

# Mass protests against Mursi mark second anniversary of Egyptian Revolution

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Yesterday, on the second anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution, hundreds of thousands workers and youth took to the streets throughout Egypt to demand the ouster of Western-backed Islamist President Muhammed Mursi and the ruling Muslim Brotherhood (MB).

The chants that echoed throughout country's squares included: "The people want to bring down the regime", "Leave, Mursi, leave" and "Bread, freedom and social justice."

The scenes were reminiscent of the initial days of the January 25 Revolution in 2011, which culminated in a mass strike movement of the Egyptian working class and, 18 days later, brought down dictator Hosni Mubarak.

Yesterday's mass protests were again driven by Egypt's staggering social inequality, which has only widened under Islamist rule.

On Tahrir Square in Cairo, the revolution's symbolic center in 2011, Kareem Abo Zaid, a 28-year-old teacher, explained to *Ahram Online* why he joined the protests: "The revolution has been hijacked. We want to complete the revolution's goals. The situation is getting tougher under the Brotherhood's rule: unemployment is on the rise, and jobs are harder to find."

"I'm here to get rid of Mursi," declared Moustafa Magdi, an unemployed commerce graduate. "First Mubarak, then Tantawi, now Mursi. We are only ruled by bastards."

In the coastal metropolis of Alexandria, where tens of thousands marched, 29-year-old Ezz El-Din El-Azzazy expressed his anger against Mursi and the MB: "I am here because of the increasing prices. I come from the slums and I feel that the Brotherhood only care about the poor when they need votes."

Popular anger against the right-wing, free-market policies of the MB—which is negotiating a loan with the International Monetary Fund based on liberalization policies and the slashing of vital bread and fuel subsidies—exploded throughout the day. Tens of thousands poured into the streets in the country's major cities.

In the seaport city of Suez, three marches converged at the Al-Arbaeen Square, another epicenter of the revolution, with workers and youth shouting: "Bread, freedom, the president lost legitimacy." They held banners reading: "Two years since the revolution, Egypt still needs another revolution." Later in the day, protesters marched to the governorate's headquarters in the city, stormed the building, and hung posters of martyrs of the revolution inside.

In Beni Suef, protesters blocked the railways, bringing train traffic between Cairo and Aswan to a complete halt. Railways were also blocked by protesters in the major industrial cities in the Nile Delta, Mahalla al-Kubra and Kafr al-Zayat.

In other cities, including Alexandria, the coastal city of Ismailiya, and the Nile Delta town of Damanhour, hundreds of angry youth stormed offices of the MB and its political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP).

The calls to bring down Mursi are the Egyptian masses' verdict on Mursi's program which, like the Mubarak regime's before it, is to impoverish the Egyptian working class in the interest of finance capital.

The day before the anniversary, Mursi signaled that he was preparing a bloody crackdown on working class protests. In a cynical speech at the Azhar Conference Hall in Cairo celebrating Milad Al-Nabi day (the birth of Prophet Muhammad), he claimed that "counter-revolutionary" forces led by remnants of the Mubarak

regime were attempting to “undermine the state.” He then laid out his own so-called “revolutionary” program for the Egyptian masses, demanding that they direct their efforts toward work and production and providing a “suitable environment for investment.”

Secular-leaning Egyptian bourgeois parties and their pseudo-left supporters—such as the National Salvation Front (NSF), the Strong Egypt Party, and the Revolutionary Socialists (RS)—responded to the renewed protests by seeking to work more closely with Mursi.

As clashes between protesters and the regime intensified, the NSF—led by the liberal Mohammed ElBaradei, the Nasserite Hamdeen Sabahi and former Mubarak-regime official Amr Moussa—met for an emergency meeting. They proposed forming “a national salvation government, representing the diversity of Egyptians.”

The official opposition’s hostility to the demands of the Egyptian workers and youth was summed up by Abdel Moneim Aboul-Fotouh, the former presidential candidate and leader of the Strong Egypt Party. During a march to Tahrir, he told *Al-Ahram* that he rejected the slogans “the people want the fall of the regime” and “down with the rule of the [Muslim Brotherhood’s] Supreme Guide.” He stressed that January 25, 2013 was not January 25, 2011 and declared that the goal was to reform the regime, not to topple it.

Like the Mubarak regime two years ago, Mursi unleashed the notorious Central Security Forces (CSF) and the military to brutally suppress the protests.

According to *Egypt Independent*, the Egyptian army was deployed in Cairo, Giza, Suez, Ismailia and Port Said. Tanks and armored vehicles guarded government buildings and main roads such as the Cario-Assiut Western Desert Road and highways connecting the major cities.

During the evening, the violence by the security forces turned deadly. At least seven protesters were reported killed in Suez, as CSF units attacked protesters at the governorate headquarters. Mohamed Salama, the head of the Suez doctor’s association, said that several protesters—including 17-year-old Mostafa Mahmoud Eissa and Mohamed Mohamed Gharib, 16—had been hit by live ammunition and birdshot.

Other victims included Ali Soliman, 19, Mohamed Mahmoud, 15, Hussein Mahmoud, 36, Walid El-Sayed

Hussein, 30, and Mahmoud Ashour. Over 60 people were injured in the city.

In the coastal city of Ismailia, Nasser al-Yamany, 23, died after being shot in the back.

Security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters in Mahalla, who marched on the governor’s office demanding the downfall of the MB and chanting “Mahalla is with Tahrir.” The building was reportedly set on fire amid clashes with police later in the evening.

In Cairo, CSF forces attacked protesters on Tahrir Square and its surrounding streets repeatedly throughout the day, firing tear gas canisters into the crowds. In the evening, Tahrir Doctors—a doctors’ organization treating injured protesters—issued an alert, declaring that the amount of gas in the air had reached a “dangerous level”, which could cause death by suffocation. After midnight, clashes also escalated at Maspero, the headquarters of Egyptian state television and radio, where security forces sought to fight back thousands of protesters trying to enter the building.

According to an official statement by the Ministry of Health, the number of injured in Cairo, Alexandria, Beheira, Luxor, Kafr El-Sheikh, Ismailia, Gharbia, Sharqiya and Suez reached 252.



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