

In leaked recording, Egyptian minister calls for machine-gunning protesters

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Egyptian Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim personally called for the use of automatic weapons against protesters, according to recordings obtained by *Al Jazeera* this week. He made these comments in a November 2014 meeting of the leadership of the Central Security Forces (CSF), the riot police of the US-backed Egyptian military junta.

“Use all that is permitted by the law. I think you all understand,” Ibrahim said. “Whatever is permitted by the law, use it without hesitation, any slight hesitation, from water to the machine gun.”

“I hope for decisiveness in confrontation. I hope you do not give them the chance to rally in the first place, even if you have to deal with them at the mosque. This is a national security issue,” he said.

“Do not wait for 100 to swell into 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000, then we are all helpless before them,” he said. He also advised the CSF on how to murder protesters without turning them into martyrs.

Ibrahim spoke as the Sisi regime prepared to employ mass repression and violence against youth and workers in Cairo and other cities protesting police detention and torture of thousands of Egyptians last fall.

Minister Ibrahim's warning points to the main concern of the thugs and murderers who control the US-backed Egyptian dictatorship. The Egyptian junta is deathly afraid that mass protests could again escalate beyond the capacity of the security forces to drown them in blood, as they did during the revolutionary uprising of 2011 that toppled US-backed dictator Hosni Mubarak.

In the recording, Interior Ministry officials also discussed the government's decision to reinstate a security officer who sought to blind demonstrators by targeting their eyes with birdshot-style shotgun ammunition, according to *Al Jazeera*.

This open discussion of mass murder and terror tactics against protesters is an indictment not only of the Sisi junta, but of the imperialist regimes in the United States

and the major European powers that have backed it. The Sisi regime has continued to receive billions of dollars of US government support since taking power in a bloody coup d'état in July 2013. This money is going to fund and arm a regime that has murdered thousands of people in the streets of Egypt's major cities, and that is preparing for new bloodbaths in the future.

US support for the Sisi junta also exposes the hypocrisy of Washington's humanitarian pretexts for its wars in Libya and Syria, after the working class toppled Mubarak in 2011. US officials, the corporate media, and pro-imperialist intellectuals insisted that the wars were launched because they could not tolerate the thought that the Libyan and Syrian regimes might use violence against protesters.

In fact, Washington and its European imperialist allies happily endorse and support regimes that deliberately resort to the mass murder of peaceful protesters to keep power. Their hypocritical denunciations of Libya and Syria were pretexts for long-prepared wars for regime change against regimes Washington did not support, as part of a neo-colonial restructuring of the Middle East and Africa in the interests of the banks and the NATO imperialist powers. These wars led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and turned millions into refugees.

In Egypt, the imperialist powers are backing the authoritarian policies of the Sisi junta. In the audio recording, Ibrahim instructs his subordinates to conduct mass arrests against attendees of any gathering of more than 100 people.

Since taking power, the junta has banned any criticism of the executive leadership and judiciary, and used police violence to enforce sweeping bans of the right of assembly. On Monday, the junta ordered the dissolution of some 170 non-governmental organizations.

The ferocious repression meted out by the Egyptian

junta aims above all to crush working class opposition to its free market policies, drawn up in consultation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the imperialist powers.

The Egyptian government is predicting that foreign direct investment (FDI) will reach \$8 billion in FY 2014-15, according to a report published Tuesday by *FTSE Global Markets*, “Egypt at tipping point for growth in foreign investment inflows.”

During a recent press conference addressing Egypt’s “road map to improve the business climate,” acting Egyptian Prime Minister Ibrahim Mehleb proclaimed that “Egypt hopes to attract billions in foreign investment over the next four years.”

“The economic DNA of the country is a free-market yet disciplined economy. This is a good time for the government to put the country’s DNA in front of the international investment community. The government has been doing all the right things with the reform program,” the top officer of Egypt’s largest private bank noted in similar remarks.

“People think that there is proper leadership in Egypt and that will make it attractive to foreign investors,” he said.

The ongoing devaluation of the Egyptian pound, overseen by the Egyptian Central Bank with support from the military junta, is being “welcomed by the business community,” he said.

While devaluation erodes the value of the national currency held by most Egyptians, who live in conditions of desperate poverty, it simultaneously creates more favorable conditions for foreign investors. Devaluation “boosts the competitiveness of Egyptian exports in both goods and services (tourism in particular) and encourages investors and international financial institutions to consider increasing their investments in Egypt,” the financial officer said.



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