

In their own words

- the position of the Muslim Brotherhood



Compiled and translated by the Middle East Monitor

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The Middle East Monitor has followed every step of the Egyptian revolution ever since it erupted on 25 January 2011. Our staff have scrutinised very closely the media coverage of the events in Tahrir Square in Cairo and in other towns and cities across the country. Hardly a commentary or analysis has been written without reference to the Muslim Brotherhood. Its past, present and future roles in Egyptian politics have been subjected to serious examination, although many of the commentaries are littered with speculation and unfounded claims.

MEMO has thus compiled and translated in this special file the most recent statements by the Muslim Brotherhood's leading spokesmen on the movement's positions on political participation, government, elections, foreign relations and relations with the army.

Muslim Brotherhood Press Release

9th February 2011



Muslim Brotherhood Press Release: Demonstrations on 16th day of popular revolution exceed all others in attendance

The number of people taking part in Wednesday's demonstrations exceeded those on all previous protests in the popular revolution. In addition to the participation of new segments of the population, such as university professors, engineers, lawyers and journalists, government media personnel from Egyptian television have also taken an honourable stance against the regime's disinformation and incitement policy. All of this confirms that Egyptians across the spectrum of society are determined to achieve their goals of freedom and dignity; equality and social justice; and national sovereignty. It also illustrates that the revolution is increasing steadily in popularity even while the regime with its stubborn refusal to accede to the people's wishes is solidifying.

Does the whole nation of 80 million people have to come onto the streets before the regime understands and responds to their legitimate demands? Many pillars of the regime have admitted the justice and legitimacy of the demands, so why is the government avoiding the issue and endeavouring to cheat the people of their rights?

The masses will not be deterred by government statements threatening a military coup. They are confident that the Egyptian army is of the people and its soldiers are the sons of the people; they are the protectors of the nation and the people together; it is, therefore, not possible that they would destroy the hopes and demands of the people.

It is regrettable that after this great, popular and largely peaceful revolution, elements from the regime should claim that the people of Egypt are not ready for democracy. And claim that the demonstrators are influenced by Islamic forces with ideas imported from abroad. This proves that the people have developed a degree of understanding and consciousness that is impossible for the pillars of the regime to understand and accept. The regime's members have been brought up on a system which oppresses, abuses and tyrannises the people. Their scare tactics casting the Islamists, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood, as the spectre at the feast isn't believed by anyone, either inside Egypt or among the regime's friends abroad.

Participation of the Muslim Brotherhood in discussions with the government did not mean the abandonment of the revolution. Representatives took part in order to realise the demands of the people through a peaceful and swift transition of authority. It was not the Brotherhood's aim to give an element of legitimacy to the regime which the people have effectively deposed. Muslim Brotherhood candidates participated in the last parliamentary elections and many accused its members of giving legitimacy to the regime, whereas it was the fraud carried out by the regime in those elections which cancelled any legitimacy it might have had. In fact, this actually contributed inter alia towards igniting this blessed revolution.

There are those who spread false allegations against the Muslim Brotherhood, including that we want to establish a religious state like Iran. We have said on many occasions that we do not aspire to power, we do not clamour for the presidency and senior positions, and we do not seek to gain a majority in the parliament. What we wish to see in Egypt is comprehensive reform in politics, economics, social affairs, the sciences, education and the media; all we do is solely for the pleasure of Allah. The state to which we aspire is a civil democracy with an Islamic reference point and the source of power and sovereignty resting with the people.

We reaffirm that this blessed revolution is the revolution of all the Egyptian people who are not driven by any party, organisation or faction. Broad participation means that no one can claim to lead it or be its sole representative. The demands of the revolution are collective demands whose claimants will not be silent until they are achieved; first amongst these is the resignation of the president.

May Allah help our people and realise their hopes and protect our nations and people, and He is the best protector and the best helper. Ameen.

**Muslim Brotherhood rejects a religious
state because it is against Islam**

9th February 2011

Muslim Brotherhood rejects a religious state because it is against Islam

Dr Mursi: “Remarks about foreign interference is an insult to 80 million Egyptians”

Dr al-Iryan: “Mubarak wants to sacrifice the people in order to retain his position in power”

Dr al-Katatani: “We carried the demand of the protesters in al-Tahrir [Square] to the discussion table.”

By Hamdi Abd al-Aal

The Muslim Brotherhood has confirmed that it is not seeking power nor has it any intention of contesting an election for the presidency in the near future. The movement seeks freedom and justice for the Egyptian people and is fully prepared to support the nation and participate constructively to lift it out of the current crisis. These points were stressed at a press conference on 9 February.



A spokesman for the Brotherhood emphasised that formal discussions with the current regime have not yet started. Speaking on Wednesday, Dr. Mohammad Mursi said that the first session with the Vice President, Omar Suleiman, was not a discussion as such, but an opportunity to set out the basis for dialogue. He added that what happened in the discussions between the Vice President and the Brotherhood was not part of the formal dialogue because Omar Suleiman himself admitted that he has no power and is merely managing the crisis. Dr. Mursi explained that the Brotherhood gave their advice about ways to resolve the current crisis in order to avoid it getting totally out of control.

During the press conference Dr Mursi, who is a member of the Guidance Council of the Muslim Brotherhood, confirmed that the organisation does not seek power; this is an innate principle of the Brotherhood which has been stated many times and is not likely to change according to the current situation in the country. The Brotherhood, he said, is ready to work with all parties for the sake of Egypt.



Dr Mursi reaffirmed that the basic demand of the Brotherhood is the resignation of President Mubarak and a change of regime. He noted that demonstrations are a constitutional right and that the demands of the protesters are the same as those of the Muslim Brotherhood. He also noted that the Brotherhood had not led any demonstrations but had participated along with other sections of Egyptian society; together they had removed any legitimacy from the regime. As a result, he said, “it is binding to meet the demands of the “new legitimacy””.

The spokesman criticised the armed forces outside the Egyptian capital, saying that the Brotherhood is like the rest of the people and, like the rest of the people, it appreciates the army's role in protecting Egypt and securing it from external threats, just as it protected the demonstrators in Tahrir Square. However, in other parts of Cairo and across the country the situation is different; hundreds of people who wanted to join the demonstrators in Tahrir Square were detained and kept in camps run by the army. There were also certain unknown elements who attacked the demonstrators, as occurred in the state security force buildings. There are people who would like to spoil the relationship between the people and the army and, therefore, the Muslim Brotherhood calls upon the armed forces to take the side of the people and apprehend those who undertake such brutality.

When asked about the Brotherhood's position on the fate of the peace treaty with Israel when a new government is in place, Dr Mursi stressed that Egypt is a mature state with its own institutions and parliament. When parliament is elected by the will of the people, the government will define which foreign treaties will still be compatible with the political will. Dr Mursi criticised western fears about the future of the Zionist state while they refuse to challenge Israel over the treatment of the Palestinian people living under military occupation. He called upon the western media to speak equally about the two parties involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The transitional government

The Brotherhood's spokesman went on to confirm that there is ongoing discussion about the government and whether the movement will participate in it or not. He confirmed again that participation in government is not a demand of the Brotherhood and that its demand is the realisation of what the protesters in Tahrir Square are demanding: a complete reform of political life in all its dimensions. He emphasised the support of the Brotherhood for the National Association for Change of which the Islamic movement was one of the founders.

In response to a question about the seriousness of the discussions, Dr Essam al-Iryan of the Guidance Council and a leading spokesman of the Brotherhood said that they went to the discussions with those charged with managing the crisis in order to place the demands of the people on the table. He said that the popular revolution had already toppled the regime and now seeks a mechanism for the peaceful transfer of power in Egypt. Dr Al-Iryan criticised the claim that Egypt is not ready for democracy, emphasising that what happened in Tahrir Square is the best response such claims. The Brotherhood, he said, is like ordinary members of the public, demanding freedom and justice.



Coup d'état

The point made by Vice President Omar Suleiman that the people of Egypt face a choice between dialogue or a coup d'état was dismissed by Dr Mohammad Sa'd al-Katatani, another member of the Guidance Council. "All Egyptians will benefit from freedom and democracy," he said, "and when the Brotherhood participated in the discussions it was emphasised that the demands of the Egyptian people have been made so as to avoid

bloodshed and ensure the participation of all parties including the youth." There must be fruitful and serious dialogue. Other demands, he added are the removal of the Egyptian regime, the dissolution of the Egyptian Parliament and Consultative Council, the amendment of the controversial articles of the constitution and the immediate release of all political detainees.

Dr al-Katatani said that the Brotherhood retains the right to suspend its participation if discussions are not serious. The movement wants to identify the main parameters while rejecting any form of threat or intimidation against the demonstrators. According to Dr Essam al-Iryan, the Brotherhood will not drop its principal demand, which is the resignation of the president. He wondered why one person cannot sacrifice his position for the sake of the other 80 million Egyptians.



With regards to western fears about Islam, Dr al-Iryan said that the west is raising such doubts because its leaders wish to protect the state of Israel. Nevertheless, he added, Islam guarantees freedom of belief and does not permit anyone to impose beliefs on anyone else. Some of the most important principles of Islam include cooperation between civilisations and people; freedom and equality; and justice. Although the Muslim Brotherhood is against a religious state because Islam is against such an entity, the movement looks for a civil state whose reference is Islam.



Concerning Iranian and western claims about the Brotherhood's support for the Egyptian revolution, Dr Mursi said that the organisation is not responsible for statements made by foreign states, no matter who they are. The simple fact is that the Muslim Brotherhood does not want any external state to interfere in Egypt's internal affairs; this is a popular revolution by the people of Egypt, and no one can claim sole responsibility or credit for it. In addition, said Dr Mohammed Biltaji, a quick glance at Tahrir Square will demonstrate that the revolution is being driven

by Muslims, Christians, the youth, all sections of society, not just the Brotherhood. "This is an Egyptian revolution," he said firmly. "The people in Tahrir Square are Egyptians and they are the rightful owners of their legitimate demands."

When asked about the steps that the Brotherhood is intending to take to ensure the resignation of the president and his regime, Dr Mursi replied that there are no specific means to force the regime to enter into serious dialogue. "This is not an easy matter," he said, "because this corrupt regime is entrenched in its political ways, but the people who have stripped the regime of any legitimacy are capable of forcing it to depart through their patience and steadfastness, and by sticking to their principles."

Dr. Mursi called the accusations that Hamas "started the Egyptian revolution" a "huge insult to Egypt and its people". This is a lie circulated by the state media and security apparatus, he insisted. "How can the Palestinians, besieged as they are in Gaza, possibly manipulate 80 million Egyptians?"

The 2011 Egyptian revolution

9th February 2011



The 2011 Egyptian revolution

By Dr Essam El-Irian

The Egyptian revolution was a surprise to everyone, including the Egyptian people who have become accustomed to needing a lot of patience with their rulers, no matter how much they suffer under their tyranny. This revolution seeks to change the Egyptian regime to a democratic system, and its slogan is “let the president – the symbol of the regime – leave”. A

new legitimacy has been born on the ruins of the old legitimacy whose most outstanding flaw was the denial of freedom and suppression of opinions alongside its extreme corruption. A new government will build on the past accomplishments and get rid of the flaws.

This people’s revolution is not led by any political party; it burst forth from Egypt’s youth of all ideological and political persuasions, including Islamists. However, it is not the product of the Muslim Brotherhood, which participated in it responsibly and worked hard to stop it descending into violence to counter that which was meted out by the government’s security agencies employing thugs and prisoners released by the security agencies for that purpose. Muslim Brotherhood participation in discussions with the regime is intended to ensure a safe and peaceful transition of power to the people.

The Egyptian revolution has shaken the false stability which President Mubarak promoted, which was not based on peaceful foundations. The people’s revolution threatens to have repercussions in many other countries.

Egypt reached this stage for several reasons; the flames were lit by the last fraudulent parliamentary elections which denied parliamentary representation to the entire opposition. There was no space left for them to function except on the streets; this includes political groups, professional and workers’ unions, student unions and local councils. Pre-election they were restricted in what they could do in terms of lawful assembly and organising, and there was a media blackout; all of this prompted a sense of humiliation among Egyptians, which was exacerbated when the President and his men flaunted the results without hinting at the corrupt nature of the elections.

Such corruption has spread in the upper echelons of government to add to the tyranny that the Egyptians have endured. There has been an illegal marriage between power and wealth, with preparation for the transition of power from Mubarak to his son Gamal to create a dynasty. This heaped even more indignity onto the Egyptian people and the sense of urgency for change; hence the eruption of 25th January.

The police state and its brutality were never truly successful, nor were the detention centres where political activists, especially members of the Muslim Brotherhood of whom 30,000 were detained during Mubarak’s rule, were abused and tortured. I and 33 others were detained as recently as the morning of the “Friday of Rage” on 29th January; the prison wardens themselves freed us before we could be tortured.

The revolution came about in a regional climate which has seen a reversal in the so-called “peace process”, that whimsical fantasy in which Palestinians dream while Israelis avoid their obligations; this was more noticeable than ever before with the current extreme right-wing government in Israel which does little more than humiliate Palestinians and Arabs. Racial discrimination is practised against the Arabs in Israel itself and the Egyptian authorities are blackmailed; at the end of the day, Cairo has become a puppet to protect the Zionist state. All of this has taken place while US support for the Mubarak regime has been constant and pressure has been placed on him to give yet more concessions; not for his own people’s freedom, but for the Israelis’.

If America is to restore its credibility in Egypt and the Arab world, it must respect the rights of the Arab masses to choose their own rulers by democratic means and not rely on the ability of their despotic rulers to subjugate the people. If the US also wants to protect its strategic interests, it must respond to the will of the ordinary people and help to build a democratic system which guarantees transparency, accountability and peaceful changeovers of power; it must end immediately its support for Arab dictatorships. Failure on these fronts will see the US losing its allies among the Arab rulers, one after another. A review of its strategic alliances in the region is long overdue. The fresh air of democratic change has arrived in the Arab world borne aloft by the winds of freedom; the people will remain long after these dictators have gone into exile. If abject failure accompanied America’s attempts to build a nation in Afghanistan and a democratic system in Iraq, then the Egyptians have proven that they are able to do better without American help. America is the richest and most powerful nation and has claimed for decades that it is the leader of the free world; its noble slogans are well known, so why can’t it respect the right of other people to determine their own destiny and choose their democratic rules and rulers? With the help of God, the people will build a genuine democratic system in Egypt which will radiate light over the entire region.

The Muslim Brotherhood has been used as a bogey-symbol by Mubarak and his regime to scare America and the west, but it has shown its ability to be steadfast, to sacrifice, to deny itself and to bear what few others have in the interest and stability of Egypt. The Brotherhood has never drifted into violence. Its members were tried before military courts in the face of American silence and Arab pleasure, but they never betrayed the people and they never concluded deals behind their backs.

When it announced that it will not present any candidates for the presidency, the Brotherhood said that it will look at the candidates’ manifestos and choose someone suitable to support; it will also contest parliamentary seats according to the proper rules. A parliamentary majority is not the aim, so the Brotherhood will forge alliances with all national parties in order to achieve general stability based on freedom, legal justice, human dignity and social justice.

Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood is a general Islamic organisation which calls on Muslims to have a comprehensive understanding of Islam. It seeks to revive social Islam and to guarantee peaceful and gradual reform through the channels of parliamentary democracy.

The time for change has come, much to the dismay of those who practised deceit and lies and sought to justify the crimes of the regime. The current dialogue is necessary to get ourselves out of the present bottle-neck in a peaceful and efficient manner, with free and fair elections. The chosen president must be capable of steering the nation through this difficult period with the new parliament undertaking essential constitutional amendments prior to introducing constitutional reform, the restoration of the economy and the country's wealth, improved living standards and new roles for the police and civil service reflected in greater esteem for their positions. The apparatus of state security and repression must be dismantled.

When Egypt is strong and stable, the question of foreign affairs will arise; that will be the time when its citizens take pride in their identity and Egypt is restored to a position of leadership in the region, and respect in the world.

Such a great historical vision is within reach of the Egyptian people, but it is tied to several factors, the most important of which are:

1. The genuine opposition must be united and must avoid splits of any kind if it is to rebuild its ability to meet the challenges it faces.
2. The people must rally around the opposition to lift the country from its current state and take it to safety and a better future for all Egyptians.
3. The agreement of the old regime for the safe and swift transfer of power to the chosen representatives of the people's revolution.

This is Egypt's revolution, not ours

*All we in the Muslim Brotherhood want is for President Mubarak
to go and real democracy to prevail*

Mohammad Mursi

Comment is free - The Guardian

8th February 2011

This is Egypt's revolution, not ours

All we in the Muslim Brotherhood want is for President Mubarak to go and real democracy to prevail

Mohammad Mursi

The Guardian, Tuesday 8 February 2011

As the past fortnight has underlined, Egypt occupies a leading role in one of the most vital and volatile regions in the world. However, this great country has been ruled by an autocratic regime for more than 30 years, and left riddled with corruption, poverty, inequality and insecurity. With millions condemned to live in squalor, astronomical unemployment rates, political suppression and absence of basic freedoms, the Egyptian people have been seething with anger, frustration and discontent for years. Thousands of political dissidents have been dragged before military courts and sentenced to years in prison despite civil courts ordering their release. Elections were rigged on an unimaginable scale – forcing Egyptians, and especially the young, into a state of utter desperation.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which was established in 1928, is at the heart of Egyptian society, and therefore has come in for much of the strife and difficulty that faced the entire country as a result of the regime's policies and practices. As a political movement with wide appeal and support, it was constantly targeted by some of the most brutal government measures. It was banned from public life despite the fact that most people considered it to be the main opposition organisation.

Despite numerous attempts to tarnish the Muslim Brotherhood's reputation inside Egypt and beyond, the tenets of our movement could not be clearer or more unequivocal. We aim to remove all forms of injustice, tyranny, autocracy and dictatorship, and we call for the implementation of a democratic multiparty all-inclusive political system that excludes no one.

Accusations that we aim to dominate or hegemonise the political system could not be further from the truth, and all our literature and public statements emphasise that we see ourselves as part of the fabric of Egyptian social and political life. So we deserve an equal opportunity to work for the prosperity of Egypt through promoting our message and solutions, just like all other groupings.

For years we have been warning the regime that matters were coming to a head and that radical change was inevitable if we were to achieve internal peace, security and stability. The revolution sweeping Egypt is a result of the eruption of anger and frustration built up over many years of abject failure and widespread corruption. Uniquely this moment is one that no political party can claim to own, to lead or to have triggered. Rather, it was a natural reaction by the population to the miserable state of its country.

Egypt's youth have been the heroes of the events. The maturity, shrewdness, resilience, intelligence and patriotism exemplified by the young people in Cairo's Tahrir Square and in dozens of other Egyptian cities has been refreshing and uplifting for the entire country. It was just what a deeply despondent population needed, and has it breathed life into a society all but resigned to exist under a corrupt dictator who would then hand over to his son.

The Muslim Brotherhood has been with those protesters from the very start, and continues to share their demands that a peaceful transfer of power is carried out immediately, and freedom in all senses is realised throughout Egypt. There can be no question that genuine democracy must prevail; and while the Muslim Brotherhood is unequivocal regarding its basis in Islamic thought, it rejects any attempt to enforce any ideological line upon the Egyptian people.

Over the past few days, we have been working with the youth leaders and our partners in the opposition to bring this revolution to its only satisfactory outcome. We have decided to engage in a dialogue between political parties and the appointed vice president and other officials to explore directly their commitment to implement the people's demands and willingness to respond to them positively. The outcome so far is far from sufficient. Meanwhile, the unprecedented nationwide protests continue – until the people's goals are achieved.

The Muslim Brotherhood along with the whole nation is unrelenting in its demand that President Hosni Mubarak stands down immediately. We want the officials responsible for the bloodshed that marred the peaceful protests to be brought to trial; the parliamentary and local councils formed by rigged elections to be disbanded; the immediate cessation of the emergency law; and the formation of an interim national government until free fair and transparent elections are held under full legal and judicial supervision. The Muslim Brotherhood will never compromise on its demands for the complete separation and independence of authorities, the freedom to form political parties and community groups, and the freedom of the press and media.

Should these be implemented – and we are determined they will – Egypt will be able to assume its place as a positive regional player and influential state that can interact with the international community on the basis of mutual respect and shared interests. The world cannot do without an Egypt that is at peace with itself and capable of playing its full role in the world.