

On the fourth anniversary of 2011 uprising

At least 18 dead as Egyptian military regime violently represses demonstrations

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Egyptian security forces killed at least 18 demonstrators and wounded at least 80 more Sunday as protests rocked Cairo, Giza, Kafr al-Sheikh and Menya.

Security forces carried out mass arrests, detaining at least 134 demonstrators, according to statement by the Minister of the Interior, and deployed liberal amounts of tear gas and “birdshot.” Demonstrators shouted slogans calling for a new revolution and the end of the military junta that seized power during the summer of 2013.

Heavily armed police and military Special Forces teams as well as undercover agents dressed in civilian clothes fired on protestors sporadically throughout the day, and gunfire could be heard well into the night, according to eyewitnesses cited by Reuters. Military vehicles continued to sweep the city as night fell. A number of government buildings were set ablaze by groups of protestors, according to state media.

The apparent murder Saturday of 32-year-old Shaimaa el-Sabagh as she marched in a demonstration commemorating the nearly 900 Egyptians killed during the mass struggles of 2011 has poured fuel on simmering popular hatred of the military dictatorship headed by Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. Video footage shows commando-style security forces aiming rifles at el-Sabagh moments before she was killed by gunshots to her face and back.

The US-backed al-Sisi regime has responded to the protests with police state measures, imposing fortified checkpoints and dispatching heavily armed patrols across the capital. Top security officials justified the measures by claiming that scores of roadside bombs were found around the capital during the weekend.

Martial law measures imposed by the military in

Sinai, including a strictly enforced curfew, will continue for at least another three months, the government announced Sunday.

Since the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood government in 2013, the military regime has sought to suppress the struggles of the Egyptian workers through military-police terror. After banning public protests, it has violently repressed attempts to defy the ban, slaughtering dozens during demonstrations last year commemorating the third anniversary of the 2011 uprising.

The government handed down death sentences to more than 1,400 political prisoners in 2014, while imprisoning tens of thousands more in secret prisons and torture centers.

Repression in Egypt has been applauded by international investors and by the major imperialist powers. Among the measures implemented by the regime on behalf of big business and foreign capital was a steep cut to fuel subsidies. Al-Sisi and his top officers are now especially concerned about the impact of continued turmoil on an upcoming international investors symposium to be held in March.

Islamist parties including the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) participated in Sunday’s demonstrations, reportedly spreading the slogan that they are “reviving the revolution.” The MB, however, has already demonstrated its hostility to the working class in Egypt and throughout the Middle East. During the government of Mohamed Mursi, the MB supported US and Israeli military operations in the region and planned to impose austerity measures in league with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The release from prison of Hosni Mubarak’s two

sons, scheduled for next week, has been delayed, according to Egyptian media reports published Sunday. The brothers are charged with embezzling millions of dollars in state funds.

The Mubarak brothers, who are appealing a four-year prison sentence handed down in May, were due for release under laws limiting the length of pretrial detention. It appears likely that the decision to delay their release was taken to avoid a further political provocation. Nonetheless, it is safe to assume that the al-Sisi regime plans to secure the brothers' acquittal, as it has done for the former dictator himself. Hosni Mubarak received only a three-year sentence in the same case, which was overturned by the Egyptian Supreme Court earlier this month.

Mubarak was already cleared last November of murder charges in relation to the nearly 900 civilians killed by his security forces during the revolutionary struggles of 2011. He may be released at any time from the elite military hospital where he is currently held.



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