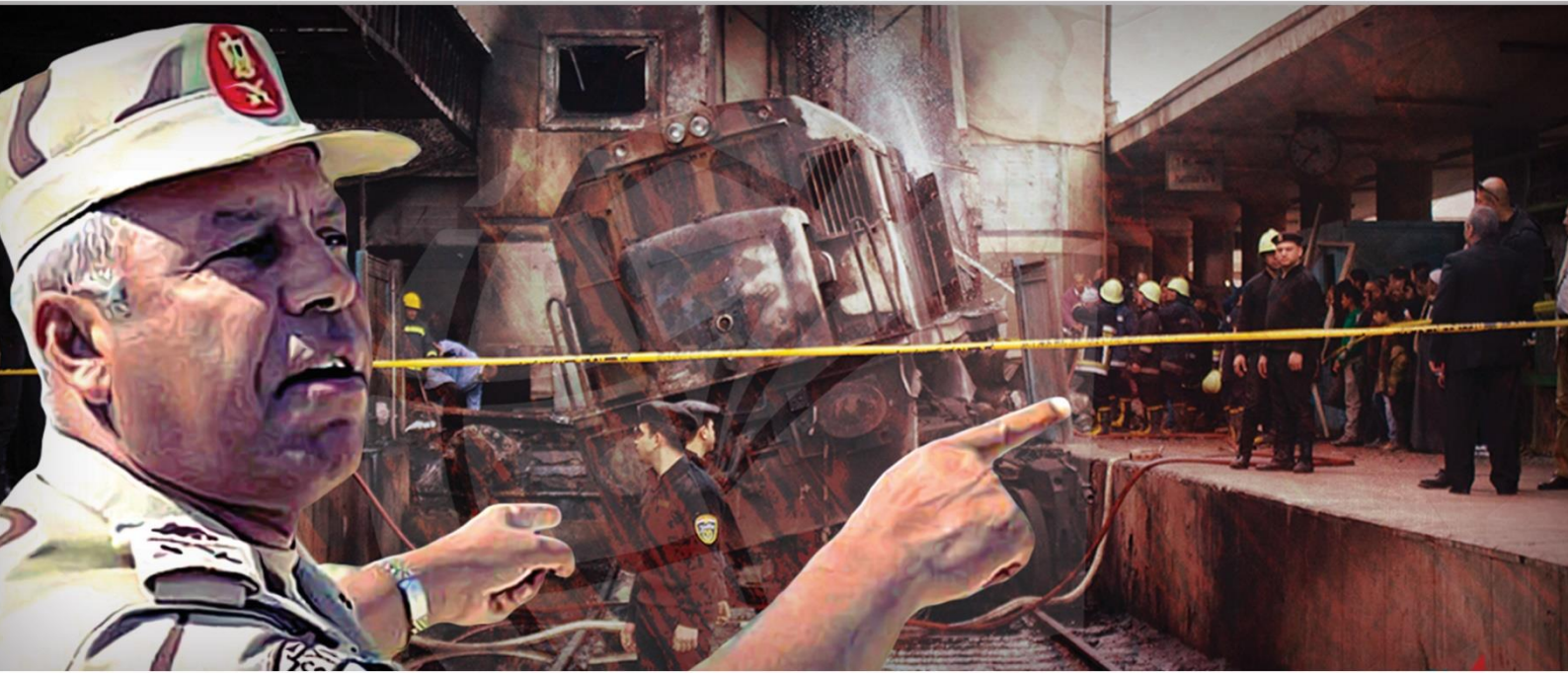


# Public Policy

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## Egypt: Manifestations of Transport Ministry Militarization

Amgad Hamdi



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The Cairo Station fire incident on February 27, 2019 – when a train crash caused huge blaze after fuel tank exploded, triggering resignation of former Transport Minister Hisham Arafat and appointment of Kamel Al-Wazir, the former head of the Armed Forces Engineering Authority (AFEA) – has raised many questions about the phenomenon of militarization in Egypt, and some considered it a trend towards militarization of the Ministry of Transport. However, the appointment of al-Wazir is not a trend but rather an extension and consolidation of the already existing phenomenon of militarization of Egypt in general and the Transport Ministry in particular, being one of the first ministries to be militarized.

### 1- Militarization during the reign of SCAF after Jan. 2011

The phenomenon of militarization started early during the reign of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) led by Mohamed Hussein Tantawi after the Jan. revolution in 2011. Al-Watan newspaper on May 1, 2011, monitored the spread of military leaders in civil bodies and bureaucracy. According to the report of Al-Watan newspaper, which was not denied by the ruling SCAF at the time, some 20 active and retired military leaders were assigned to the Ministry of Transport administration. The report pointed out that the Egyptian navy officers monopolize senior positions in the Egyptian ports, including chairmanship. Also the report said the 20 former army officers, of the rank of Major General and Brigadier General, occupy leading positions in the Ministry of Transport, especially the maritime transport sector, headed by Vice Admiral Sayed Hamed Hedaya in addition to his job as Chairman of the Alexandria Port Authority, and his deputy Vice Admiral Adel Yassin Hammad, who took up his post as deputy chairman of the Alexandria Port Authority in implementation of the Prime Minister's Decree No. 1368 of 2011. Similarly, the heads of Damietta and Red Sea ports authorities are former Egyptian navy officers. The most prominent military in the ministry's office include Major General Mohamed Essam al-Feqi, Head of the Central Department for the Minister's Office Affairs, Major General Hassan Mousa, Director of Administrative Affairs at the Minister of Transport's Office two years ago after leaving the Armed Forces' Signal Force, and Brigadier General Gamal Hegazy, currently Deputy Chairman of the Transport Projects Planning Authority, and Major General Ahmed

Badr Mahrous Arab, Advisor to the Ministry of Transport for Roads and Bridges, who had previously served in the Corps of Engineers.

However, the main artery of the Egyptian economy, i.e. the Suez Canal, did not witness any rejuvenation for 16 years, where Maj. General Ahmed Fadel was selected to take over chairmanship of the Suez Canal Authority in 1996, after he had left his post as commander of the naval forces and was promoted to the rank of Lt. General in 1991 and then appointed as head of the Suez Canal Authority in 2012.

## 2- Militarization of the Suez Canal Authority

The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) is an independent public body, which was established on July 26, 1956. The SCA is affiliated to the Prime Minister; and in order to manage the facility, the authority has all necessary powers for this purpose without adhering to governmental regulations and conditions.

There have been seven heads of the SCA board of directors since its nationalization in 1965 until now, the first of whom, the only civilian chairman, remained in office for only one year from July 26, 1956 to July 9, 1957, who was succeeded by six military chairmen, namely Mahmoud Younis (1957 - 1965), Mashhour Ahmed Mashhour (1965 - 1983), Mohamed Ezzat Adel (1984 - 1995), Lt. General Ahmed Ali Fadel (1996 - 2012), Lt. General Mohab Mohamed Hussein Mamish (2012 - 2019), and Lt. General Osama Mounir Mohamed Rabie (12 August 2019 - until now) .

## 3- Manifestations of militarization in the era of Sisi.

In August 2017, Mr. Abdel Nasser Salama, former editor-in-chief of Al-Ahram, a government owned newspaper, sent a complaint to the President of the Republic warning him of the danger of militarization of the Ministry of Transport. He identified 22 officials of the Ministry of Transport who had come from the military institution to occupy senior positions in the ministry, namely:

- Major General Medhat Shousha, Chairman of the Railway Authority, who resigned following the recent train accident.
- Major General Tarek Ghanem: Head of Maritime Transport Sector.

November 4, 2019

- Major General Adel Turk: Chairman of the Roads and Bridges Authority.
- Major General Ashraf Haggag: Director of the General Directorate of Protocol at the Ministry.
- Brigadier Ahmed Saeed: Director of the Central Department of the Ministry's Office.
- Major General Khaled Hamdy: Advisor to the Minister for Care and Insurance.
- Brigadier General Mohammad Hassan: Director of the Crisis Center at the Ministry
- Major General Sami Mohammed: Counselor at the Crisis Center.
- Major General Mohamed Qenawy: Advisor to the Minister for Employment and Budget.
- Major General Mohamed El-Shennawy: Head of the Central Department for Legal Affairs, although he is not registered in the Bar Association and is not entitled to take up the post.
- Brigadier Mamdouh Quraish: Head of the Central Department of Facilities and Stations.
- Major General Refaat Hatata: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Integrated Services and Railway Cleaning.
- Major General Mohamed Nasrallah: Chairman of the Sleeper cars company.
- Brigadier Khaled Attia: Chairman of the Information Technology Company.
- Major General Tarek Gamal El Din: Chairman of the National Authority for Tunnels.
- Magdi Badawi: Director General of Security at the National Authority for Tunnels.
- Major General Ahmed Shoukry: General Security Manager in the Egyptian Company for the Management and Operation of the Subway.
- Major General Reda Ismail: Chairman of the River Transport Authority.
- Major General Fouad Othman: Head of Land Ports Authority.
- Major General Khaled Zahran: Chairman of the Maritime Safety Authority.

- Major General Rushdy Abdel Rahim: Chairman of the Holding Company for Roads and Bridges.

Mr. Salama said there have been other military personnel, but he wanted not to talk too long, adding that the deputies of those officials are mostly military.

#### *Ports Sector:*

- Major General Hisham Abu Sinna, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Red Sea Ports Authority.

- Major General Ayman Saleh, Chairman of Damietta Port Authority.

- Major General Medhat Attia, Chairman of the General Authority of Alexandria Port.

- Major General Ahmed Salem, President of Dekheila Port.

- Major General Gamal Ramadan, head of the central administration of the regions.

- Major General Khaled Suleiman, Head of the Movement Sector.

- Major General Fat'hi Taha, Chairman of Port Said Ports Authority.

#### *Cairo Ferry Company*

Major General Hussein Hermel served as chairman of the company since its inception in 2008 until he was fired in 2017 due to losses and debts of the company, where Major General Sharif al-Kharsh was appointed in his place, and then Kamil al-Wazir dismissed al-Kharsh in May this year, and appointed Major General Bahri Mohamed Talaat to succeed him.

Finally, it should be noted that the key manifestation of militarization of the Ministry of Transport is appointment of two ministers who belong to the military institution at the head of the Ministry of Transport, i.e. Major General Saad al-Goyoushi and Maj. General Kamel al-Wazir during the Sisi era.

\*To read the full study in Arabic click [here](#)