

Fifty-plus killed by Egyptian military as “Second Revolution” off to a rocky start

Tuesday 9 July 2013, by [BLACK Ian](#), [CHULOV Martin](#), [KINGSLEY Patrick](#), [The Guardian](#) (Date first published: 9 July 2013).

Four articles from today's edition of The Guardian.

Contents

- [Country braced for more \(...\)](#)
 - [Foreboding in second city as](#)
 - [Disorder, death and the \(...\)](#)
-

At least 51 killed in Egypt as army opens fire ‘like pouring rain’

Morsi supporters and military dispute cause of killings outside barracks said to be holding deposed president

Patrick Kingsley, *The Guardian*, July 9, 2013

Cairo—On several floors of Cairo's Health Insurance hospital, room after room was filled with bloodied, moaning protesters, many of them waiting to be treated. Supporters queued up to donate blood as doctors rushed more wounded past them on stretchers. Security officials screamed at journalists to leave; families of victims implored them to stay.

By the end of yesterday at least 51 protesters had died and more than 400 had been injured in one of the bloodiest incidents in Egypt's recent history.

It began, according to the wounded, as dawn prayers were ending. Hundreds of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, supporters of the deposed president, Mohamed Morsi, had knelt in Salah Salem Street, one of Cairo's main thoroughfares, outside the headquarters of Egypt's Republican Guards at first light yesterday when the imam's chants were shattered by the sound of gunshots.

“It was like pouring rain,” said Mohamed Atia, one of the hundreds injured in the subsequent bloodbath, speaking in hospital. A pool of dried blood darkened his once-grey trousers, the gunshot wound to his shoulder still awaiting medical attention. “They started shooting teargas and then live ammunition. We were shouting ‘peaceful, peaceful’, but the shooting continued.”

Mohamed Saber el-Sebaei lay with a dirty bandage around his head, blood caking his eyes shut. “There were dawn prayers and then I heard someone calling for help, so the imam finished the prayers quickly,” he said.

“Just before we finished, the shooting started. The army units that were standing in front of the

Republican Guard headquarters first started shooting teargas, then live ammunition above people's heads ... I was taking cover with another guy behind some rubble and I felt something hit my head. I held my prayer mat in my hand and I started to cover my head with it. But I couldn't stop the bleeding because there was so much blood."

A third injured man, Abdel Aziz Abdel Shokor, crippled by a live round to his leg, swore that no one had provoked the assault. "I swear to God no one was doing anything," he said. In post-revolutionary Cairo, now more divided than ever after the toppling of Morsi last Wednesday, the narrative of history is rarely straightforward. Yesterday the city was awash with claims and counterclaims about whether the bloody events had been provoked.

According to the army, a thousand proMorsi supporters had been camped outside the guards' compound since Thursday, protesting at the overthrow of Morsi, who was reportedly under house arrest inside. About 4am yesterday, the army said, an armed group of Morsi loyalists attacked the compound, first with stones, then with live ammunition.

The army had no choice but to return fire, a spokesman said in a heated afternoon press conference. At least one security official was killed.

Even at the site of the incident, no one could agree how it started. Videos showed armed Islamists later continuing the fight in the streets, leading to a nearby proMorsi sit-in.

But there was no conclusive evidence that either the army, the police or Morsi supporters fired the first shot.

Those at the hospital claimed the massacre began after a soldier was shot by friendly fire. But at the area near the Republican Guard building, which is inhabited mainly by ex-military families, some local residents strolling the now empty and debris-strewn protest site said it was started by armed Islamists.

"After prayers somebody came here and said 'jihad, jihad'," claimed a man who said he was a friend of Hosni Mubarak. "Armoured trucks came and somebody shot one officer and two soldiers. Then people got really crazy broke off part of the barbed wire by the presidential guard and then [the soldiers] started firing teargas and live fire."

There were women and children among them, the man admitted, as well as people not interested in fighting. At least 100 fled into the nearest residential tower block, banging on any door they could find, asking for shelter and vinegar - a homemade remedy for teargas. The residents put them on the roof until the police arrived to arrest them. One petrified 11-year-old was still there by the afternoon.

An ex-policeman who said he lived on the 11th floor of a building overlooking the site said the army and police had not fired a bullet. "All this time there was no live ammunition, just teargas," he said. "I saw this with my own eyes. No one was killed. It was protesters running back who started burning their own tents. As you can see there is no blood or ammunition."

Officials were in the middle of a largescale cleanup, but the Guardian found a live military round among the detritus. Metres away stood a car with two bulletholes and an exit hole. "I saw people being carried away from here in blankets, and people later washed the blood off. They were shot, they fell, and they got carried away," admitted a man who gave his name as Mohamed - in testimony that contradicted that of his neighbours.

One thing they all agreed on was the attitude of the protesters. "They've been here for three days," said Mohamed, "and they've been treating the soldiers very disrespectfully."

Hours later, many of those same protesters were still arriving in bodybags at Cairo's Zeinoh morgue.

Country braced for more violence After 'massacre' of Morsi faithful

Brotherhood condemns attack during prayers Security forces say terrorists tried to storm building

Ian Black and Patrick Kingsley, *The Guardian*, July 9, 2013

Egyptians were braced for new violence last night after at least 51 supporters of the deposed president Mohamed Morsi were killed by security forces in what the Muslim Brotherhood condemned as a massacre, but the military insisted was the result of an armed attack on a Cairo barracks.

The country's single bloodiest incident in over a year took place outside a Republican Guard officers' club where Morsi is rumoured to be in detention. The Brotherhood said its people were attacked during morning prayers, but the army said an attempt had been made by "a terrorist group" to storm the heavily guarded building. Emergency services confirmed 435 people were injured.

Egypt's interim presidency announced a judicial investigation into the killings, but that did not appease angry crowds, who were still massing as night fell at the nearby Rabaa al-Adwiya mosque, a focal point for pro-Morsi protests. The US said it was "deeply concerned" and called on Egypt's military to "exercise maximum restraint".

Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, head of the al-Azhar mosque and the country's senior Muslim cleric, warned of the danger of "civil war" and said he was going into seclusion until violence ended and reconciliation began.

Injured victims described how shooting began hours after hundreds of thousands of people attended rival rallies for and against Morsi across the country. The deaths blocked attempts to form a new civilian-led transitional government and fuelled already high tensions on the eve of the Ramadan holiday.

"There were dawn prayers and then I heard someone calling for help," Mohamed Saber el-Sebaei told the Guardian. "Just before we finished, the shooting started. The army units that were standing in front of the Republican Guard headquarters first started shooting teargas, then live ammunition above people's heads. People started to fall back and then an armoured vehicle came round the right-hand side escorted by a group of soldiers with their rifles shooting directly into the people. I was taking cover ... behind some rubble and I felt something hit my head."

Initial claims that there were women and children among the dead were not confirmed. But a doctor running a field hospital called the three hours he had spent treating casualties some of the worst he had experienced in his life.

The army said an "armed terrorist group" had tried to break into the compound and had attacked security forces. Two policemen and an army officer died and 40 soldiers were injured, including

seven who were in critical condition. The army said it had arrested at least 200 people with “large quantities of firearms, ammunition and Molotov cocktails”.

But many unanswered questions remained. Protesters could not agree whether the security forces fired first with teargas or live ammunition. Some were later filmed holding firearms.

The army’s narrative was contradicted by testimony from residents who said that at least 100 protesters, including children, fled to a nearby tower block – implying that not all of them were involved in an attack.

Heba Morayef of Human Rights Watch tweeted: “Regardless of what started [the] violence ... [the] military and police have responsibility to exercise restraint and not use excessive and lethal force.”

Morsi, narrowly elected a year ago, was deposed by the Egyptian military last Wednesday after mass protests led by the Tamarod (Rebellion) movement. Judge Adly Mansour, the head of the high constitutional court, replaced him as interim president. Morsi supporters condemned this as a military coup. Opponents portray it as a continuation of the revolution that overthrew Hosni Mubarak in 2011.

In immediate political fallout, the conservative Salafi Noor party withdrew from already faltering talks on a transitional government. “We wanted to avoid bloodshed, but now blood has been spilled. We will end all negotiations with the new authorities,” it said. Political sources told the *Guardian* that Mohamed ElBaradei or Ziad Baha al-Din were likely to be named interim prime minister.

Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, a moderate Islamist who left the Brotherhood last year, called on Mansour to step down and told al-Jazeera TV the incident was “a horrible crime against humanity and all Egyptians”.

The Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice party (FJP) said it was calling “on the great Egyptian people to rise up against those who want to steal their revolution with tanks and armoured vehicles, even over the dead bodies of the people”. But a spokesman clarified later that the appeal was for a “peaceful uprising”. Jihadi groups in Sinai threatened “severe retaliation”.

Saad Amara, a senior FJP figure, said the killings were like Israeli attacks on Palestinians in Gaza and carried out by “armed criminals”.

The US has been trying to defuse the crisis by brokering an agreement between the Brotherhood and the military, but Egyptian analysts and politicians say there is now no chance that Morsi will be restored or that the defence minister, General Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, will resign, as the Islamists are demanding.

British foreign secretary William Hague said : “It is crucial that there is a swift return to democratic processes in Egypt. All sides of the political spectrum should work together for the sake of the country’s political and economic future.

Foreboding in second city as myriad Islamist groups prepare to confront Uneasy alliance of Tamarod and tanks

Martin Chulov, *The Guardian*, July 9, 2013

Alexandria—The convoy of army lorries carrying tanks rumbled slowly through the ramshackle heart of Alexandria, where a clutter of tired, low-set buildings, soaring new hotels and relics of ancient Egypt face the Mediterranean Sea, and stopped on the foreshore outside Alexandria Library. The library, a reconstruction of the building once renowned as a centre of learning, and now the city's main tourist attraction, has also become an operations hub for the revitalised state security service, which has played an ever more visible role since the ousting last week of the country's elected president, Mohamed Morsi.

When plainclothes officers detained the Guardian outside the library, they were quick to explain that they were acting on orders from Cairo, and that foreigners were now seen as suspicious. "These aren't normal times," a young security officer explained. "There are spies all around," said another.

Just days after Morsi was deposed, the mood has shifted from certainty to circumspection. As the Muslim Brotherhood holds its ground in parts of Cairo and tries to regroup beyond the capital, the celebrations of anti-Morsi protesters have given way to searching questions about what comes next.

Two miles from the library, both sides of a now deeply divided society have fought a series of street battles in the Sidi Gaber neighbourhood, where Egypt's only tram runs alongside the railway line to the capital. About 30 people have died here since Wednesday.

A man with a megaphone bellowed to a gathering throng on a volatile street. "The army, the police and the people are one hand," he shouted, as supporters waved posters of Egypt's military leader, General Abdel Fatah al-Sisi. "Don't let the outsiders seize this revolution."

As his hoarse voice grew louder, the mood of the crowd switched between defiance, anger and benevolence. "You are an American," one lady screamed, her voice trembling with rage. Other women worked hard to calm her down.

The tanks and armoured personnel carriers that had been lowered from the backs of the lorries took up positions at all entry points to the neighbourhood. Soldiers stood in front of them. Groups of men stood incongruously nearby. The latter were the secret police, regarded as villains of the first revolution but now seen as standard-bearers of the second.

This new alliance of the old guard from the Hosni Mubarak era and the revolutionary secularists and liberals – who were on opposing sides in street battles in January 2011 – is uncomfortable. During the tense 17 months of military rule between the demise of Mubarak and elected civilian rule, the two groups continued to fight each other. Only in the removal of Morsi have they struck a fragile consensus.

"The [Muslim] Brotherhood wants Egypt to become like Syria, or Iraq," one security man said. The tension was palpable. "We don't want you to stand here, we want you to leave," said another, addressing the Guardian. "Isn't this your car?" demanded another.

Every afternoon since Morsi was toppled, crowds have gathered in Sidi Gaber. A foreboding mood was fast settling in and both camps confirmed that their people would soon be hitting the streets. "We can control our people 100%," said the Brotherhood's international policy adviser, Mohammed

Soudan. "But there are 39 other groups [outside] the Freedom and Justice party, and all of them are trying to find their own ways out of this serious crisis."

Many of these Islamist groups suffered under Mubarak, and are keen to escape the same fate this time. "Many of their people were detained and tortured under the Mubarak regime; they will never accept to go back to the old ways of a police state. The counter-revolution has succeeded. It is very, very dangerous," said Soudan.

The tanks and armoured personnel carriers were now almost all in place. Some were waiting in a military base near the library in case trouble flared in the evening. The plainclothes men had taken up their positions on the Corniche and were frisking men who were walking to the rally holding banners displaying Sisi's face, or Egyptian flags.

Khaled al-Qabi, an organiser of the Tamarod movement, which is credited with the anti-Morsi momentum in April, said uncomfortable alliances would be dealt with later. "For now, all the people are working together for a common goal," he said. "In time, those old-guard forces will be held to account. We will purify the interior ministry and the other corrupt elements of state.

"Our demands have not changed since the 25 January revolution against Mubarak. The 30 June revolution expanded on the goals of the first. We want a secular civilian democracy and people now understand that their rights can't be taken away from them."

For now, though, supporters of the opposition in Alexandria seem reluctant to look past Sisi as a man who can hold the country together. Jostling over leadership positions in the new interim presidency of Adly Mansour is not resonating on a street that has yet to come to terms with the seismic events that have taken Egypt to the edge of uncertainty.

This timeworn city of dynasties, traders and civilisations has seen it all before. The coming months here will go a long way towards determining how Egypt ushers in a new age.

Disorder, death and the generals

Editorial, *The Guardian*, July 9, 2013

However the shooting at a Muslim Brotherhood sit-in outside the Republican Guard club in Cairo started – and there are wildly conflicting accounts: the Brotherhood called it "a massacre" shortly after dawn prayers, while the army said it responded to a "terrorist" attack – it is indisputable that 51 people died and more than 300 people were injured in what has become the deadliest single clash since the fall of Hosni Mubarak. According to our body count, more Egyptians have been killed and injured in two weeks of protests than in one year under Mohamed Morsi. The argument that the army had to go in to restore order when it staged its coup has been shown to be fallacious. In the past 10 days, the security forces became a major instigator of disorder and violence. The army also became wholly partisan, handing out orange juice and cold water to one side and firing bullets at the other.

No sooner did the news break than the country's interim leadership began to shed political cover. Three major players either switched sides or threatened to: the Salafist al-Nour party withdrew from

talks about a transitional government; Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, the Islamist leader who left the Muslim Brotherhood last year, called on the interim president to resign; and the country's most senior Muslim cleric, al-Azhar's grand imam, Ahmed alTayeb, threatened to walk out. His most senior adviser, a respected and non-partisan scholar, publicly rejected the offer to participate in the proposed national reconciliation commission, saying that no conciliation was possible until everybody, who had been arrested – including Morsi – had been freed, and until the killing stopped. He is right. This has to happen before any talks can take place.

The boycott that the sheikh and others announced yesterday means that there is no Islamist force left supporting the military regime's attempts to set up a transitional government. It may mean that the popular mood remains hostile in large areas of Cairo and other cities to the return of Morsi as president, but the fact remains that the political alliance behind the National Salvation Front and other supporters of the army coup has crumbled. Excluding the Islamists, who constitute a substantial part of the electorate, comes at a high price. The legitimate criticism of Morsi is that he failed to ruled on behalf of all Egyptians. With the current political breakup, the task of unifying the nation has become hugely more difficult after the past 48 hours.

This leaves Egypt swinging like a coach that has smashed through the safety barriers and has come to a halt with its front wheels dangling over the edge of ravine. The Brotherhood, thinking that its numbers will be swollen by the defections, has called for an uprising, adding later that it should remain peaceful. If it saw little reason before yesterday morning's events to make life easier for the military who deposed its president and ordered mass arrests of its senior leadership, it sees even less reason to play ball now. We can only expect the tactic of sit-ins, mass civil disobedience and repeated demonstrations to continue, particularly during Ramadan, which starts on Wednesday.

Two hours after sundown, Muslims gather every night at the mosque for the evening prayer, which becomes a natural magnet for large gatherings. This religious practice naturally favours what has become the Islamist opposition, who will have large numbers in the streets each night, whatever happens. The imminence of Ramadan provided one reason for the timing of the coup, which was expected to establish new facts on the ground before opposition could be organised. The army gambled that the Muslim Brotherhood would go quietly back to prison, and it failed. It now has a major fight on its hands just to keep control of the country.

The army's claim to be protector of all Egyptians is disintegrating before our eyes. Before it loses its cohesion – and there are reports of unrest in its lower ranks – it should back down, because even worse might follow.
