other three citizens referred to in the request are: Mansoura

University research assistant, Taqadom Al-Khatib, who claims to have been assaulted in a police ambush in Qena then accused of attacking police personnel; Khaled Al-Sayed, a revolutionary figure who says he was assaulted in a Nasr City ambush and falsely charged with drug possession; and company chairman, Mohamed Soliman, who says he was physically assaulted, dragged and injured by police personnel in an ambush.



Mali Islamist group under pressure to break with Al-Qaeda

By Romaric Ollo Hien (AFP)

Ouagadougou – Burkina Faso led efforts on Sunday to persuade one of the armed Islamist groups controlling northern Mali to cut ties with Al-Qaeda as a west African military intervention looms to end the crisis.

Ansar Dine has joined with jihadist groups including Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) to take over the north of Mali in the wake of a March coup attempt in Bamako.

An Ansar Dine delegation, which arrived in Ouagadougou on Friday, met late on Sunday for about 45 minutes with Djibrill Bassole, the Burkina Faso foreign minister.

“Things went well,” said head delegate Algabass Ag Intalla after the talks.

A meeting on Monday between Intalla and Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore, who has been the chief mediator in the Mali crisis for the regional bloc ECOWAS, was not ruled out.

The Ansar Dine envoys “renewed their availability and their commitment to find a negotiated solution to the crisis,” said a source close to the mediation. The delegation was “very available, very open,” the source added.

As far as their “ties with the ter-

rorist groups [are concerned], they insisted that they are independent” and had not committed “any act of terrorism,” said the source, but added that Burkina Faso expected “concrete commitments.”

Head delegate Intalla told AFP he had met late Saturday with the foreign minister in Mali’s transitional government, in Ouagadougou, but declined to comment on their discussions.

The 16 nation Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has demanded that Ansar Dine end “terror and organised crime” in the region, breaking with the Al-Qaeda and other Islamist factions and enter into a political dialogue to re-establish the unity of the Mali nation.

While not immediately acceding to these demands, the group sent out a signal, saying that “Ansar Dine is independent of any other group,” Intalla told AFP.

He added that his movement “is ready to negotiate so that there will be peace”.

Countries in the region, as well as the international community, fear that north Mali could become a new breeding ground for terrorists.

On Friday Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan said ECOWAS “must take action to root out Al-

Qaeda, drug traffickers, kidnappers and other criminal elements who are turning northern Mali into a home for terrorists.”

Terrorism fears have also led Algeria to hold talks with Ansar Dine representatives, the Algerian daily El-Watan reported, citing a source close to the matter while the government has made no comment.

Algeria is seen as a key player in dealing with Islamic extremism, and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited the regional heavyweight this past week to press for support in the Mali crisis.

Algeria has been hesitant to get involved in any military intervention; however Washington feels that with its powerful army, counter-terrorism experience and intelligence services, it could play a central role.

Like Burkina Faso, Algeria would like to see a negotiated solution to the Malian crisis, while not ruling out a military intervention.

Meanwhile in Bamako, international experts were expected to finish their work on plans for a military force to enter Mali’s desert north.

On 12 October the UN security council adopted a resolution preparing for the deployment of such a force for Mali, giving ECOWAS 45 days to



AFP Photo / Romaric Ollo Hien

Islamist rebels of Ansar Dine near Timbuktu, in rebel-held northern Mali

firm up its plans.

The Mali coup attempt in March was triggered by soldiers angry at the government’s handling of the Tuareg rebellion in the north and ousted the regime in Bamako. That however allowed the north to fall into the hands of the Tuareg rebels fighting alongside Islamic extremists.

The headline Islamists quickly sidelined the secular Tuareg, eclipsing the desert nomads’ plans for independence for an area they consider their homeland.

Mali was effectively split in two, with the north under control of Ansar Dine and the Movement for Oneness

and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), backed by AQIM.

They have imposed their strict interpretation of Islamic law, stoning to death and whipping transgressors and forcing women to cover up as well as destroying ancient cultural treasures deemed “idolatrous.”

Do or die: Final campaign day dawns for Obama, Romney

by Tangi Quemener (AFP)

Madison, Wisconsin – After a grueling 18-month battle, the final campaign day arrived Monday for United States President Barack Obama and rival Mitt Romney, two men on a collision course for the world’s top job.

The candidates have attended hundreds of rallies, fundraisers and town halls, spent literally billions on attack ads, ground games, and get out the vote efforts, and squared off in three intense debates.

Their running mates, Vice President Joe Biden and Republican congressman Paul Ryan, have laid out the rationales for their bosses’ aspirations; First Lady Michelle Obama, Romney’s wife Ann and countless surrogates on both sides have made the case.

Monday marks the final, last-ditch attempt by incumbent and challenger to convince the narrowing sliver of undecided voters that their policies, their platforms, and their approach to leading America forward are the right ones come 2013.

And with polls showing that, for the most part, each has as equal a shot at the White House as the other, Obama and Romney will engage in unvarnished efforts to mobilise their core supporters.

“I need you, Ohio,” Obama admitted to a 20,000-strong crowd in Cincinnati, in a state for which both candidates are fighting tooth and nail.

“And if you’re willing to work with me, and knock on some doors with me, if you’re willing to early vote for me, make some phone calls for me, turn out for me, we’ll win Ohio. We will win this election,” the president said.

Both candidates campaigned deep into the night on Sunday, with Romney too imploring his supporters to get out the vote in the handful of battleground states where the next



AFP PHOTO/Jawel Simhad

US President Barack Obama waves at supporters during a campaign rally in Aurora, Colorado, on 4 November

occupant of the White House will be decided.

“We’ve got a little work to do in the coming days... which is to make sure we have a win on Tuesday night,” the Republican nominee said at a night rally in Newport News, Virginia.

The final dash underlined the tightness of a race that is drawing to a close with the rival candidates and their aides confidently predicting victory after months of campaigning and conflicting fortunes in opinion polls.

As the clock ticked down to Tuesday’s vote, Romney’s efforts included a surprise foray into Pennsylvania, a Democratic-leaning state that Republican strategists say is breaking his way.

“We’re taking back the White House because we’re going to win Pennsylvania,” Romney told a crowd of up to 30,000, according to US Secret Service estimates quoted by the campaign, who had gathered on a farm in frigid weather.

Obama advisers dismissed the trip as a sign of desperation from the challenger less than 48 hours from election day.

And yet a valuable character witness, former President Bill Clinton, will headline four rallies for Obama on Monday in Pennsylvania, to counter Romney’s late push there.

Democrats said they were confident of Obama’s small but steady lead in key swing states, but acknowledged that everything now depends on getting the vote out.

“Ultimately, it’s up to you. You have the power,” Obama said at a rally in Concord, New Hampshire. “You will be shaping the decisions for this country for decades to come right now, in the next two days.”

Obama flew to New Hampshire to reprise a buddy act from the night before with Clinton, which saw the popular former president place his economic legacy on the younger leader’s shoulders.

On a gruelling swing, the Democratic incumbent also travelled to Florida, Ohio, and Colorado before touching down in Wisconsin in the early hours Monday.

Exhaustion began to show on both candidates this past weekend as they

keep up frenetic paces straight into Monday, when each performs another multi-state crisscross that would make any frequent flyer proud.

Obama begins in Wisconsin, continues to Ohio and then to Iowa, the state where Obama began his presidential run in 2008, before returning to his home town Chicago.

Romney starts the day in the biggest swing state of all, Florida. He then flies to Virginia and kingmaker Ohio one last time before returning to where his campaign began 18 months ago: New Hampshire.

Campaign aides pointed at early voting advantages in Ohio and Florida as evidence that Obama is close to sealing the deal in his quest to become only the second Democrat since World War II to get a second term.

“Early vote’s gone very well for us. We think we’re closing with strong momentum,” Obama adviser David Plouffe told ABC.

The two candidates are effectively tied in national polls of the popular vote but Obama appears to have a stronger claim to the battleground states, and if the polls are accurate, seems to be in position to win reelection.

The latest ABC News/Washington Post survey showed the race tied, with both Obama and Romney receiving 48 per cent support among likely voters.

In a new CNN/ORC poll of likely voters, Obama and Romney stood at 49 per cent each.

A survey by the Wall Street Journal and NBC News gave Obama 48 per cent support and Romney 47 per cent, a statistical dead heat.

And only a Pew poll found that Obama led 48 per cent to 45 per cent among likely voters who already have made up their minds, with four per cent saying they remain uncommitted.

Death toll from Myanmar unrest reaches 88: official

Sittwe, Myanmar (AFP) – Sectarian bloodshed has left at least 88 people dead in Myanmar this month, the authorities said Monday, with more than 26,000 others forced to flee a wave of rioting and arson.

Hundreds more homes were burned down over the weekend as security forces struggled to quell clashes between Buddhists and Muslims in western Rakhine state that have seen whole neighbourhoods razed.

Four more deaths were reported, although they were believed to be from earlier clashes.

“Altogether 49 men and 39 women have been killed,” a government official told AFP, bringing the total death toll since June to about 180. Rights groups fear the actual number of people killed could be much higher.

“About 300 houses were burnt down in Pauktaw town on Sunday but there were no casualties in that incident,” said the official, who did not want to be named.

Decades-old animosity between Buddhists and minority Rohingya Muslims exploded in June after the apparent rape and murder of an ethnic Rakhine woman sparked a

series of vicious revenge attacks.

Myanmar’s 800,000 stateless Rohingyas are viewed by the United Nations as among the most persecuted minorities on the planet.

Seen by the Myanmar government and many Burmese as illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh, they face tight restrictions on their movements and limited access to employment, education and public services.

New York-based Human Rights Watch on Saturday released satellite images showing what it described as “extensive destruction” in a predominantly Rohingya Muslim area of Kyaukpadaung, the site of a major pipeline taking gas to China.

Virtually all structures appear to have been wiped from the landscape.

Other Muslims in Rakhine have also been swept up in the latest violence, including the Kaman, one of Myanmar’s officially recognised ethnic groups.

The UN estimates that 26,500 people, mostly Muslims, have been displaced since 21 October, in addition to about 75,000 people already crammed into squalid camps following the June unrest.

22 dead in floods, 60,000 displaced: govt official

Hyderabad, India (AFP) – Torrential rains in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh have killed at least 22 people and displaced tens of thousands of villagers over the past week, according to an official.

Downpours triggered by a cyclone that hit the coast near Chennai last week left hundreds of villages inundated and 60,000 people in relief camps, Karikal Valaven, a government officer overseeing emergency operations, told AFP on Monday.

“At least 22 people have died and thousands have lost their houses. The rains have damaged all the standing crops in the coastal region,” he said.

Disaster response teams helped move people to higher ground in rubber boats and nearly 100 shelters were opened across the state to accommodate people fleeing the flood zone.

“The unseasonal rainfall has destroyed our crops and our entire field is submerged in water,” Arku Rajaipa,

a farmer in Guntur district, one of the worst-affected regions, told a local TV news channel.

“We will have to depend on the government for food the whole year.”

Cyclone Nilam struck 50 kilometres south of Chennai on Wednesday evening in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu before moving inland, killing at least 10 people.

The Andhra Pradesh state government said in a statement that it had handed out 100,000 food packets.

All trains were suspended from the coastal cities of Visakhapatnam and Vijaywada, a major transit route in the region.

The meteorological office has forecast more rain, and people from low-lying areas have been advised to head to shelters.

In September this year two million people were forced to flee their homes in the north-eastern state of Assam after floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains.

Pakistan party announces Taliban ‘referendum’

Karachi (AFP) – A Pakistani political party has announced an unofficial nationwide referendum asking people whether they want their country to follow the ideology of the Taliban or the vision of the nation’s founder.

The secular Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), an ally of the ruling Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), has been openly critical of the Pakistani Taliban, and last week the Islamist militants threatened to attack the party.

The Taliban earned condemnation across Pakistan last month when they tried to murder schoolgirl activist

Malala Yousufzai in the northwestern area of Sway, for promoting girls’ education.

Pakistan has been convulsed by Islamist and sectarian violence in recent years, with more than 5,200 people killed since July 2007 in suicide attacks and bombings across the nuclear-armed nation.

Faisal Sabzwari, an MQM leader and provincial minister for youth affairs in Sindh, said the poll, announced Sunday, was an attempt to harness public opinion against the extremists. “We are holding the referendum

to build an opinion among the fellow countrymen and women whether they want a Pakistan of Taliban or a Pakistan of Mohammad Ali Jinnah,” he said.

Jinnah, commonly often referred to as “Quaid-e-Azam” or Great Leader, led the creation of Pakistan as a homeland for Muslims in 1947 in the partition of British India.

“Quaid-e-Azam founded a country for everyone without the discrimination of faith, caste and creed. We want that Pakistan,” Sabzwari said.

He said the party was arranging for



BUSINESS

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Italian delegation proposes five investment initiatives

By Mohamed El-Bahrawi

An Italian business delegation currently visiting Egypt expressed enthusiasm towards enhancing mutual cooperation and boosting trade exchange between the two nations.

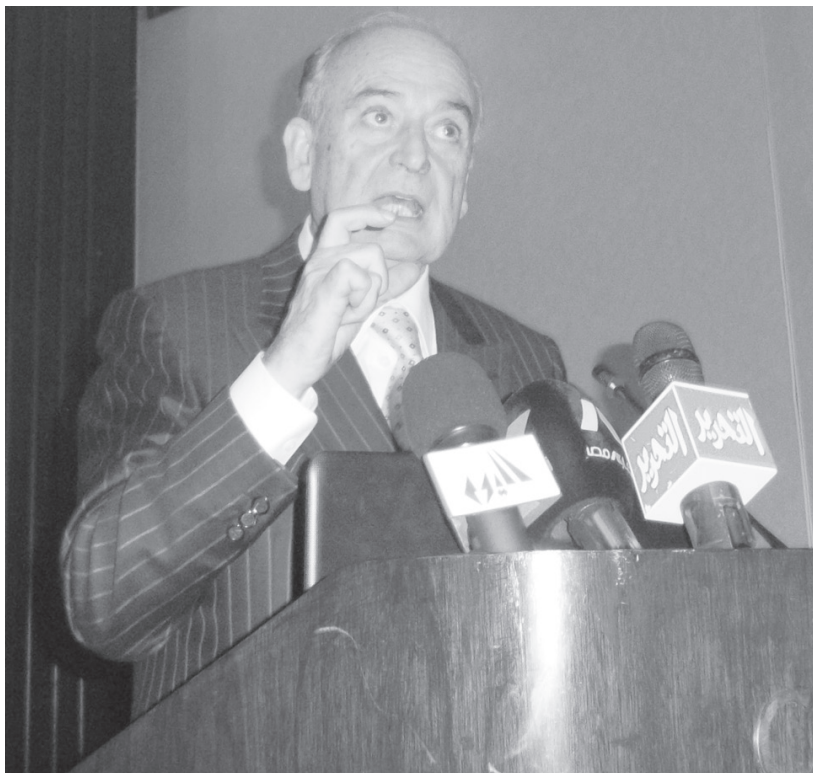
Five Italian initiatives have been presented to the Egyptian cabinet in the fields of agriculture, tourism, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), bio and renewable energy as well as vocational training. "We're eager to find partners," said the president of the Italian Association for Cooperation and Friendship with Egypt (IACFE), Antonio Badini, during a press conference held Monday.

The delegation earmarked \$2 billion for investment in the Egypt and stressed expanding public private-partnership (PPP) investments. Badini expressed the delegation's desire to work hand in hand with the Federation of Egyptian Industries towards developing vocational training of human capital. He also emphasised the need for a mutual agreement that allows duty-free exchange of goods between both nations.

"Italian SMEs are finding it more difficult to compete in a global market due to the high cost of production and taxation in Europe. In order for these companies to remain globally competitive, they need to find ways to save on production costs. This is where Egypt comes in," said the counsellor for the IACFE, Dr Nagy Albert.

This way, "Egypt can benefit from their technology and knowhow while Italy can reduce their production cost owing to Egypt's lower taxes," added Albert.

On the sidelines of the press conference, the president of the Italian-Egyptian Business Council, Khaled



Mohamed El-Bahrawi

President of the Italian Association for Cooperation and Friendship with Egypt, Ambassador Antonio Badini, addressing the attendees of Monday's press conference

Abu Bakr told the Daily News Egypt "they [Italians] are used to investing in an instable political climate," commenting on possible concerns that might deter investment. "For them, it's a stable transitional period. We're the ones who are too worried and I highly doubt that cycle of production and employment would come to a halt so long as we continue to live and work and produce and raise generations."

One of the agricultural initiatives is the Green Corridor, which basically aims at easing and expediting agricultural trade between Egypt and Italy. "This is one of the projects that necessitates mutual cooperation. Italian ports are fully committed to facilitate quick and smooth transportation of our agricultural production

in order to reach Italian ports fresh, safe and properly packaged," said Albert.

"The government is in the final stages of restarting the high-speed maritime line between Alexandria and Venice, which stopped operating after the revolution," AbuBakr said, adding that one of the main targets of the Italian-Egyptian Business Council is to lure Italian SMEs that are closing down in Italy to come and start their businesses in Egypt rather than any other neighbouring country.

"As we speak, there are factories being entirely transported to Egypt in cooperation with Egyptian investors who expressed interest in expanding their operations," AbuBakr added.

Government solicits citizens donations

By Hend El-Behary

Minister of Finance Momtaz El-Saeed is soliciting public donations in an attempt to rescue the economy.

He called on Egyptians eager to support their country to donate to an "Egypt Renaissance Account." The account is also intended to receive money illegally acquired by the ousted regime.

A former minister of finance, Samir Radwan told Daily News Egypt that the idea was not a new one and could potentially be successful. "We've applied a similar technique during my era... and we succeeded to gather around EGP 40 Million," he said.

Hazem El-Beblawy, another former minister of finance, wished the initiative success, saying that in such hard times any source of funding is desirable.

However Magdy Toulba, an economist, said he expected the campaign to fail. He said that a similar initiative at the beginning of the 1980s during the reign of former President Hosni Mubarak failed to achieve its aim.

"I agree upon the concept of social participation to handle the recent crisis, but it's not 'a renaissance', said Toulba. "A renaissance should be based on studies, and have direction and an obvious strategy.

"I need to know how my money can help Egyptian economy specifically, either in building schools, industrial cities or otherwise. This campaign is very vague."

According to El-Saeed, the initiative was a response to the desire of many expatriate Egyptian businessmen to support the economy and help President Mohamed Morsy.

"The account will be put under the supervision of oversight bodies, including the Ministry of Finance and the Central Auditing Agency in particular," El-Saeed said. "The account's balance will be announced periodically and the funds will be used to support the economy."

African Development Bank: Employment is an exigency for Africa

By Mohamed Salah Eldin

Casablanca - The African Development Bank (AfDB) renewed its commitment to promote employment in Africa as a way to combat poverty.

Job creation, competition and growth constitute the main axes identified by the bank to develop human capital in the continent.

According to a report issued by AfDB, youth represent 60 per cent of total unemployment in the region; young people in Africa are mostly underemployed and engage in low productive jobs in the informal economy; 90 per cent of jobs created in the region are in the informal sector as demonstrated by the International Labour Organisation estimates.

By 2040, Africa will have the largest workforce in the world; it also harbours the youngest population of the world according to CIA World Fact-book data, this large "youth bulge" is a risk factor for the continent, but can also represent an opportunity for change, progress and social dynamism if the talents of the youth are channelled to the productive sectors of the economy.

A comprehensive strategy was put forward to achieve this goal; it includes offering support to high education

(scientific and technological) and vocational training, developing links between school and the labour market, creating regional centres of excellence following the model of Carnegie Mellon in Rwanda, also the African Virtual University that has a wide platform comprising more than thirty universities.

The plan also considered providing support to regional initiatives targeting the mobility of skilled persons, strengthening women's participation in education and employment opportunities and supporting mediation programs between jobs supply and demand.

This strategy was discussed by many stakeholders from North Africa who convened in Casablanca on the first and second of November to express the views of their countries and organisations on the document drafted by the AfDB.

Egyptian economist and professor at Ain Shams University Noha El-Devery said that the problem is not only unemployment, but the inequality of access to the labour market; she clarified that not all the youth have equal chances of getting employed, thus the strategy should deal with "employability" and not only employment.

The education chief economist at AfDB Morocco Mohamed Gueye

outlined the partnership launched between the Bank, the African Union, the United Nation's Economic Commission for Africa and the International Labour Organisation (ILO); an initiative aiming at increasing and improving the youth employment in Africa by including it in national and regional policies, operating already existing job creation programs and knowledge creation for better intervention. The long term partnership (2011-2050) is divided into five year phases and will be subject of revision and evaluation, it will cover eventually the whole continent but only 10 countries will be selected for a pilot period in the coming three to five years.

The workshop on employment was concluded by issuing recommendations that should be used as guidelines for AfDB's action in this field; namely the matching between firms and education centres, the sensitisation of trainers, improving the work value and the initiative culture, working on the employment elasticity of growth and developing risk capital.

In response to a comment raised by Daily News Egypt, the moderator of the session Dr Adel Ben Youssef added a recommendation concerning the use of "social capital" as a means to "employability."

Merck Pharmaceutical Company Opens The New Office in Egypt

Merck, the German Pharmaceutical company, has opened its new office in Egypt, in the Sheraton Residence, Heliopolis. The inauguration event included prominent doctors from various fields of medicine, government officials, medical associations, as well as top officials from different companies that produce, manufacture and distribute pharmaceutical products in Egypt.

The inauguration ceremony was hosted by Mr. Jon Baumhauer, Chairman of Family Board of Merck Germany, Dr. Stefan Oschmann, Board Member of Merck and CEO of Merck Serono, Dr. Emad Graiss, Managing Director Merck Egypt, as well as the company's managers of different departments.

Merck is a global pharmaceutical and chemical company with a history that began in 1668 (the oldest phar-

maceutical and chemical company in the world), and a future shaped by more than 40,000 employees in 67 countries. Its success is characterized by innovations from entrepreneurial employees.

Merck Serono is the biopharmaceutical division of Merck KGaA, with headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany. Merck Serono offers leading brands in 150 countries to help patients with cancer, multiple sclerosis, infertility, endocrine and metabolic disorders as well as cardiovascular diseases. In the United States and Canada, EMD Serono operates as a separately incorporated subsidiary of Merck Serono.

Merck Serono discovers, develops, manufactures and markets prescription medicines of both chemical and biological origin in specialist indications. Merck Serono has an en-

during commitment to deliver novel therapies in the core focus areas of neurodegenerative diseases, oncology and rheumatology.

Merck Egypt has been established since 1964. Since then, Merck has introduced to the Egyptian market many vital drugs like "Glucophage" for the treatment of diabetes, "Concor" for the treatment and management of high blood pressure as well as other important drugs in the Egyptian pharmaceutical market.

Merck Egypt is continuously exerting efforts in producing effective pharmaceutical products and design innovative programs that support patients. Moreover, the company is always reinforcing its collaboration with the Ministry of Health in order to provide the Egyptian patients with the best medical services.

Daily EGX30 index performance

Company	Reuters	Sector	Last Price	Close Price	Returns			Daily Performance		Turn Over (EGP Mill.)	Volume Trade	Market Cap. (EGP Mill.)
					Daily	YTD	12-Mths.	Max. Price	Min. Price			
Commercial Bank	COMI	Banks	37.49	36.81	0.77%	96.84%	37.97%	37.70	36.00	39.45	1,071,680	21,816.72
NSGB	NSGB	Banks	44.98	44.43	-2.54%	118.76%	69.64%	45.60	43.50	10.884	244,973	20,220.80
Ezz Steel	ESRS	Basic Resources	9.35	9.07	0.78%	143.16%	51.17%	9.35	8.74	15.92	1,755,451	4,889.39
ELSWEDY ELECTRIC	SWDY	Industrial Goods and Services and Automobiles	25.26	25.17	-2.71%	21.36%	20.37%	25.73	25.00	0.675	26,801	5,779.82
MRRIDIVE	MOIL	Industrial Goods and Services and Automobiles	1.06	1.04	-2.80%	-13.95%	-37.13%	1.06	1.02	5.88	927,481	383.49
AIC Contracting	AIND	Financial Services excluding Banks	0.53	0.51	-1.92%	-1.92%	-17.74%	0.53	0.50	2.244	4,372,171	278.00
Amer Group Holding	AMER	Financial Services excluding Banks	0.68	0.67	0.00%	21.82%	-17.62%	0.68	0.65	4.08	6,118,666	2,036.60
EK Holding	EKHO	Financial Services excluding Banks	1.20	1.19	0.00%	21.43%	15.53%	1.20	1.18	1.383	189,937	998.76
EGF-Hermes	HRHO	Financial Services excluding Banks	11.4	11.16	-1.24%	11.49%	-14.29%	11.45	10.91	32.00	2,868,772	5,404.73
Pioneers Holding	PIOH	Financial Services excluding Banks	4.99	4.85	-2.02%	118.47%	52.04%	5.04	4.62	7.746	1,598,212	2,475.00
Citadel Capital	CCAP	Financial Services excluding Banks	3.86	3.75	1.35%	47.06%	13.29%	3.90	3.59	18.66	4,982,575	2,418.76
Raya Holding	RAYA	Technology	5.98	5.74	-1.71%	64.94%	32.26%	5.98	5.50	3.406	593,079	375.07
Telecom Egypt	ETEL	Telecommunications	14	13.76	-1.29%	4.16%	-6.65%	14.10	13.56	7.96	578,332	23,796.58
Orascom Telecom Media And Technology	OTMT	Telecommunications	0.59	0.58	1.75%	67.98%	53.09%	0.60	0.56	30.413	52,677,566	2,990.04
Orascom Telecom	ORTE	Telecommunications	3.55	3.51	1.74%	103.08%	85.07%	3.56	3.43	22.02	6,280,429	18,097.63
Sidi Kerir Petrochemicals	SKPC	Chemicals	13.49	13.27	-0.38%	11.42%	3.75%	13.49	13.14	1.392	104,929	6,993.00
Egyptian Financial and Industrial	EFIC	Chemicals	10.76	10.63	-0.56%	19.30%	-5.68%	10.88	10.32	5.13	482,878	740.83
AMOC	AMOC	Oil and Gas	78.00	78.00	0.00%	16.52%	17.12%	78.00	77.76	13.789	176,781	6,715.80
Juhayna Food Industries	JUFO	Food and Beverage	6.55	6.43	2.06%	64.87%	33.68%	6.55	5.90	5.46	849,657	4,448.14
Orascom Construction Industries (OCI)	OCIC	Construction and Materials	258.00	252.00	1.35%	25.28%	4.73%	262.00	247.11	53.769	213,371	51,950.45
Delta Construction & Rebuilding	DCRC	Construction and Materials	7.05	6.92	-0.86%	-10.01%	-30.94%	7.14	6.70	1.13	163,919	161.28
Modern Co. For Water Proofing	WATP	Construction and Materials	2.19	2.13	-1.39%	-7.39%	-14.11%	2.20	2.04	2.344	1,100,126	220.32
Palm Hills	PHDC	Real Estate	2.59	2.52	-0.40%	131.19%	82.61%	2.62	2.41	36.38	14,443,317	2,652.25
TMGH Holding	TMGH	Real Estate	4.62	4.55	0.89%	53.72%	27.09%	4.64	4.45	17.882	3,928,086	9,306.67
National Real Estate Bank	NRPD	Real Estate	24	23.53	-1.09%	19.93%	-12.66%	24.10	22.75	5.49	233,273	92.84
Six of October	OCDI	Real Estate	21.08	20.48	-0.29%	156.96%	46.29%	21.40	19.65	5.147	251,326	1,862.49
El Kahera Housing & Development	ELKA	Real Estate	5.87	5.67	-4.22%	46.13%	22.73%	5.93	5.45	3.04	536,604	555.00
Arab Cotton Ginning	ACGC	Personal and Household Products	3.99	3.88	-3.48%	83.89%	33.79%	4.02	3.71	11.561	2,977,317	1,088.68
Oriental Weavers	ORWE	Personal and Household Products	23.4	23.03	-0.17%	-16.87%	-20.12%	23.50	22.30	0.40	17,204	2,076.30
Egyptian Tourism Resorts	EGTS	Travel & Leisure	1.08	1.06	-0.93%	26.19%	-1.85%	1.09	1.03	2.187	2,056,508	1,123.50

Market indices performance

Index	Value	Daily Ch.	YTD Ch.
EGX 30	5,470.31	0.38%	51.02%
EGX 70	505.12	-0.97%	21.54%
EGX 100	837.44	-0.54%	30.23%
EGX 20 Capped	6,341.22	-0.05%	61.54%

Market Brief

Markets	No.	Volume	Value(LE)	Trades
Listed	175	144,054,304	672,022,305	29,986
Stocks	172	143,891,991	489,456,419	29,983
PDBonds	2	162,295	182,564,009	2
Bonds	1	18	1,877	1
Nilex	6	213,050	1,125,920	203
OTC	14	117,001,964	369,167,708	291
Deals	10	115,412,708	367,401,450	34
Orders	4	1,589,256	1,766,258	257
Total	195	261,269,318	1,042,315,933	30,480
Total Market Cap		379,886,658,038		

Direction	No.	Volume (000's)	Value (LE 000's)	No. of Trades
Listed stocks	173	143,892	489,458	29,984
Gainers	39	74,265	226,159	9,350
Decliners	108	60,785	239,668	19,557
Unchanged	26	8,842	23,631	1,077



Trouble in Sinai and issues over the prosecutor general

The sadness from the east
Emad Al-Din Hussein
Al-Shorouk



The recent incidents in the Sinai scare Hussein. Looking at why the soldiers left their posts, the writer believes there must have been factors behind the troops' unprofessional behaviour: Considering the poor security situation in Sinai, it is not the time to point fingers at the presidency, the government or other institutions, in Hussein's view. The main challenge is to treat Sinai residents as an integrated part of the population.

The columnist points out that Mubarak's regime contributed to the uneasy feelings of Sinai Bedouins when dealing with other Egyptians. We shouldn't follow the same path or neglect earlier violations of human rights carried out against Sinai locals. The starting point of effective solutions in Sinai is putting an end to meaningless

The main topics overwhelming opinion pages are the recent incidents in the Sinai and the prosecutor general. Some writers question the political independence of the prosecutor general, noting that whoever opposes or supports him simply makes a mess of his judicial position, which theoretically stands free of political bias.

statements and focusing on healing the sore relations between Sinai sheikhs and locals in Egyptian governorates. Hussein voices his disappointment with the situation in Sinai and asks how the area can return to stability when revolutionary powers fail to bring Sinai residents into the fold. Without exaggeration, the situation in Sinai is seriously hazardous.

The prosecutor general is not a political position
Amr Al-Shobaki
Al-Masry Al-Youm



Those opposing or supporting the prosecutor general confuse his judicial position, which should be independent of any political pressure, argues Al-Shobaki. The political analyst denounces the

prosecutor general's reception of a delegation of politicians, who apparently came to his office to officially announce their support of him. Al-Shobaki finds the move unacceptable, as it indirectly implies some political groups deal with the prosecutor general as a political position, undermining his judicial role. Many falsely perceive the prosecutor general as a person with bias against political Islamists.

Even those who oppose Abdel Meguid Mahmoud, contribute to the problem, according to the writer. They appear on the opposite side of his supporters, making his position eligible for political conflict. The prosecutor general is a legal position. He is the first lawyer of the Egyptian people. It cannot be acceptable that Mahmoud would be inclined towards a certain political wing. His strength should stem from his independence. Thus, calls to dismiss the prosecutor general are without legal justification, according to Al-Shobaki. To conclude, Egypt is in a dire need to a prosecutor general who cannot be dismissed by the president or any political group.

We will not be silenced

I was about 13 when I first discovered what it means to oppress freedom of expression. I was on a road trip with my cousins, from Cairo to Damascus. It was a long trip and I took with me my very first "big" book, which told the story of King Farouq and the royal palace. Long trips require such books, we passed through Nuweiba to Aqaba, to Aden then Daraa, and the road ends in Damascus. All went well; my book spent most of the time lying on the car floor. I found it terribly boring, and couldn't read more than a couple of pages. We were then stopped at the Syrian border, we knew we would be spending many hours going through security checks at the Daraa checkpoint.

During the search, they found my book and for some reason the soldier took it directly to the officer in charge. I think all books went there. The officer came to us asking about the owner of the book, my aunt and her husband looked terrified and I didn't know why. I replied it was me; I was then taken, gently, to a room that looked like the interrogation rooms you see in movies, with the single light bulb hanging just above my head, the far small desk where the officer sat and asked questions. Of course it could have been a regular small office but I was a terrified child and that is the memory I am left with.

The officer kept asking the same questions over and over; why are you reading this book? Who gave it to you? What does your mother work as? And your father? Why are you in Syria?

On it went while I wondered why he was so interested in a stupid boring book. Then I was taken back to my family who, by the looks of the car, were searched to the bone. We were let go and my book was allowed to cross the border as well.

The first thing I did was read the book, all of it, despite how boring it was, just to find out what was so "bad" about it. I found nothing, it only spoke of royalty and for the life of me I could not understand what the officer was thinking.

In the beautiful jasmine-scented city of Damascus, a group of teenagers gathering after midnight told jokes under the starry sky. At one point one began to tell a joke of "Mubarak, Gaddafi, and Assad," then he stopped suddenly and to continue the joke we had to move inside the house to a closed second floor room. The joke was told with a hushed voice. The fear was "you never know who could be listening; it might be the garbage collector or a neighbour!"

I was reminded of these stories when I read about Ayman Al-Brince, who was talking to a group of friends at a cafe and criticising some political moves made by our president. Al-Brince is now facing charges of "insulting the president."

On top of incidents like the cancellation of Al-Minya concert; the banning of a song in some movie; and lately the problems with censorship faced by a theatre director for a play about the revolution and Egyptian politics; if coffee table talk leads to



RANA ALLAM

jail, then even jokes are risky because they will definitely call for charges of "insulting the president."

Do the Muslim Brotherhood and our president intend to imitate oppressive regimes and scare us into silence? Will they ban talking and movies and songs and arts and concerts under the name of righteousness and religion? Will they ban talking and discussions and gathering, under the auspices of insulting the president?

Do they honestly believe that people will take this lying down? Don't they see all the protests across the country? In the second half of September alone, over 300 protests, sit-ins and marches were documented. Since our revolution, Egyptians have learned to speak up, to voice their frustrations, how do our rulers think they will stop this? Kill us all?

Let this be clear, we will not be silenced!

r.allam@thedailynewsegypt.com

Letter to the president

Dear Morsy,

Like many Egyptians, I was looking forward to your government's attempt to implement its decision to close down shops at 10pm, out of the sheer comic value it would've presented. I set up an observation post in front of my building in Roxy Square, chairs, shisha and all, to get a front row seat for the Tom & Jerry-style shenanigans that would take place the moment you tried to shut down the shops there. And then the news came in that your government backed down on its decision and would delay it for another week, which at first got me into a fit of laughter. To my amazement the laughter turned to increasing levels of anger as time went by, with a single thought dominating my head: Have you no shame, at all!

The point of any state is its ability to enforce its authority on the ground; it is what is referred to as political will. Any state that doesn't do that is basically turning itself into another mirage state, one that only exists on paper; which is not what the Egyptian people signed up for when they went to the election polls. The people wanted a functioning government: one that has a vision, runs the country based on that vision and can enforce the rule of law, which your government fails to do on all fronts. Is the decision to shut down the shops a bad idea? Yes! Absolutely; but here are the options that any government has when it gets such a bad idea: 1) Don't propose it at all, or 2) Go through with it and try to enforce it, even if it is doomed to failure from the beginning. Since you decided to propose it, I wanted you to try to close the shops, and fail, but at least you would've failed with some semblance of dignity or self-respect. Your government now has neither and has become the laughing stock of the entire country, which brings us to the real question: Dear president, what the hell are you doing exactly?

What exactly was the point of the Muslim Brotherhood putting you up for president in the first place? To be in power? What power? What's the point

of power if you are incapable of exercising it or enforcing it? So far I, and every Egyptian I know, can count at least five major decisions that you or your government took in the past four months and couldn't enforce. And it's not like those decisions were great ones and there is a conspiracy preventing you from executing them; they were simply bad decisions, either legally or practically, and they showed an embarrassing amateurish style of governance. If you can't handle power, why go for it? So you can give us a weekly sermon every Friday? So that your governments can get us more in debt and execute shady international business deals, which we know very little about? I mean, we get that the grand ambition of the Brotherhood is to enjoy the same kind of business corruption as the NDP; and that unlike every other Egyptian, the head honchos in your secret society are enjoying a sudden prosperity, but at least the NDP were trying to make it look good, and they were not scared to enforce their will, two things your people can't seem to do. And yet again, is that really all there is to you? Did you not learn from your predecessor at all?

Listen you stupid bastard, when the people elected you they didn't do so in order to watch you make a mockery of the national symbol of the presidency by having you touch your privates, nor did they do it so that you can give us religious sermons that are not only boring, but are falsely interpreting the Quran. They elected you so that you can make things better, fix the country, and create a functioning government. They basically elected you to work, your excellency, but you are not doing your job at all, and it's starting to show. Not only that, but the people are slowly getting the message that this is a government without vision, plans or tools to execute their laws and decisions, and will start ignoring you. And then the question won't be whether or not the opposition will be able to unseat you or your party in the next elections, but whether there will be a point to another election in the first place, because nobody wants



MAHMOUD SALEM

to be part of a government that has no power of execution. And why would they? If they wanted a place to exchange ideas and draft laws that won't be implemented, they would start a think tank or a social club, and it would be one where they don't have to debate with idiots whether or not a nine year old is eligible for marriage because she had her period. It's not only you that's failing, it's the entire concept of the state, and if that fails, well, good luck bringing that back. Am I getting through to you? Do you understand what's at stake here? Do you get that you are taking the country into anarchy?

Mind you, anarchy will not bother me nor my friends. We will adapt, get guns and electric generators and generally be fine. Others won't be though. We will turn into the land of do-as-you-please, and the supreme majority of the country, some of which are Muslim Brotherhood, will suffer greatly. Is that what you want? No? Then stop being such a joke, and work. Do your job. Or step aside if you are unable to. Which ever choice you make, you better make it quick. We have serious problems that require serious solutions implemented by serious people, and so far you have shown that you neither have the solutions nor are you serious about finding them. You better change that quickly, because we can't take four years of this. It has been only four months and we are already cracking.

Sincerely yours,

Mahmoud Salem is a political activist, writer, and social media consultant. www.sandmonkey.org

REBEL ECONOMY WRAP

"Renaissance" Bank Account, Centamin Troubles, UK-UAE Ties

Yesterday, President Morsy surprised us again by announcing he had opened an account named Egypt's Renaissance and was urging citizens and expat Egyptians to donate to boost the economy. What a utopian idea. Here are some issues related to the move:

It is a desperate plea that is unlikely to garner a huge amount of money (does Morsy expect citizens to donate billions of dollars to narrow the deficit?)

Most Egyptians don't have a bank account (nine out of 10 adult Egyptians don't have a bank account, the Middle East's lowest ratio apart from Yemen) immediately limiting the move to a few, basically well-off Islamists who voted for Morsy or well-off liberals, who are among the few that are not disgruntled with the Islamist-dominated government.

The Ministry of Finance press release suggests that this account will also be used to deposit public cash that was pilfered by members of the former regime and recovered from abroad. Investigations reveal, however, that the Hosni Mubarak family were worth only several hundred millions of dollars, not billions. In fact, there is only about \$1.2 billion in assets frozen abroad which authorities are trying to retrieve. All this suggests that a) it will take a long time to retrieve frozen assets, and related assets from other former regime members, b) that the amount abroad is relatively paltry and will not "save" Egypt.

Final thought, this account reflects another move that will soon be forgotten. As Ahram Online points out, it is not the first scheme of its kind. In March of last year, the finance ministry opened a similar account at the Central Bank (account no. 25-01-2011) for citizens' financial donations, but the total donations were

never announced (probably because there were none).

The government also tapped into patriotic appetites and attempted to sell land to expat Egyptians. That programme was expected to pump \$2.5 billion into Egypt's treasury pot and alleviate pressures on the currency. No concrete news on that yet. ...

London-listed gold miner Centamin, which has its focus in Egypt, said this morning it was confident a court case that questioned its right to mine gold in Egypt will be resolved through an appeal process.

Last week an Egyptian court ruled that the licence to operate Centamin's Sukari gold mine was invalid. Rebel Economy described it as a partial win by the labour movement, which has held successive strikes and demonstrations against company management.

The whole case is falling apart day by day, as the oil minister and the Egyptian Mineral Resources Authority backs Centamin and supports a fast overturning of the ruling.

The court issued its ruling without it having been presented as evidence that the contract was signed in 2005, with the then oil minister giving the company operational rights to an additional 160km² area, Oil Minister Osama Kamal said in an interview with Bloomberg.

Though an appeal is very likely, this case epitomises the difficulty of proving beyond doubt that a transaction was invalid. Even if the ruling is accurate, there is bound to be pressure from the government to overturn the ruling. It will be a test of how effective lawyers can be in questioning complex financial transactions.

... David Cameron, the UK's Conservative prime minister, will land in the United Arab Emirates today



FARAH HALIME

as he begins a three-day tour of the Gulf in an attempt to rescue faltering trade alliances, the FT reports.

The delicate ties between the UK and Gulf were damaged when Britain was criticised for failing to "take a tougher line against Islamists, who have grown steadily in political power in the Middle East as dictators have been toppled over the past two years," the report says.

But the trip "will sidestep concerns over regional security and human rights as [Mr. Cameron] pushes British military exports in an effort to get the UK economy moving again."

Although the prime minister is expected to raise issues such as Saudi Arabia's record on suppressing minorities and political opponents, the overwhelming focus of the trip will be commercial.

Just in case you didn't know, the priority for the US and UK is mostly commercial and not in the interests of human welfare.

Farah is a business journalist and founder of Rebel Economy, a blog focused on how regional economies are rebuilding after the Arab Spring.

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East African street vendors sell black market goods on Neve Sha'anán street in Tel Aviv

By Connor Molloy

"Immediately across the border, I was kidnapped in Kassala," said Demsas speaking flatly.

He had been thinking for a while about leaving Eritrea. His reason for wanting to leave was the vicious conditions of his military service, mandatory in Eritrea.

As Demsas put it, "I didn't have good relations with the military."

So on New Year's Eve 2011, with his mind made up, Demsas left the army barracks and started walking to Sudan. He hadn't heard much about Sudan, but figured it could not be worse than his life in Eritrea. He was wrong.

Demsas set off on foot to Asmara, the capital of Eritrea. After that, he headed due west, stopping first in Barentu before crossing the border into Sudan.

Demsas was about to enter a strange world that exists along the western bank of the Red Sea. Eritreans are abducted; sometimes grabbed as they flee their country, sometimes they are taken while vulnerably exposed in refugee camps, sometimes they are coaxed into leaving by professional extortionists.

These Eritreans are then brought to designated houses in the Sinai and told to pay ransoms in exchange for being brought to Israel, whether or not that was their original destination. If they cannot pay, or if the money is slow to appear, they are savagely tortured to incentivise payment.

When Demsas was outside the Sudanese city of Kassala, a group of men showed up and put Demsas in their car, alongside other kidnap victims. Demsas called these men Rashaïda, the name of a nomadic tribe in East Africa that has become notorious for kidnapping and trafficking individuals trying to flee Eritrea.

The Rashaïda took Demsas to their home, a hut in Kassala. He remained trapped in the hut for seven days before being handed over to a different group of Rashaïda.

Demsas was in a foreign land and confused. "I was new to the area, so I was thinking of nothing. I didn't know the area or the people."

In Demsas's case, he did not know when he ended up in Sinai. He knew only the series of locations on the way there. The first was a big building with a flag on top. There were 120 others with him there. They started to split them up into groups of 32. Once his group of 32 was isolated, they were taken in cars to an unfinished house.

They stayed there until after nightfall when they were driven to another house where they were chained together.

"They asked for \$3,300 to transport us to Israel. They said we had three days to pay. Some paid, some couldn't, but the majority paid." Demsas paid the ransom by calling his family. "They sold all of their property and all of their jewelry, and transferred the money to the kidnappers."

Despite this, after three days of captivity and receiving the funds, the traffickers simply collected the ransoms and flipped their human cargo to another group in exchange for more money.

Meron Estefanos is a human rights activist and radio presenter for a Tigrinya-language station. She said that Rashaïda is more or less the term that Eritreans use for Bedouins, nomadic tribes that she said have been smugglers throughout their history.

"It all started with the road to Libya

about six to seven years ago. People were going from Sudan to Libya to Malta to Italy. This was the best way to get to Europe. But then Gaddafi made a deal with the EU to block the refugee flow to Europe."

At this point the Rashaïda stepped in and started smuggling migrants to Israel, with the help of their Egyptian Bedouin counterparts. Soon Israel started cracking down on the smuggling route; they stopped giving medical treatment at the border and made life hard for migrants in Israel.

"They started torturing us and we suffered a lot. They beat us and in the morning they would cut our hands and our bare feet"

With Israel a less appealing destination, many migrants were no longer eager to pay the smuggling fees.

"So smugglers started losing money. They started realising that they could make money just keeping the migrants for ransom."

This is what happened to Demsas, he was bought and sold as a commodity in one of the Sinai's most profitable businesses.

His new overseers asked for an additional ransom, but Demsas had nothing left to give. That is when the torturing started in earnest.

"They started torturing us and we suffered a lot. They beat us and in the morning they would cut our hands and our bare feet," Demsas said miming a slashing motion across his palm. "It was a bad time. People started to pay, but it only got worse when some people paid. Half paid, the rest kept suffering."

Unfortunately, Demsas's story is not unique according to John Stauffer, president of The America Team for Displaced Eritreans. Eritreans, he said, are mainly abducted in Eastern Sudan and "forcibly taken to Egypt where they are sold to renegade Egyptian Bedouins. The victims are tortured continuously by beatings, electric shock, burning with melted plastic bottles, binding in chains, suspension upside-down, and starvation. Women are often raped repeatedly, sometimes with their children present."

Doctor Ido Lurie, who works at the Open Clinic of the Physicians for Human Rights in Israel, said his clinic has conducted 1,200 interviews with people passing through the Sinai to Israel. They have not processed all of their data, but they have sorted through 280 interviews and the results tell a striking tale. More than half of the asylum seekers, primarily Eritreans, reported being chained and more than half also reported being abused physically.

A European Union report on human trafficking in the Sinai that was submitted to the European Parliament in September paints a picture of a systematic industry. One where humans are traded, torture is routine and torture houses populate the Sinai

interior near the Israeli border.

Stauffer confirmed that, just like Demsas described, huge sums are asked for in ransom, adding, "victims who do not pay are subject to enslavement by the extortionists and may be killed."

This was not Demsas's fate. He told the story of his rescue, but did so in the same expressionless tone with which he relayed his kidnapping and imprisonment.

"On 25 February, after being beaten, a sheikh heard the screams while he was walking by." The sheikh released them from their chains and took them to his home. There, "he started to give us medicine for our wounds, and clothes, and food, and a shower."

Finally they were taken to Cairo and given rent money from a local NGO. Still, said Demsas, "in Cairo life is bad." He is always scared when he leaves the apartment, so he mostly stays at home with nothing to do and no plans for the future. "Because I'm not legal, I'm afraid all the time that people may hurt me."

This is not an unfounded fear: "Egypt is holding the refugees in detention centres and deporting them back to Ethiopia or Eritrea," said Mirjam van Reisen, who co-wrote the EU report. "The refugees from Eritrea are political refugees and according to UNHCR have group rights to protection as asylum seekers." Despite this, Egypt has still been willing to detain and deport those from Eritrea and because it is almost impossible to leave Eritrea by legal means, "those who are deported back to Eritrea certainly risk imprisonment if not death."

If Eritreans leaving their homeland face kidnapping in Sudan, torture in the Sinai, and imprisonment by the Egyptian authorities, why do they still take the risk?

One of the reasons cited time and again, and offered by Demsas, is the mandatory military service in Eritrea, with conscription that is indefinite. "Every Eritrean, regardless of sex, is forced to serve in the military," said Estefanos. "Some people from 1994 are still doing it."

Estefanos said the military pays the equivalent of \$30 per month. Yet the meager pay is almost a footnote when compared to the corruption and abuses that are rampant in the military. It is more indentured servitude than national service. "They own you until you are 45 or 50," said Estefanos.

The dictatorial regime of Isaias Afewerki is involved in every aspect of Eritreans' lives. Said Estefanos, "we are talking about a regime that knows what all citizens ate for lunch." The threat of indefinite service in the army is always looming. "When kids are eleven they are already worrying about being in the military. Kids in Eritrea, they don't say they want to be a doctor or a pilot. They grow up without hope."

So despite the risks, Eritreans are still willing to leave, walking, like Demsas did, into an uncertain future. Estefanos said one Eritrean man explained it to her like this, "you leave knowing that 50 per cent of you will make it, 50 per cent of you won't. You know all the hardships you face. It's like playing cards, it's gambling."

By doing this, they at least are taking agency over their own lives. The man told Estefanos, "it's better to die trying to get

out than to die staying in the country."

Unconfirmed sources in the Egyptian military reportedly told activists that they simply do not have the capacity to crack down on the torture houses in the Sinai. This despite the fact that the military currently has a heavy presence in the peninsula.

After this year's Ramadan attack that killed 16 soldiers on the border with Israel, the Egyptian military flooded the Sinai as part of Operation Sinai.

Vehicles that travel through the Sinai face military checkpoints and possible inspection nearly every hour on the desert roads. Buses filled almost exclusively with young Egyptian men are routinely emptied, with the passengers ordered to stand in single file, holding their luggage, while the bus is inspected.

This level of military oversight exists along the few highways that run through the Sinai. But the interior is a different story. Along one of those roads filled with checkpoints a Bedouin woman and her child walked away from the road and toward the rocky crags of the interior. With her black niqab billowing in the wind, she calmly headed into what seemed like an uninhabitable abyss. It is easy to understand the impunity with which Sinai criminals are allowed to act.

Though many Eritreans, like Demsas, never intended to traverse the Sinai or even end up in Israel, many do, and many make it across the border. The number of African migrants living in Israel is estimated at between 50,000 and 60,000. For these thousands, Israel is rarely the promised land.

Eritreans who make it past all the obstacles between the Sudanese border and the northern reaches of the Negev, are put in buses and dropped off at Levinsky Park in south Tel Aviv.

Levinsky Park is located next to the new central bus station. On the fourth floor of the bus station, down the hallway from a free STD clinic, is the African Refugee Development Center; the only service centre of its kind in Israel started by a refugee, Yohannes Bayu from Ethiopia.

"The biggest issues facing Eritreans in Israel is work, difficulties of finding work," said Michael Alexander of the ARDC. "The second issue is simply shelter, finding a place to live, which depends on work. The third issue that is really of concern to them is getting medical attention, to address physical and psychological problems."

The ARDC offers professionals who are trained in addressing the physical and psychological effects of migration, torture, and rape. The Physicians for Human Rights also offer this type of assistance. They used to occupy another space on the fourth floor of the bus station, but have since moved to Jaffa.

Work and housing, however, require cooperation with both the state and the population at large.

Many Eritreans and other East African migrants have settled in the low-rent apartments near the old Tel Aviv bus station, just down the road from the new one. The dilapidated streets between the two sites used to be popular with Israeli prostitutes and those who wanted to stay out of sight from Tel Aviv's nearby five star hotels and chic shopping strips.

Neve Sha'anán Street, which curves around Levinsky Park, is closed to motorists and every day of the week it hosts street vendors selling their wares on splayed-out mats, surrounded by bars, peep show parlours, and restaurants serving injera, traditional east African bread.

Besides these migrant-owned businesses, one of the easiest ways for a newly arrived Eritrean to make money is chick-chak work. If an Israeli needs a fence built or a storage unit moved, they can drive their car to south Tel Aviv and pick up any Eritreans looking to make a few shekels in cash.

While asylum seekers are not outlawed from employment in Israel, their options are kept limited in part because of a coyly worded piece of paper.

The Eritreans who gain temporary residency in Israel do so via the A25 visa. "They get this from the ministry of interior and it says they will not be deported," said Alexander. "But it is not a residence permit in any way. On the paper it says in Hebrew, 'this is not a work permit,' so naturally many employers are afraid to employ this person."

The situation is the result of an uneasy truce reached between human rights organisations and the state of Israel. "We took the state to the Supreme Court," explained Alexander. "We said, 'feed them [the asylum seekers] and give basic things like housing, if not, you have to let them survive somehow.' The answer of the state was, 'we won't give work permits, but we won't enforce the law either.'" So while it is technically possible for an Eritrean in Israel to work, employers are dissuaded from doing so.

Meanwhile, the Israeli state has been pursuing a three-pronged approach to keep African migrants out of their country to begin with.

The first step is the building of a fence along the border with Egypt. The construction of the barrier has

Even the use of the term 'infiltrators' is totally inappropriate as it carries connotations of threat and criminality; its use by officials and in the public sphere fuels xenophobia

been condemned by those keeping track of events on the ground.

"Israel's international obligations don't preclude it from building a wall," said Bill Van Esveld from Human Rights Watch, "but it is obliged to ensure that asylum seekers or refugees fleeing persecution can file asylum claims. However, Israel appears not to have any plans to build crossings into the wall for asylum seekers, the point of the wall, according to Israeli statements, is to keep all Africans out."

Van Esveld argues that while Israeli politicians are labeling these migrants "work infiltrators," the government figures he cites show that nearly 30 per cent are from Eritrea, whose citizens are frequently recognised as refugees

when they seek asylum elsewhere.

Sara Robinson, Refugee Rights Coordinator for Amnesty International in Israel, said, "the construction of the southern barrier to try to prevent people crossing from Egypt is part of a larger Israeli plan to deter the arrival of refugees, asylum-seekers, and other migrants."

Robinson then pointed out the second prong of Israel's deterrence efforts; the Prevention of Infiltration Law. She explained that the law, passed earlier this year, allows for the detention of asylum-seekers who enter without permission to "be held without charge or trial for three or more years."

This, continued Robinson, "flies in the face of Israel's obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and other international human rights instruments. Migrants in irregular situations should not be considered criminals under the law, and should not be treated as criminals."

This raises the question of what to do with all these new criminals. The answer is the state's third prong: the construction of a massive detention centre in the Negev Desert that will be able to imprison up to 10,000 migrants.

In October, Interior Minister Eli Yishai, who aggressively advocates the expulsion of African migrants from Israel, toured the construction site and was reassured by the deputy general manager of the defence ministry, Bezalel Treiber, that "all the appropriate conditions for people are kept; 4.5 metres for each person staying in a room."

Van Esveld said, "as for the expanded detention centre, international law is clear that detention may only be used as a last resort."

Robinson added, "even the use of the term 'infiltrators' is totally inappropriate as it carries connotations of threat and criminality; its use by officials and in the public sphere fuels xenophobia. Unfortunately this feeds an atmosphere of growing anti-migrant racism within Israel, which has seen a number of attacks on refugees and asylum-seekers."

Robinson is referring to anti-African rallies that have sometimes devolved into attacks on migrants, and are sometimes attended by politicians, including those from the ruling Likud party. At one of these rallies in May, Miri Regev, a member of the Likud party in the Knesset famously called the migrants "a cancer in our body."

With early elections called in October by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, there are fresh opportunities for politicians to pander to this hatred. Just last week, another anti-African migrant march stomped through south Tel Aviv.

"Israeli politicians should stop peddling xenophobic falsehoods about African migrants," said Van Esveld. "Rather than slandering the entire group as disease-carrying criminals who should be deported, politicians should start reforming Israel's dysfunctional asylum system so as to ensure the rights of asylum seekers."

When members of the United Nations met in 1951 to agree on a convention for refugees, they recognised that "many persons still leave their country of origin for reasons of persecution and are entitled to special protection on account of their position."

However, with a populist government in Israel, a dictatorial government at home, and an inept Egyptian government in between, there is little refuge for a people on the run.



ART & CULTURE

Art should make a statement and Culture is what surrounds us.

EVENTS

MUSIC

Mawawil

Singers Gamal El Touhami and Reda Shiha will sing traditional music accompanied by musicians who bring back instruments from pharaonic times.
Makan
1 Saad Zahloul Street
Downtown, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2792 0878
6 November 8.30pm

Shady Ahmed, The Downtown Meltdown and Cold Shot

A night of all different kinds of rock in CJC Shady Ahmed starts off the night, following by the Downtown Meltdown and Cold Shot finish the night with their debut performance. Reservations are recommended.
Cairo Jazz Club
197, 26 of July Street
Zamalek, Cairo
Tel: (02) 3345 9939
6 November 10pm

DANCE

Deserts

Do not miss the choreographic performance by Nela Adam, Anna Schoells and Marcel Saegesser in Darb 1718 in which they will explore the notion of deserts being 'abstracted temporary landscapes'. Attendance is free.
Darb 1718
El Fustat, Old Cairo
Islamic Cairo, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2361 0511
6 November 8pm

Our Land

For the next two nights enjoy an evening of dance and poetry at the Opera House when the soloist of Cairo Opera Ballet take to the stage.
Cairo Opera House
El Borg Geziira
Zamalek, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2739 0114
6 November 8pm

THEATRE

J'aurais voulu être Égyptien

The play, J'aurais voulu être Égyptien (I wish I was Egyptian) by Jean-Luis Martinelli is based on Alaa El Aswany's book Chicago. Tickets available at the Opera House and El Ghomhouria ticket offices.
El Ghomhouria Theatre
12 Al-Ghomhouria Street
Abdin, Downtown, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2390 7707
6 November 8pm

EXHIBITIONS

Feminine

Natalia Baykalova's solo exhibition features the beauty of everything feminine.
Cala Art Gallery
140, 26th July Street
Zamalek, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2738 0154
6 November 10am

8-bit Portraits

Ahmed El Shaer explores the 8-bit era of the 80s in one of the coolest examples of pop culture meets art. The exhibition will use imagery inspired by this era, culturally important to the west, to bring it to audiences here in Egypt.
Mashrabia Gallery
8 Champollion Street
Downtown, Cairo
Tel: 010 0170 4554
6 November 12 pm

Weather



Tuesday, November 6

Alexandria	26°C / 20°C
Aswan	37°C / 25°C
Cairo	30°C / 20°C
Hurghada	32°C / 22°C
Luxor	35°C / 21°C
Sharm El-Sheikh	36°C / 23°C
Suez	27°C / 17°C

Al-Saadawi's brainchild fights for women's equality in dark times

Egyptian women have been at the forefront of many recent changes taking place in Egypt, but a unified feminist movement is still a long way off. "We have had a complete lack of feminist intellectual and enlightenment movements for almost 60 years," says Her-mas Fawzy, of the Egyptian Feminist Union. The union is one of Egypt's most prominent post-revolution attempts to gather grassroots support for female equality.

The union started in pre-revolutionary Egypt with well-known feminist Nawal Al-Saadawi. "Doctor Al-Saadawi wanted to start a feminist movement for quite some time. But she was stopped by [former First Lady] Suzanne Mubarak because her ideas were radical, socialist and progressive. Now that Mubarak is deposed of, what better chance do we have at implementing her dream than

now?" asked Fawzy.

Fawzy said the international women's day of 2011 on 9 March signaled a red flag, and harassment was rampant within a short time after the revolution's 18 days. Al-Saadawi, who has been very vocal and active in the January uprising, is involved in the union as a sort of "spiritual godmother" as Fawzy terms it.

"Women are often the recipients of violence and domestic abuse," said Fawzy. "This oppression on a small scale has much bigger implications for society and eventually the country. When one half of the population is oppressed, everyone suffers. Children understand implicitly that boys are better than girls and women are treated as second-class citizens. This translates into a troubled society."

Though the question seemingly revolves around women, there are

many men involved in the union and Fawzy said the issue is not exclusive to women even if it is about them. "Just as one does not have to be poor to want social justice, you do not have to be a woman to fight for equality. We need the state to start treating people equally and not on the basis on gender. This is a humanistic project that has to do with human rights above all. Our goal is for women to be treated as human beings and equal citizens."

The union has been active both in trying to achieve broader revolutionary goals, such as deposing of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and writing a representative and inclusive constitution, but also with issues specific to their raison d'être, such as violence against women by the state during protests and virginity examination tests by



Courtesy of Egyptian Feminist Union Facebook page

'We don't want the Egyptian woman to become a second class citizen'

the military.

"The main issue facing us today is, of course, the constitution. The constitution will serve as solid ground for us to stand on in our long fight. We need an equal legal basis so we can address an equal cultural basis," said Fawzy.

Fawzy said many difficulties lie ahead and that the number of people

willing to fight is disproportional to the oppressive lives women lead in Egypt. "You would think that every woman out there would be trying to reclaim her rights but sadly it is not the case, especially with the conservative powers taking over the country. We have many who are receptive to our ideas but it is generally a difficult time."

Nadya Shanab: Unexceptional music with Arabic flavour

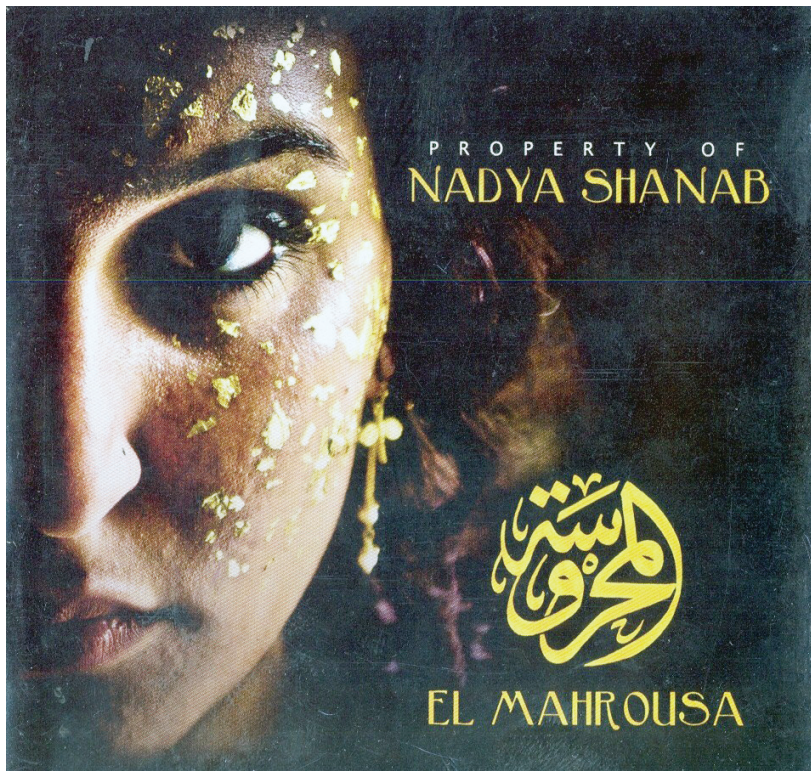
By Omar El Adl

With the current state of Egyptian pop, audiences have found refuge in alternative genres. Often labeled 'independent' or 'underground' music, but without any specific meaning ascribed to either, one thing that is clear is that this music defines itself as being different than what is offered by mainstream Egyptian or Arabic pop. By default, such music is given merit simply by the virtue of being 'different,' but in some cases a closer look at the music itself reveals much style and little substance.

There has been considerable hype surrounding Property of Nadya Shanab and their new album *El Mahrousa*. It is a hype that is limited to a certain scene and community, but hype nonetheless. The album can be described as a fusion of Arabic and western elements with an emphasis on a wide range of acoustic instruments and a mix of Arabic and English vocals. The lyrics are ultimately what ruin the album. Both in Arabic and English, the lyrics are simplistic and unsophisticated. At times they sound positively adolescent, something I found very difficult to forgive, given that the lead singer, who also wrote most of the songs, studied music.

The Arabic lyrics in particular suffer from a bad case of having no structure and awkward phrasing, with the lead singer trying to force them to conform to the tune, ultimately making any native speaker cringe when sentences are unnecessarily stretched or shortened, like forcing a square peg into a round hole.

The music on the album is good, within that particular genre, but still



Album cover of El Mahrousa

El Mahrousa

nothing you haven't heard before. Shanab's voice can be beautiful but not only is it an acquired taste, the sound on most songs is not tight enough and on many of the tracks her voice melts into the instruments.

Then there is the issue of Shanab's inability to properly enunciate basic Arabic. Experimentation with language and singing is one thing and one could forgive her peculiar phrasing and pronunciation if the album was not clearly trying to evoke images of Arab heritage.

From the name *El Mahrousa* to songs like Cairo Minarets and the arbitrary sprinkling of every other song with *Ya Lili* and *Ya Ainy*, the album romanticises this heritage. A heritage which emphasises singing in Arabic much in the same way one would re-

cite poetry, meaning that proper singing and enunciation is a must, and anything less would be a bastardisation of this tradition. For the sake of this album, only a minimal understanding of Arab heritage is needed, because this is what the album imposes upon you every chance it gets.

While the album tries to pay homage to Egyptian heritage both in terms of style and substance, it ultimately belittles it and reduces it to a few random words here and there that include the likes of *Aseela* and *Asmar*. The western elements are better done and the album would have sounded much better if it were not for the use of Arabic elements, as seems to be a gimmick in an otherwise good but unexceptional album.

Mosireen receives full support

The funding campaign to ensure that Mosireen, the media collective in Cairo that supports citizen media, could stay independent reached fever pitch in its last day. With over \$15,000 still needed to reach the desired \$40,000 a mere 36 hours before the deadline, an outpouring of social media messages urged people to pledge their support by donating to the fundraising effort running on a crowd-funding website.

An hour before the campaign ended there was still \$3,500 missing and Twitter exploded with messages urging everyone to get out their credit cards and donate. Tweets included apologies for filling people's timelines and humorous observations, as witnessed by the tweet from founding member Omar Robert Hamilton, "six minutes left. That's less time than Jack Bauer needs to save the world."

The social media offensive worked like a charm, because as the minutes



Screenshot from the Pirate Bay website

ticked down the final count of the donations reached \$40,415 which will guarantee that Mosireen will be able to continue their work for another year.

Mosireen intends to use the funds to continue their work, which includes archiving an extensive collec-

tion of footage shot during and after the revolution, hosting workshops to teach the basics of film and photography to citizen journalists, hosting weekly film screenings of films never seen before in Egypt and maintaining their equipment rental and editing facilities.

Play proceeds despite censors' concerns



The play *Aasheqeen Torabek*, or *In Love with Your Soil*, has ran for the past two days without the changes proposed by the censorship committee. "The play opened without any changes and it will continue to go on without any changes," said director Mohamed El Sharkawy. "The solidarity stand seems to have delivered the message that freedom of expression is untouchable."

The director of the play had organised a solidarity protest with several celebrities, actors and revolutionaries like Saber Fawzy, Ahmed Doma and Ultras football fans.

"The play will run for another 30 days and we will continue operating

as scheduled," said El Sharkawy. "After the public has been made aware of the censorship attempts, it will be more difficult for them to do this again."

The play's director was approached by the censorship committee and asked to remove scenes which criticised the current regime such as a scene featuring bearded actors and another which mentioned Prime Minister Hisham Qandil by name. Since no official decision has been taken, however, El Sharkawy is not legally bound to remove anything from the play. The play will continue showing at the Balloon theatre's Salah Jahin hall.

Time for soup



Hassan Ibrahim

The first proper autumnal rain has fallen and Cairo woke up to a drop in temperature. And even if the sun still shines and the temperature is balmy during the day, the evenings and early mornings have a chill to them that warns of worse to come.

The time to get out the sweatshirts, find your socks and file your shibshib away till next year is getting closer and many of us suddenly crave foods that are warm and comforting. Such as soup.

Luckily Halloween did not get them all; piles of pumpkins are waiting to be turned into delicious soup.