

The “election victory” of al-Sisi in Egypt

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On Monday, the Egyptian electoral authority announced the victory of military dictator General Abdel Fatah al-Sisi. He received 89.6 percent in the three-day elections between December 10 and 12 and is therefore set to rule the country until at least 2030.

If anything was needed to reduce the human rights propaganda of the imperialist powers to absurdity in the midst of Israel’s genocide against the Palestinians, it is their partnership with the Butcher of Cairo.

Al-Sisi, who seized power with Western support almost ten years ago, on July 3, 2013, following mass protests against the Islamist President Mohamed Morsi, leads one of the bloodiest terror regimes in the world. His rule began with a bloody massacre.

On August 14, 2013, at al-Sisi’s command, Egyptian army and police forces stormed two protest camps of opponents of the coup in Cairo and murdered over a thousand people, including many women and children. Human Rights Watch called the massacre the “worst incident of unlawful mass killings in Egypt’s modern history.”

Hundreds of other opponents of the regime have been killed in the last decade under al-Sisi’s rule. Tens of thousands of political prisoners languish in the country’s notorious torture dungeons. Independent media is censored and strikes and protests are brutally suppressed. The same applies to parties and organisations critical of the regime.

The death penalty is also used excessively under al-Sisi. In 2017 and 2018 alone, over 1,100 people were sentenced to death. At least 356 were executed in 2021. With the exception of China, this is the highest number of death sentences recorded by Amnesty International worldwide in 2021. Executions are being carried out more and more frequently. In 2020, the number tripled to 107 compared to the previous year.

Immediately before the election, the regime intensified its repression of all opposition. “Al-Sisi has deployed the entire state apparatus and the security authorities to prevent any serious candidate from running at all,”

commented Hossam Bahgatat, head of the non-governmental Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. “Just like last time, he has handpicked his opponents, who are only running against the president for the sake of appearances and do not criticise his disastrous policies, or do so only very cautiously.”

Al-Sisi’s “counter-candidates”—Farid Zahran from the Egyptian Social Democratic Party (4.49 percent), Hazem Omar from the Republican People’s Party (4.01 percent) and Abdel-Sanad Yamama from the New Wafd Party (1.86 percent)—all came from parties that are in fact part of the regime.

The campaign of Ahmed Tantawi, a former leader of the Nasserist Karama Party, was suppressed by the regime. On November 7, the authorities put Tantawi, his campaign manager and 21 previously detained supporters on trial. The next hearing will take place on January 9, 2024.

The regime’s bloodthirsty and dictatorial approach has not diminished al-Sisi’s support from the imperialist powers. On the contrary, immediately after the election results were announced, the US ambassador to Egypt, Herro Kader Mustafa Garg, congratulated the Egyptian tyrant. The Biden administration wanted to continue its “solid partnership with the government of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi,” Mustafa said in a statement.

According to an Egyptian media report, she emphasised “the multifaceted nature of the relationship between the US and Egypt, which encompasses a wide range of shared priorities.” These included “bolstering regional stability and security, deepening economic and trade ties, and enhancing cultural and people-to-people connections between Americans and Egyptians.”

The leading European powers and the European Union had already repeatedly expressed their support for al-Sisi before the elections.

“Germany stands by the side of our Egyptian friends to support them in times of crisis in overcoming existing difficulties,” declared the German ambassador to Egypt, Frank Hartmann, at the beginning of October. Germany

was an important partner in Egypt's "modernisation efforts" and supports the country's "ambitious reforms," he said.

There are two main reasons for the close cooperation between the imperialist powers and al-Sisi. Firstly, like the long-term dictator Hosni Mubarak, who was overthrown in 2011, al-Sisi acts as imperialism's governor in the region—and is handsomely rewarded and armed to the teeth for this. Egypt receives military aid totalling over one billion euros a year from the US alone. Germany exports more weapons to Egypt than to any other country. In 2021, Berlin authorised arms deliveries worth around 4.3 billion euros to Cairo.

In return, the regime does the dirty work of the imperialists. It is currently playing a key role in the genocide of the Palestinians. Al-Sisi's criticism of Israel's actions during the election campaign cannot hide the fact that Egypt is sealing off the Gaza Strip from the south and is closely coordinating its actions with the far-right Netanyahu regime in the blockade of aid deliveries and other measures.

In the Sinai Peninsula, the Egyptian military is waging a brutal war against the population under the guise of fighting "Islamist terror," which is similar in its methods to Israel's actions against the Palestinians. In a two-year investigation published in 2019, Human Rights Watch documented "crimes including mass arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, extrajudicial killings, and possibly unlawful air and ground attacks against civilians."

The second reason why the imperialist powers as well as Israel and the other Arab governments, Russia and China support al-Sisi lies in the class character of the regime. The military coup in 2013 was not simply directed against the Muslim Brotherhood, to which Morsi also belonged. It was aimed at the bloody suppression of the Egyptian revolution.

At the beginning of 2011, millions of workers and young people had overthrown Mubarak with mass strikes and protests, shaking Egyptian capitalism and the dominance of imperialism in the Middle East. With al-Sisi's military dictatorship, the Egyptian bourgeoisie tried to drown the mass movement, which continued while Morsi was in power, in blood.

After ten years of brutal repression, this strategy is coming to an end. In recent weeks, hundreds of thousands have protested in Egypt against the genocide in Gaza. On October 20, as part of worldwide mass protests, tens of thousands stormed the central Tahrir Square in Cairo, the

epicentre of the revolutionary uprising that led to the fall of Mubarak in 2011.

Following the election victory, the bourgeois media warned of a renewed escalation. "Getting re-elected was the easy part for Sisi. But Egypt is on the brink," reads a headline from the *Washington Post*. In addition to the "public anguish over the suffering of Palestinians," the regime is also confronted with massive social discontent that could erupt at any time.

"Basically the entire duration of Sisi's presidency has been an endemic series of economic crises—and it's not just economic hardship, it's humiliation," the *Post* quotes Timothy Kaldas, deputy director of the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, as saying. "While all this is happening, Egyptians are watching the regime enrich itself."

While the global mass protests against Israel's genocide in Gaza continue, explosive new class conflicts are also developing in Egypt. For these struggles to be successful, lessons must be learnt from the Egyptian revolution and counter-revolution. The overthrow of Mubarak in 2011 underlined the enormous power of the working class, while the counter-revolutionary coup by al-Sisi revealed the central problem of the Egyptian revolution: the lack of a revolutionary socialist political perspective and leadership.

In a situation in which there was no revolutionary party to mobilise the working class for an international socialist programme and to seize power for itself, the ruling class, with the active support of pseudo-left forces, succeeded time and again in subordinating the mass movement to one or other wing of the bourgeoisie, ultimately paving the way for al-Sisi's tyranny.

The decisive task facing Egypt and the world is the development of a revolutionary leadership, the building of Socialist Equality Parties as sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Only in this way can the working class establish its political independence and arm itself with a socialist programme and Trotsky's perspective of permanent revolution to overthrow capitalism and put an end to imperialist oppression and violence.



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