



المعهد المصري للدراسات
EGYPTIAN INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES

Military

Sisi Sacks Maj. Gen. El-Keshky
with a US Directive

9 October 2019

Mahmoud Gamal



WWW.EIPSS-EG.ORG

[f Eipss.EG](https://www.facebook.com/Eipss.EG) [t Eis_EG](https://twitter.com/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

October 9, 2019

Sisi Sacks Maj. Gen. El-Keshky with a US Directive Mahmoud Gamal

The coup leader, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, has dismissed a new army commander through forced retirement, in a new episode in the ongoing series of getting rid of leaders of the military institution, which has not stopped since the coup d'état of 3 July 2013 until now.

A [video](#) released by the Egyptian Ministry of Defense on Sunday showed that Sisi fired Assistant Minister of Defense for International Relations Maj. General Mohamed El-Keshky and honoring him after his compulsory retirement.

The ceremony was held to honor a number of commanders whom the Ministry of Defense said had "completed their service in the armed forces and were retired on July 1, 2019". The dismissed commanders were honored in the presence of Defense Minister Mohamed Zaki and Chief of Staff of the Egyptian army, Mohamed Farid Hegazi, as well as commanders of the main branches of the armed forces.

Maj. Gen. Mohamed El-Keshky, who has recently been overthrown, was one of the most important military leaders during the post-coup era. He played an important role in promoting the coup in the U.S. political corridors.

When the United States suspended part of the military aid to Egypt in the wake of the July 3 coup (2013), El-Keshky was instrumental in restoring the suspended aid later. Also, Maj. Gen. El-Keshky has enjoyed distinguished relations with many current and former army leaders.

Al-Keshki is considered one of the senior and most important military leaders that took over many extremely significant external files such as the Libyan file and the Egyptian-American relations file, as well as the file of the Egyptian-Russian relations which has witnessed a remarkable development since the coup of 2013.

Some believe that one of the reasons for the overthrow of Keshky is his successive failures in the Libyan file which he took over after the dismissal of the former Chief of Staff Mahmoud Hegazi, the father-in-law of Sisi's son, Mahmoud (Sisi's son Mahmoud is married to Hegazi's daughter Dalia).

October 9, 2019

Haftar's failure to resolve the Tripoli battle so far and his continued failure was probably among the reasons behind the overthrow of Keshky. Some may argue that Maj. Gen. el-Keshky was running the Libyan file through supervising the Egyptian National Committee on Libyan Affairs, which is a political not a military entity; however, even at the political level, el-Keshky has not achieved tangible successes, especially as the Tobruk parliament that supports Haftar has failed to unify the Libyan military institution.

El-Keshky, scapegoat of Sisi's military deal with Russia

Another most likely reason for the dismissal of Major General Mohamed el-Keshky is the Egyptian regime's recent attempt to pass a Russian-Egyptian military deal: El-Keshky was leading that deal without knowledge of the Americans, who were got furious after learning about it.

On 18 March, 2019, Egypt has [reportedly](#) signed an agreement with Russia for the purchase of 20 to 24 Sukhoi Su-35 multi-role fighter jets worth about \$2 billion, according to a report by the Kommersant news daily; but deal was not then confirmed by official sources.

On 20-22 March, a senior Egyptian military delegation led by Assistant Minister of Defense for International Relations Major General Mohamed El-Keshky was in in Washington, D.C., for the [31st meeting of the Military Cooperation Committee](#) (MCC) with a US senior military delegation led by Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Kathryn Wheelbarger.

According to some observers, El-Keshky was trying during the meeting to contain the crisis of the Egyptian arms deal with Russia by completely denying it. However, this step from Keshky came too late, given that all details about the deal were already known to the US officials, which led the US administration to issue their veto on the possibility of Keshky's survival in his position as assistant Minister of Defense for International Relations.

On April 9, 2019, during a Senate budget hearing, U.S. Secretary of State [Mike Pompeo](#) announced that the United States would penalize Egypt under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) should Egypt buy Russian Su-35 fighter jets. In late June, Sisi fired El-Keshky through compulsory retirement as of the first of July 2019, a decision which some reports confirm that Keshky was not pleased with.

October 9, 2019

However, the recently overthrown military commanders did not meet the retirement age limits, as the age limit does not apply to all members of the military. For example, members of the junta and prominent military commanders have a special exception in this regard, and the retirement age has been raised to 64 years for some military leaders, which proves that El-Keshky and others were fired not retired.

In December 2017, Egypt's House of Representatives (parliament) approved a two-year extension of the [retirement age](#) for armed forces officers, from 62 to 64, which was later issued by Sisi. In a statement, the parliament said it approved a draft law amending some provisions of the law of retirement, insurance and pensions for the armed forces, issued by law No. 90 of 1975.

Some observers expect that the chief of staff of the Egyptian army, Mohamed Farid Hegazi, will be sacked soon, especially that such a decision will be justified by the army's failure to face the insurgency in Sinai, despite the passage of nearly two years since launching the comprehensive Operation Sinai 2018, without achieving any tangible successes on the ground so far.

If the current chief of staff is fired, only one member will be remaining of the military junta that existed during the military coup of 2013 against late President Mohamed Morsi, namely, Maj. General Mamdouh Shahin, who is still the assistant Defense Minister for Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

***Mahmoud Gamal** is a researcher and director of the Monitoring and Documentation Unit at the Egyptian Institute for Studies (EIS).