



المعهد المصري للدراسات
EGYPTIAN INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES

Military

6 SEPTEMBER
2018

Sisi maintains repositioning of military leaders

Mahmoud Gamal



WWW.EIPSS-EG.ORG

 Eipss.EG  Eis_EG

TURKEY- ISTANBUL

Bahçelievler, Yenibosna Mh 29 Ekim Cad. No: 7 A2 Blok 3. Plaza D: 64
Tel/Fax: +90 212 227 2262 E-Mail: info@eis-eg.org

Sisi maintains repositioning of military leaders

Mahmoud Gamal

Since the early moments of the military coup (4 July 2013), Abdel- Fattah Al-Sisi has worked to impose full control over the military institution as well as all other security institutions. Therefore, he has conducted a series of changes and repositioning of leaders within the Army, the General Intelligence Service and the Ministry of Interior, so that he could have the upper hand over these institutions. Al-Sisi occasionally dismisses military commanders and appoints others - who might be more loyal to him - in their positions; hazes some commanders that were removed from their positions; and sometimes honors others that may be appropriate for new positions, albeit outside the Egyptian army. In other words, Sisi is working on the transformation of the regime from governance of the military institution to an autocratic rule that controls the military institution as well as all other security institutions.

In this context, there were several developments that took place during August, including:

1- Al-Tarras Chairman of the Arab Organization for Industrialization

On the evening of Sunday, August 12, 2018, Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi assigned Lt. General Abdel Moneim Al-Tarras, the former Commander of the Air Defense Forces and member of the military council, to chair the board of directors of the Arab Organization for Industrialization (AOI), according to Presidential Spokesman Bassam Rady. Meanwhile, Sisi received Abdel Aziz Seif El Din, the former president of AOI to thank him for his efforts during his tenure.

On 14 August 2012, President Mohamed Morsi appointed Abdel Moneim Al-Tarras as Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Air Defence command after he had dismissed Lt. General Abd El Aziz Seif-Eddin. Al-Tarras remained in his position until December 18, 2016, when he was sacked by Al-Sisi after Al-Tarras returned from a surprise visit to the UAE where he met a number of military leaders.

Since his dismissal, Abdel Moneim al-Tarras completely disappeared until December 18, 2017, a year after his dismissal when he identified himself as Sisi's military advisor. He then held a meeting with a group of preachers and sheikhs in Al-Nour Mosque in Abbasiya, Cairo, and announced the following:

- 1- The Egyptian Army does not accept any groups that adopt Islamic ideas among its ranks. (Tarras said he dismissed a captain because he belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood under the rule of President Mohamed Morsi)
- 2- Sisi moved on June 30 in defense of Islam, and that the “7-day warning”, issued by Al-Sisi to Morsi came after Al-Tarras delivered a message from a sheikh calling on Sisi to remove Morsi and rid the country of “sedition”.
- 3- There were differences between the presidency and the army in the era of Morsi, including the development of the Suez Canal.
- 4- There was communication between Sisi and President Morsi on the night of the dispersal of the Rabaa sit-in, hoping that demonstrators might leave the square without interference from the army, but this did not happen.
- 5- Tarras was responsible for negotiating with the Islamic currents that were stationed in Rabaa al-Adawiya Square, and met some of their leaders, including Assem Abdel-Maged, of the Islamic Group, and Dr. Salah Sultan of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Lt. General Abdel Moneim al-Tarras might have worked to win the trust of Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi unlike Lt. General Sami Anan, Lt. General Osama Askar, and Lt. General Ahmed Wasfi, so that he could be employed afterwards; and this is what has recently happened when Tarras was appointed in this post as AOI Chairman, which has great economic advantages.

It is worth mentioning that at the time of the dismissal of Lt. General Tarras on December 18, 2016, Al-Sisi also sacked 10 other military figures, amid reports that during that period there were differences among the members of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) because of the government's wrong policies in many files. These differences appeared in the SCAF meeting that was held on the first of October 2016, showing that there were two points of view among members of the military council. Some of the SCAF members believed that Sisi must complete his first term in office only, provided that he commits to refraining from seeking a second term through running for the presidential election of 2018, which was altogether rejected by Sisi. Immediately after that meeting, the Al-Sisi dismissed eleven military commanders as follows:

- 1- Lieutenant General Abd Al-Moniem Al-Terras, Former Commander of Air Defense
- 2- Lieutenant General Osama Rabie, Former Navy Forces Commander
- 3- Staff Major General Ahmed Wasfi, Former Second Field Army Commander
- 4- Lieutenant General Osama Askar, Former Third Field Army Commander
- 5- Staff Major General Tawhid Tawfiq, Former Head of Military Operations Authority
- 6- Staff Major General Mohamed Abdella, Former Third Field Army Commander. He has recently been appointed as Secretary General of the Ministry of Defense.
- 7- Staff Major General Nasser Al-Assi, Former Second Field Army Commander.

- 8- Staff Major General Yehia Taha, Former GOC, Southern Military Zone
- 9- Staff Major General Mohamed Zamalout, Former GOC, Northern Military Zone
- 10- Staff Major General Wahid Ezzat, Former GOC, Western Military Zone. He has recently been appointed as head of the Military Operations Authority.
- 11- Brigadier General Mohamed Samir, former military spokesman

2- Reaction of the former military spokesman to exclusion

Brigadier General Mohammed Samir, a former military spokesman, wrote an [article](#) that was published in **Veto**, a daily newspaper close to the General Intelligence Service, titled: “The worst model”, where he attacked the government policy in the management of media after being neglected while other personalities were escalated in the administration of the government’s institutions and apparatuses for being close to prominent State officials. Some observers concluded that the articles of Mohammed Samir show the state of internal conflict witnessed by the military institution in Egypt, and the extent of tension within the Egyptian army. In his article, Brigadier Samir said, “Imagine that you are responsible for the livelihood of a whole family, or even for spending on yourself only: while you do your best in performing your career, and suddenly your employer fires you with cold blood amid the current unprecedented economic and social conditions, with no regard to any professional or humanitarian considerations.” “But it is the game of interest whose abhorrent practices have brought about the bad situation of the Egyptian media, as it has become the biggest (Zero) in our lives, and the worst model ever according to the testimony of all prominent specialists as well as citizens. Of course, the government knows through professional polls citizens’ deep resentment and absolute loss of trust towards various internal media outlets,” Samir said.

Mohamed Samir added, “The reason for this failure is always because of assigning inexperienced persons to undertake significant files, only for being “people of trust” or for being close to prominent officials ... In spite of this, we still wonder: Why has the Egyptian media failed to shoulder its responsibilities?!” “At the same time, despite your degree of competence and skills, you are to be excluded from everything, including your career and your social position.”

It is noteworthy that Brigadier Mohamed Samir, the former military spokesman, had written an article before, titled, [“Do not be arrogant. The Lord is the greatest”](#), addressing the phenomenon of injustice in Egypt. In that article, Samir said: “... At the same time, I call on all oppressor that have forgotten the power of Allah, maintained arrogance, and abused and cut people’s livelihood, depending on their high position that they are definitely not worth it, or relying on a senior officials with whom they share common personal interests – I call on them to remember how Caliph Omar bin Abdul Aziz asked one of his companions one day to remind him if he saw him went astray, although Caliph Bin Abdul Aziz was keen to achieve justice and equality between people. Samir also called on all the oppressed complaining of the expansion of the circle of injustice and its severity in an unprecedented manner, to “keep patient, as injustice will end someday,” Samir said.

In addition, Samir has written many other articles attacking the government policies, including [“Don’t Get Sad, Sir”](#), [“The Great Difference between the Reality and the Expected”](#), and [“Mysterious Objectives and the Legitimate Questions”](#).

Since Brigadier Mohamed Samir was dismissed from his position as the official spokesman of the Egyptian army on December 18, 2016, he did not speak or declare such statements that he has made during the past days and months. Some believe that

Samir was satisfied with being appointed as head of the Al-A'sima (Capital) channels; but when he was removed from all media files that he was running in the recent period, Samir has started to attack the regime's policies.

3- Propaganda for the General Intelligence Service Director

There has been much media propaganda about the role that the director of the Egyptian General Intelligence Service, Major General Abbas Kamel, has recently played in the US decision to lift a \$ 195 million freeze of US military aid to Egypt. Abbas Kamel has imposed overwhelming control over all prominent regional and domestic issues, in a way that made him appear as the strongest and most prominent man in the Egyptian regime. Therefore, many Egyptian officials and politicians describe Abbas as “shadow president” because of his great influence, his control of the decision-making process, and his close relation with Al-Sisi. Recently, Sisi transferred many important internal and regional files to Kamel, including the Libyan file which was handled by the armed forces.

The second most prominent regional file that was transferred to the direct supervision of Abbas Kamel is the Palestinian file and the secret relations with Israel, so that he is the first and final decision holder of the Egyptian side in this file. Since then, he sought to play roles in favor of Tel Aviv and have control of the Palestinian factions and the complete Palestinian scene in order to gain Israel's Trust. The third important file that was transferred to Abbas Kamel is the file of the Egyptian-Sudanese relations as well as the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The fourth file that is now under direct supervision of Abbas Kamel is the Egyptian-American relations and Egypt's contribution to President Trump's “Deal of the Century”.

4- The military institution's control over other institutions

Al-Sisi's intelligence circle has begun a new phase in its plan to restructure the Egyptian media by eliminating programs and channels of a political nature in the losing media institutions, that are mainly acquired by the General Intelligence Service and the Ministry of Interior, and adopting a new program plan based on social and entertainment content, and thus move away from the style of “political Talk Show” that prevailed in all Egyptian satellite channels since the January 25 Revolution, 2011. According to sources within the channels of CBC, ON TV, and Capital, all owned by “sovereign” bodies through private investment companies, there have been instructions to cancel all programs of a political and serious nature, especially in the CBC channel group which was known as one of the strongest media platforms that paved the way for the coup of July 3, 2013, and supported Sisi along the line, even after the intelligence takeover of the right to manage the group and its newspaper “Al-Watan” through Mohamed Amin, a businessman, a year ago.

Al-Sisi is currently controlling the financial and administrative aspects of most of the Egyptian satellite channels, including: ON, DMC, CBC, Al-Nahar, Al Hayat and CAPITAL. The Sisi bodies are also escalating their pressures on various media outlets and the press. Recently, the pro-Sisi bodies have acquired the share of Naguib Sawiris, a well-known businessman, in Al-Masry Al-Youm newspaper. Soon after that, Al-Masry Al-Youm's chief editor was changed against the backdrop of a report that was published by the newspaper on the government's mobilization of voters to participate in the last presidential elections.

Sisi's reshuffle of Egyptian army commanders

Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi's [reshuffle](#) of Egyptian army commanders included:

1- Major General Mohammad Raafat al-Dash was transferred from the position of commander of the Third Field Army to the post of head of the army's Inspection Authority. Al-Dash was replaced by General Rafiq Raafat Arafat, who was the chief of staff of the Third Field Army. It is noteworthy that Maj. General Raafat Al-Dash was not appointed as commander of the Unified Command as it had been done with former field army commanders, such as Lt. General Osama Askar and Maj. General Mohamed Abdellah, former commanders of the Third Field Army.

2- Major General Mohamed Masri, commander of the eastern canal forces, was transferred to the post of head of the Armed Forces Operations Authority.

3- Referring Staff Major General Wahid Ezzat, head of the Armed Forces Operations Committee to pension.

The three aforementioned commanders are SCAF members. In view of the situation of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces since July 3, 2013, up to now, we see that Sisi occasionally conducts reshuffle of senior military positions to prevent creation of centers of power within the military institution.

Sisi is now dealing with the commanders of the military junta in three ways. Sometimes, he transfers them to other military posts that do not enable them to remain as SCAF, as he did with Major General Raafat al-Dash. Sometimes, he moves them to another position but within the framework of the SCAF, as he did with Major General Mohammed Al-Masri; but in other times he dismisses some of them outside the military institution, as what happened with Maj. Gen. Wahid Ezzat.

Although Sisi is careful not to keep military commanders in their positions, for a long time, including those who are altogether dismissed, yet all of them are included in the [Law on Treatment of Senior Army Commanders](#).

- New Office Director for GIS Chairman

The head of the new General Intelligence Service, Major General Abbas Kamel, appointed Lt. Colonel [Ahmad Shaaban](#) as director of his office.

Lt. Col. Ahmad Shaaban has been one of the close associates of Major General Abbas Kamel. Shaaban was the director of the office of Major General Abbas Kamel, while Kamel was the director of Al-Sisi office.

When Major General Abbas Kamel was appointed as head of the General Intelligence Service, he decided to transfer Lt. Colonel Ahmad Shaaban and Lt. Colonel Mohamed Fayez from the presidency to the intelligence service. Both young officers, who were directly responsible for the media file, were extremely active.