



MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

Quick Facts

Geographical Areas of Operation: Egypt; Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated groups operate in Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Numerical Strength: Unknown

Leadership: Hassan al-Banna

Religious Identification: Sunni

Source: The Counter Extremism Project, 2018

OVERVIEW

Founded in Egypt in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood is one of the world's oldest, largest and most influential Sunni Islamist groups. In the first decades of its existence, the movement was actively involved in the efforts to drive the British out of Egypt, and it later participated in the 1948 war against the State of Israel's emergence. Its primary purpose, however, was creating an Islamic state in Egypt, which it hoped to use as a foothold to create a new caliphate. Following Gamal Abdel Nasser's assumption of power in Egypt in 1954, the Brotherhood was formally outlawed. Nasser's successor as president, Anwar Sadat, gradually permitted its reemergence during the 1970s, and in the decades that followed the movement was sometimes repressed and otherwise tolerated but always illegal. Throughout this period, the Brotherhood developed a wide network of social and religious charities and programs, expanding its influence across the entire Muslim world and beyond.

Simultaneously, the movement underwent key evolutions in ideology, such as formally distancing itself from internal elements advocating the violent overthrow of non-Islamic regimes in the 1970s. This move, however, put the Brotherhood at odds with other Islamist movements, which continued to advocate violence, in the years that followed. While the movement did not immediately join the 2011 Arab Spring uprising in Egypt, its involvement was ultimately pivotal. The Brotherhood became a key beneficiary of President Hosni Mubarak's overthrow, in the wake of which it translated its traditional social influence into tangible political power. However, in 2013, a year after a Muslim Brotherhood-dominated government led by Mohammad Morsi assumed power, the Egyptian military intervened and Morsi from office. The resulting (and ongoing) crackdown on the Brotherhood has severely degraded the group's leadership and capabilities inside Egypt.

HISTORY & IDEOLOGY

The Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Society of the Muslim Brothers) was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, a young primary school teacher from the city of Isma'iliyya in southern Egypt.¹ In its original form,

the Brotherhood was a religious, youth and educational group. It advocated moral reform and a revival of Islam in Egypt and the Middle East as a means to combat what al-Banna viewed as Western-inspired secularization. Inspired by the thinking of Muslim scholars Muhammad Abdu (1849-1905), Rashid Rida (1865-1935) and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), al-Banna was convinced that the process of “Westernization” had corrupted his fellow Muslims, and that secular sentiments were among the principal reasons for the decline of Islamic societies. He felt that the weaknesses of the Muslim world could only be cured by implementing Islam as an “all-embracing concept,” meaning that Islamic principles as defined by the Brotherhood (or those educated according to the Brotherhood’s theories) should govern every aspect of life.

Al-Banna envisioned the Brotherhood as a mechanism for promoting this vision throughout Egypt from the grassroots on up. To this end, during the Brotherhood’s early years, he focused on establishing Brotherhood offices and local organizational structures across Egypt to promote the Brotherhood’s vision. Al-Banna introduced a multi-stage process through which the Brotherhood would achieve its political goals: it would recruit individuals, whom it would indoctrinate throughout a process known as *tarbiya*; those individuals would then raise families that would lead Islamic lifestyles; these families would help promote the Brotherhood’s vision in the society; once the society broadly embraced the Brotherhood’s vision, it would implement its particular interpretation at the state level, until Egypt was an Islamic state; and once this process took place in multiple countries, they would all unify under the banner of a new caliphate. Beyond outlining this process, al-Banna focused on promoting unity within the group. Recruitment and indoctrination were therefore designed to weed out dissenters, and to ensure that all members were committed to the Brotherhood’s vision and willing to follow its leaders’ orders. Al-Banna further rallied Egyptian Muslims around vague Islamist slogans, promising a “return to Islam” and assuring supporters that “the Qur’an is our constitution,” marshaling supporters to populist causes such as resisting British rule in Egypt and opposing Zionism. While the process of becoming a Muslim Brother was quite rigid and the organization was, for much of its history, exclusivist, these slogans helped the Brotherhood to develop a broader following even among non-members.

Al-Banna outlined his vision through a series of epistles, including one titled “On Jihad.” In this piece, he argued that too many Muslims were passively watching as their values were overcome by the brand of modernity that Westernization brought. He called supporters to invest themselves in pressing back against the tide of Westernization. However, al-Banna believed that jihad was not restricted to the struggle against *kuffar* (apostates), but was in fact a more comprehensive awakening of Muslim hearts and minds. In the 1930s, al-Banna’s opposition to British rule and influence found expression as his organization began to recruit followers who saw the appeal in its ideology on issues ranging from poverty and education to nationalism and the nascent Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

As the movement grew, it faced domestic repression. During this period, the group constructed an armed “secret apparatus,” which sought to protect the organization but also used offensive violence. Al-Banna’s relationship with this apparatus is disputed, but it was blamed for numerous violent incidents during the 1940s, including the 1948 assassination of the country’s prime minister. Al-Banna himself was assassinated in February 1949, likely in retaliation.

After al-Banna’s death, the government accelerated its repression of the group. Nearly 4,000 members were arrested in 1949, and most were not released from prison until after the Free Officers Revolution in 1952. Hassan Al Hudaiby, a judge, succeeded al-Banna as the Brotherhood’s leader, but struggled to control the organization because he lacked al-Banna’s charisma.

The Brotherhood collaborated with the military officers who ousted King Farouk during the 1952 Free Officers Revolution, and thus anticipated having influence in the new government. But after a brief period of cooperation, the Brotherhood was outlawed along with all other political parties. Following a failed assassination attempt in 1954, President Gamal Abdel Nasser escalated the crackdown on the organization,

imprisoning most of its leadership, sending many Brothers into exile, and effectively eliminating it on the ground for much of the next two decades.

During this period, the most radical tendencies within the Brotherhood emerged, led by its chief ideologue, Sayyid Qutb, a literary critic whose brief stay in the United States repelled him from Western values. While in prison, Qutb wrote his manifesto *Milestones*, which has since inspired generations of violent jihadis. In *Milestones*, published in 1964, Qutb argued that the Muslim world had regressed to the pre-Islamic state of ignorance known as jahiliyya, and advocated jihad against jahili political and societal influences as a remedy. Qutb thereby cast contemporary Arab governments, including Egypt's, as non-Islamic, and urged his followers to take up arms against them. The Egyptian government responded by banning *Milestones* and executing Qutb in prison in 1966.

While the Brotherhood continues to regard Qutb as a martyr and teach his writings, it distanced itself from his most radical arguments. In this vein, during the late 1960s, Muslim Brothers in prison refuted Qutb's view that contemporary Arab governments were non-Islamic by promoting *Preachers Not Judges*, a pamphlet which was later attributed to the second leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan Hudaiby. In *Preachers Not Judges*, Hudaiby rejects violent jihad and envisions a greater role for the individual in ascertaining an Islamic path. Both Qutb and Hudaiby believed that governments not working in obedience with God's will interfered with an individual's ability to choose the proper path in their pursuit of righteousness. Hudaiby, however, feared that violence would only further cloud the individual's ability to choose correctly. He thus advocated more gradual change that centered on education as the antidote for jahiliyyah.

In the decades that followed, Qutb and Hudaiby would represent competing trends, both within the organization as well as in the world of Islamism more broadly. Brotherhood "Qutbists" typically favored insularity and ideological purity, whereas those from the "Preachers Not Judges" stream favored outreach and even working with non-Islamists in pursuit of common short-term objectives. More importantly, though, those Islamists who favored Qutb's call for violent jihad gravitated towards jihadi movements, and represented the Brotherhood's main competitor within Islamism. These groups included al-Gamaa al-Islamiya and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

When Anwar Sadat succeeded Nasser as president in 1970, he gradually gave greater freedom to Islamists, viewing them as useful for countering the socialist nationalist adherents to Nasserism who threatened his authority. This, combined with the upsurge in Islamist activity that followed the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, catalyzed an explosion of Islamist advocacy on university campuses. When Muslim Brothers were ultimately released from prison during the mid-1970s, they recruited from this new generation of Islamists in reestablishing the Brotherhood. For the most part, those who joined the Brotherhood during this period rejected violent jihad within Egypt, and this deepened the rift between the Brotherhood and jihadist organizations, the latter of which were implicated in Sadat's assassination in 1981.

Under President Hosni Mubarak, who succeeded Sadat, the Brotherhood remained an illegal organization but was permitted to participate in parliamentary elections as independents. It also used moments of relative freedom to expand its societal influence through its nationwide recruitment of Islamists and massive social services network. The Brotherhood first participated in elections in 1984, when it formed a coalition with the nationalist New Wafd Party, which won 58 parliamentary seats. Three years later, the Brotherhood aligned with the Socialist Labor Party and the resulting coalition won 60 seats.

The Brotherhood's success at the polls, however, often came at a price, as the Mubarak regime viewed its Islamist ideology and committed following as a significant threat, and thus repressed the movement in order to prevent it from gaining greater influence. In this vein, dozens of Muslim Brotherhood leaders were arrested and sentenced to five years in prison immediately prior to the 1995 elections, in which the Brotherhood only won one seat. Ten years later, after the Brotherhood won an impressive 88 of 444 contested seats in parliament, the regime began another major crackdown: two chief financiers – businessman Hassan

Malek and deputy supreme guide Khairat al-Shater – were arrested and each given seven-year sentences, while constitutional amendments issued in 2007 were designed to restrict religious parties from future elections.² Then, during the 2010 parliamentary elections, which were widely considered to be the most rigged in Egypt’s history,³ the regime’s repression prevented the Brotherhood from winning any seats.

Fearing even greater repression, the Brotherhood initially stayed on the sidelines during the January 25, 2011 protests that began Egypt’s version of the Arab Spring. But when it appeared that the demonstrations would succeed, the organization mobilized its followers to participate in the pivotal January 28, 2011 Friday of Rage protests, during which Egypt’s police force effectively collapsed.

GLOBAL REACH

Although banned and clandestine for most of its history, the Muslim Brotherhood has expanded throughout the Muslim world, especially in Egypt’s neighboring countries—Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories—as well as on the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, and Bahrain). The movement has also achieved global status by expanding well beyond its traditional Middle Eastern borders and into the West. For decades, these different offshoots have remained largely autonomous from their Egyptian base and independent from one another, making it inaccurate to characterize the Brotherhood as a coherent and homogenous organization.

The Brotherhood first began to spread its ideology throughout the Middle East in the 1930s, essentially as a response to Western colonial presence. In Palestine, the movement was established in 1935 by the brother of al-Banna himself, Abd al-Rahman, along with other figures such as Izz al-Din al-Qassam, who was one of the leaders of the armed resistance against the British.⁴ At the time, the Brotherhood’s activities were primarily of a social and religious nature, and included the creation of associations, schools and the establishment of mosques intended to “bring an Islamic generation up.”⁵ It was in 1987, in the context of the first Intifada (Palestinian uprising), that the Brotherhood politicized itself by founding the Islamic Resistance Movement – more commonly known as Hamas⁶ – which in turn took on a greater military bent. In contrast, such politicization occurred earlier in countries like Syria and Jordan, where the Brotherhood became an opposition force to the regime in the first years after national independence.⁷ The Islamic Action Front (IAF),⁸ the Jordanian Brotherhood’s political wing, is, for instance, that country’s only established opposition party.

In Syria, after the 1963 Ba’athist coup, the Brotherhood became the main (Sunni) opposition force to the ruling (Shi’ite Alawite) Assad clan. The conflict quickly developed into an open armed struggle, culminating in the Hama uprising of 1982 that the regime brutally crushed, effectively eliminating the movement when it killed thousands of its members.⁹ After that, the movement ceased to be active politically inside the country, and maintained only a skeletal support network there, as most of its leadership regrouped in exile.¹⁰

Since the beginning of the Syrian uprising in 2011, the Brotherhood has joined the anti-regime movement.¹¹ First led by former leader (currently in exile) Riyad al-Shaqfeh,¹² its members initially held the most seats within the Syrian National Council (SNC). Non-Islamists, however, objected to the Brotherhood’s strength and the SNC has since been replaced by other opposition coalitions in which the Brotherhood has less influence. Syrian Muslim Brothers also chaired relief committees that distribute aid and money to the rebels. In the fall of 2014, al-Shaqfeh stepped down as leader of the Syrian Brotherhood following calls for a change in leadership and new elections.¹³ Mohammad Hikmat Walid, described as a “seventy-year-old UK educated eye surgeon,” was elected the new leader.¹⁴ Although his election initially signaled a new chapter in Brotherhood history, Walid’s leadership was still met with disappointment by some younger, more radical members.¹⁵ Despite its involvement in the early years of the Syrian civil war, other Islamist groups have played a much greater role in the recent fighting. As of 2018, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood is not a big player in the overall conflict.¹⁶

In Jordan, the Brotherhood similarly positioned itself as a leading player in the 2011 anti-government protests and denouncing public corruption and poverty.¹⁷ As in most other countries where the Brotherhood operates, however, the movement there seeks to change the system from within.¹⁸ In Iraq, the Brotherhood-affiliated Iraqi Islamic Party was banned during the 1960s and forced underground by Saddam Hussein. It reemerged after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, and has since displayed an ambiguous posture, voicing harsh criticism of the U.S. and Iraq's new political elites while still participating in the transitional process.¹⁹

In the Gulf, the Brotherhood has branches in several countries, most of which were established by Brothers who were driven out of Egypt in the 1950s. Many found shelter in Saudi Arabia, but their doctrine was seen as a challenge to that country's official Wahhabi creed. The movement was never allowed to deal with religious issues, and therefore invested its energies in the educational field as an alternate way of disseminating its ideology. This led to the emergence of movements like the "Awakening" (Sahwa), known for its support of rebellion against the Saudi leadership.²⁰

Elsewhere, such as in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, the Brotherhood relied on a strong intellectual and media presence to influence local populations.²¹ With the exception of Oman, where the Brotherhood has faced severe crackdowns, the movement also managed to gain seats in parliaments across the region: in Kuwait via the Hadas movement;²² and in Yemen through Islah or the "Congregation for Reform."²³ Bahrain's Al-Minbar historically had success in both the 2010 and 2014 elections, but has since lost its prominence. Most notably through the rise of Shiite opposition that has garnered support from Bahrain's Shia majority population, and changed the political landscape of the country.²⁴ Following the 2011 uprising against Bahrain's ruling family,²⁵ a so-called "militarization of Shia resistance" has grown due to continued and increased Iranian support.²⁶

In North Africa, the Brotherhood's expansion was also fueled by resentment of colonial rule. In Algeria, its members joined the uprising against the French during that country's war for independence before being marginalized by the secular FLN party. In the 1990s, the Algerian Brotherhood did not join jihadist factions in their fight against the state; instead, the group favored a peaceful resolution of the conflict and a return to democracy, even taking part in the coalition backing current president Abdelaziz Bouteflika in the early 2000s.²⁷ In Tunisia, the Brotherhood influenced Islamists, in particular Ennahda (the Renaissance Party) founded in 1989, whose leaders advocate democracy and pluralism "within an Islamist framework."²⁸ Formerly outlawed during the Ben Ali regime, Ennahda made a historic return in the wake of the 2011 "Jasmine Revolution"²⁹ and became a legal party, benefiting from considerable popular support in the parliamentary elections and winning 40 % of the votes. It later responded to resistance by ceding power and joining a transition process with Tunisia's other political forces, culminating with the election of a non-Islamist government. Domestic opposition to Islamism has forced Ennahda to downplay its Islamism, and in 2016 Ennahda leader Rachid Ghannouchi formally distanced the movement from political Islam, hinting that the movement would instead focus on outreach work (dawa). In the most recent 2018 municipal elections, Ennahda was able to claim victory alongside its coalition partner Nidaa Tounes. The win was described by Ennahda top party official, Lofti Zitoun as the "reward for the new tolerant and democratic Ennahda," signaling the party's continued move away from political Islam.³⁰

In Morocco, the Justice and Development Party (PJD) also won the largest number of seats in the 2011 parliamentary election, gaining 27% of the votes and becoming the country's major opposition party. Since its 2011 victory, the PJD has continued to grow in influence. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, the PJD came in first with 125 of the 395 total parliamentary seats.³¹ These elections, and subsequent majority coalition government led by the PJD, have made the Brotherhood a key power broker in Moroccan politics. In Libya, the Brotherhood has maintained a presence since the 1940s when King Idris I offered Egyptian Brothers refuge from persecution. However, after seizing power in a coup, Muammar al-Qadhafi considered the Muslim Brothers a menace and actively worked to eliminate them. Despite this repression, the Brotherhood maintained a vast network of sympathizers in Libya.³² The Party of Justice

and Construction (the political arm of the Brotherhood in Libya) has gained seats in the legislative body since Qadhafi's death.³³ Finally, in Sudan, the Brotherhood enjoys a significant, though informal, presence, and has launched mass Islamization campaigns that have allowed its representatives to infiltrate virtually all state institutions.³⁴

In addition to its traditional geographic reach, the Brotherhood has gained significant ground in Europe through regional forums like the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe, the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organizations, and the European Council for Fatwa and Research.³⁵ Starting in the 1960s, members and sympathizers of the group moved to Europe and established a vast and sophisticated network of mosques and Islamic charities and schools, such as those in England (Muslim Association of Britain), France (Union des Organisations Islamiques de France), Germany (Islamische Gemeinschaft Deutschland), and Italy (Unione delle Comunita' ed Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia).³⁶ With considerable foreign funding and the relative tolerance of European governments seeking to engage in a dialogue with Muslim minorities,³⁷ Brotherhood-related organizations have gained prominent positions on the Continent's sociopolitical scene, presenting themselves as the legitimate representatives of Muslim communities in Europe and "moderate" interlocutors for governments and the media.

In addition to its presence in Europe, the Brotherhood has also reached out to Muslims in the United States, where its members have been present since the 1960s. The movement launched its first long-term strategy there in 1975, focusing on proselytizing efforts and the creation of specific structures for youth and newly arrived Muslim immigrants. Seeking to exert political influence at the state and federal levels, Muslim Brothers have been represented in multiple religious organizations such as the Muslim Students' Association (MSA), the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), the Muslim American Society (MAS) and a variety of other activist groups. On May 22, 1991, the Brotherhood issued a programmatic memorandum titled "The General Strategic Objective for the [Brotherhood] in North America,"³⁸ which highlighted its goal to penetrate the heart of American society. The memorandum stated that all Muslims had to "understand that their work in America [was] a grand jihad in eliminating and destroying Western civilization from within and sabotaging its miserable house by their hands so that God's religion [Islam] is victorious over all religions."³⁹

RECENT ACTIVITY

When Hosni Mubarak was ousted from power in Egypt on February 11, 2011, the Brotherhood believed that the moment had come for it to transition from promoting Islamism within the society to implementing it within the state, and it therefore formed a political party – the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) – as its political vehicle. When a small segment of Brotherhood's youth opposed this sharp turn toward politics, the Brotherhood quickly banished them, thereby preventing fissures from forming within the organization. These Brotherhood youths later formed the Egyptian Current Party, which won zero seats in the 2011-2012 parliamentary elections. The Brotherhood's FJP, by contrast, anchored an alliance of eleven parties, which won more than 47 percent of the seats. The second largest bloc belonged to Salafist parties, which won approximately 24 percent of the seats.⁴⁰

In the FJP-dominated parliament, Muslim Brothers held either the chairmanship or deputy chairmanship of 18 of 19 committees, Salafists MPs were granted the chairmanships of three committees, and Brotherhood leader Saad al-Katatny was appointed parliamentary speaker.⁴¹ The core issue before this parliament was the selection of the Constituent Assembly, which was tasked with drafting Egypt's next constitution. Despite their differences, the Brotherhood and Salafists collaborated to select a Constituent Assembly that was approximately 65 percent Islamist.⁴² Non-Islamist Assembly members, as well as representatives from Al-Azhar, the judiciary, and the Coptic Church, responded by boycotting the Assembly, and a court ultimately disbanded it in April 2012, a mere two weeks after it was formed. The Brotherhood also used their dominance of the parliament to chip away at the SCAF's political legitimacy, and escalate what had

been a dormant power struggle between the junta and the Islamists. In March 2012, in response to the FJP's attempt to use the parliament to declare no confidence in the SCAF-backed government, the SCAF issued a statement that effectively threatened the Brotherhood with a crackdown akin to the Nasser days.⁴³

This was one reason that the Brotherhood reneged on its prior pledge, made in February 2011, before Mubarak was overthrown, that it would not run a presidential candidate.⁴⁴ The second was the emergence of former Muslim Brotherhood leader Abdel Moneim Abouel Fotouh as a leading presidential candidate as the May/June 2012 presidential elections approached. Abouel Fotouh had declared his intention to run in early 2011, and the Brotherhood banished him for doing so against its orders. The Brotherhood, however, feared that if it did not run a candidate, many of its members would ultimately vote for Abouel Fotouh, thereby rewarding someone who failed to follow the Brotherhood leaders' orders and threatening chaos in the Brotherhood's ranks.⁴⁵

So in late March 2012, the Brotherhood announced that Khairat al-Shater, a wealthy businessman and senior member of the organization, would be the FJP's presidential candidate. Two weeks later, Shater was disqualified from running by the national electoral commission due to his prior imprisonment under Mubarak,⁴⁶ as were other leading contenders.⁴⁷ The Brotherhood, however, was prepared for this possibility and had already nominated FJP chairman Mohammed Morsi as a backup. The final list featured thirteen candidates, including Mubarak's former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq, Nasserist former parliamentarian Hamdeen Sabbahi, and former Foreign Minister Amr Moussa. The elections took place on May 23-24, 2012, with Morsi ultimately securing victory with 24 percent of the vote.⁴⁸ A month later, Morsi was named the winner of a run-off election against Shafik, in which he garnered 51.7 percent of the vote.⁴⁹

Prior to winning the election, however, relations between the Brotherhood and state institutions deteriorated further. On June 14, a court disbanded the FJP-controlled parliament, arguing that it had been elected unconstitutionally because the electoral format did not give an equal opportunity to political independents.⁵⁰ A few days later, in anticipation of a possible Morsi victory, the Supreme Court of Armed Forces, Egypt's highest military body, issued a constitutional declaration that protected the military from any future president's oversight and granted itself legislative authority. As a result, the Brotherhood and its allies occupied Tahrir Square before the presidential elections results were announced, threatening chaos if Morsi was not named Egypt's next president.

The SCAF's constitutional declaration meant that when Morsi was sworn in on June 30, 2012, there was no parliament, no new constitution, and his precise powers were undefined. On August 12, however, Morsi used a major attack in the Sinai the previous week as a pretext for firing the SCAF's leaders, promoting director of military intelligence⁵¹ Abdel Fatah al-Sisi to defense minister, and issuing a new constitutional declaration granting himself legislative power until a new parliament was sworn in.⁵²

This action made Morsi Egypt's undisputed power holder, at least legally. But in November 2012, it appeared as though a second Constituent Assembly, which parliament had appointed before it was disbanded in June, was going to be nullified by the courts just as the first one had been. Morsi responded by issuing another constitutional declaration that protected the Constituent Assembly from the courts, but also placed his own edicts above any judicial oversight. It was effectively a total power grab, and when mass protests broke out, Morsi used the ensuing political crisis to ram a theocratic constitution through to ratification.

While the new constitution passed by 64 percent through referendum, the political crisis persisted for months, with increasingly violent protests against Morsi erupting with greater regularity. Meanwhile, the economy plummeted, lines for gas extended around city blocks, and power shortages created outages lasting many hours on end.⁵³ As a result, on June 30, 2013, millions of Egyptians took to the streets to demand Morsi's removal. When Morsi refused to compromise, the military responded by ousting him on July 3, 2013.

In the wake of the coup, the Brotherhood gathered its members and allies in northern Cairo's Rabaa

al-Adawiya Square and Giza's al-Nahda Square. Protesters denounced the interim government installed to replace Morsi as illegitimate. After negotiations between the new government and the Brotherhood broke down, security forces violently cleared these protests on August 14, 2013, killing at least 800 civilians, according to Human Rights Watch.⁵⁴

After the Rabaa massacre, the government arrested tens of thousands of Brotherhood leaders and supporters. Then, following a massive terrorist incident in al-Mansoura in December 2013, the government labeled the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group.⁵⁵ Ultimately the government's crackdown on the Brotherhood appears to have been successful: with its leaders in prison, in exile, or in hiding, the organization has been decapitated, rendering it incapable of executing a nationwide strategy within Egypt. Meanwhile, the Brotherhood faces a significant internal crisis pitting younger members, who want to fight the current government with violence, against older leaders, who fear that Brotherhood violence will legitimate the regime's crackdown.⁵⁶ The Brotherhood youth's wing appears to have won internal elections that were held in 2014, which explains the Brotherhood's January 2015 statement calling for jihad and martyrdom in fighting the regime. But the "old guard" has rejected these elections, creating a rift that has not been resolved as of this writing. For a time, the "revolutionary" wing was backed by senior Brotherhood leader Mohamed Kamal, who endorsed and encouraged the use of violence against Egyptian security forces and state infrastructure, and commissioned a Brotherhood sharia body to draft an Islamic legal defense of his faction's violence, which was titled *The Jurisprudence of Popular Resistance to the Coup*.⁵⁷ This pitted him and his faction against the Brotherhood's "old guard," nominally headed by deputy supreme guide Mahmoud Ezzat, which has argued that the "revolutionary" wing's violence would legitimate the state's violence and accused Kamal's wing of defying the Brotherhood's internal hierarchy.

The rift deepened following the arrest of several "old guard" leaders who had remained in hiding within Egypt in mid-2015, as the "old guard" blamed the "revolutionary" wing's violence for endangering senior leaders. For a brief period, however, the "revolutionary" wing appeared to have the upper hand, and took control of the organization's main web portal, ikhwanonline.com. But following Kamal's killing during an October 2016 raid, the "old guard" retook control of ikhwanonline.com. This did little to dampen the rift, however, and in early 2017, the Brotherhood's "revolutionary" wing launched a series of online pamphlets harshly criticizing the "old guard" leaders' conduct since the 2011 uprising, and called for establishing new structures for confronting the Egyptian regime.⁵⁸

Due to these internal disagreements, as well as the Egyptian government's repression of the organization as a whole, the Brotherhood no longer represents a significant threat to the current regime in Cairo. Indeed, it is barely visible within Egypt as of mid-2018, and its active leadership has relocated and remains in Istanbul, where the Brotherhood and its sympathizers have established five satellite television networks that promote the group's ideology and political vision. Within Egypt, some Brotherhood sympathizers are believed to have joined comparatively low-profile militant groups that have targeted security forces and state infrastructure, such as the Molotov Movement, Revolutionary Punishment, Liwaa al-Thawra, and Hasm.⁵⁹ To date, however, these groups have failed in their goals of destabilizing the Egyptian regime.

For its part, the Sisi regime has sought to prevent the Brotherhood's possible reemergence by shutting down its social services activities and implementing strict restrictions on mosque preaching. In this vein, in mid-2016, the Egyptian government mandated that imams read government-approved sermons in Friday prayers. This edict was also intended to constrain Salafists, despite the fact that the leading Salafist party—the Light Party—supported Morsi's overthrow and is the only Islamist group still participating in Egyptian politics. In the summer of 2017, the Egyptian government also joined its Persian Gulf allies—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain—in pressuring Qatar to end its political support for the Muslim Brotherhood via an economic and diplomatic embargo. Although the blockade was intended to cut off Doha's backing for the Brotherhood, Qatar's government has proved unwilling to do so, and as of mid-2018 Qatar's open door policy toward the Muslim Brotherhood (entailing both political backing

and the provision of safe haven)⁶⁰ remains largely unaltered.

Since President Sisi's reelection victory in March 2018, the Muslim Brotherhood has continued to operate outside of the political sphere in Egypt.⁶¹ Sisi's ongoing crackdown on Brotherhood activities has caused further setbacks within the group. While the "old guard" is seen as accommodating of the Sisi regime, the so-called "new guard" is often described as confrontational and unwilling to compromise.⁶² Despite the internal divisions within the Brotherhood, and its inability to threaten the current regime, authorities have continued to arrest those suspected of being group members. In April 2018, Egyptian courts sentenced a total of thirty-five Muslim Brotherhood members to life in prison. Subsequently, in June 2018, fourteen others – including Morsi's former economic advisor, Abdullah Shehata – were given life sentences.⁶³

Overall, the Muslim Brotherhood is likely to remain on the fringes of Egyptian political life for the foreseeable future. The Sisi regime shows no signs of easing its crackdown on Brotherhood members, while infighting and growing factionalism within the organization continue to hinder cohesion and political mobilization. The organization thus remains ill-situated to take advantage of the wellspring of support that it continues to enjoy in Egyptian society.

ENDNOTES

1. For an overview of the Muslim Brotherhood's core ideology, see Hassan al-Banna's writings and memoirs, particularly the *Letter To A Muslim Student*, which develops the main principles of the movement. For the English translation, see <http://www.jannah.org/articles/letter.html>; see also Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928-1942* (New York; Ithaca Press, 1998) and Richard Paul Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).
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4. Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties in the West Bank under the Jordanian Regime, 1949-1967* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982).
5. Ziad Abu-Amr, " Hamas: A Historical and Political Background," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22, no. 4, Summer 1993, 5-19.
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