

Egypt's Pinochet

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Junta power runs Egypt. It reflects the worst of fascism writ large. General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi rules as strongman. He heads the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF).

He's Washington's man in Cairo. Since August 2012, he's been top military commander.

He's Defense and Military Production Minister. He's a 1977 Egyptian Military Academy graduate. He got US training. He's a US War College graduate.

He maintains close Pentagon ties. Washington manipulated Mubarak's ouster. It was complicit in toppling Mohamed Morsi.

It deplores democracy. It opposes it at home and abroad. It's governed by a homeland police state apparatus.

It backs pro-Western fascist despots globally. Doing so reflects business as usual.

Egyptian civilian officials have no legitimacy. They're appointed. They're figureheads. They're puppets. They're convenient stooges.

Elections when held won't matter. Brute force runs Egypt. Ousting Morsi on July 3 was reminiscent of September 11, 1973. Chileans old enough to remember won't forget.

A reign of terror followed. Pinochet's "Caravan of Death" reflected it. A climate of fear included mass arrests, disappearances, torture and murder.

Opposition government officials, academics, union heads, independent journalists, student leaders, activists, and other suspected regime opponents were targeted.

US citizens Charles Horman, Frank Teruggi, Boris Weisfeiler and Ronni Moffit were killed.

Horman's death was the subject of a 1982 Hollywood film. It was titled "Missing." He and thousands of others were Caravan of Death victims.

Nixon vowed to make Chile's economy scream. Kissinger was his national security advisor. He and CIA operatives orchestrated Salvador Allende's ouster.

After his 1970 election, Kissinger said:

"I don't see why we need to stand idly by and let a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people."

Allende was a progressive democratic leader. He was no communist. Junta head General Augusto Pinochet put General Sergio Arellano in charge of assuring provincial commanders

complied with hard-line policies.

He was told to establish a uniform criteria of justice. He later explained, saying:

“With no concern for the guise of legality, as in the case of some War Councils, prisoners were taken out and shot under the cover of night. Most executions were attributed to attempts to escape.”

Retired Lt. Col. Marcos Herrera Aracena said:

“General Arellano informed me that what Pinochet wanted was to bring an end to the remaining legal processes. In other words, finish with them once and for all.”

Death squad justice was instituted. At issue was terrorizing Chileans. Instilling fear and crushing resistance were prioritized. Military commanders were ordered to go all out to solidify junta power.

Victims were buried in unmarked graves. Some were mutilated before being executed. General Joaquin Lagos explained why he didn't return some bodies to family members, saying:

“I was ashamed to see them. They were torn into pieces. So I wanted to put them together, at least leave them in a human form.”

“Yes, their eyes were gouged out with knives, their jaws broken, their legs broken.”

“At the end, they gave them the coup de grace. They were merciless. The prisoners were killed so that they would die slowly.”

“In other words, sometimes they shot them by parts. First, the legs, then the sexual organs, then the heart. In that order, the machine guns were fired.”

Death squads killed thousands. Chile remains one of Latin America's most unequal societies. Chicago School fundamentalism creates wastelands.

Chile remains a model of economic unfairness. Crony capitalism reflects out-of-control corruption, inequality and injustice.

General el-Sisi is Egypt's Pinochet. Since usurping power, he instituted reign of terror justice. Sweeping crackdowns continue.

Muslim Brotherhood (MB) members are targeted. So are supporters and others challenging junta authority. Thousands were arrested. Others were disappeared, tortured and murdered.

Over 1,000 nonviolent street protesters were killed. Everyone suspected of supporting MB is threatened. So are activists demanding democracy.

President Morsi is charged with murder, treason, espionage, and sponsoring terrorism. He's accused of collaborating with Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, and anti-regime groups. Bogus charges claim he did so to destabilize Egypt.

Kangaroo court justice awaits him. He faces possible capital punishment. Around three

dozen other MB officials face similar charges.

Morsi remains in maximum security prison confinement. He's held incommunicado. Attorneys and family members are denied access. Some MB co-defendants remain at large.

On December 25, Egypt's so-called cabinet declared MB a terrorist organization. It did so unconscionably.

It did it following Dakahlia Governate's Security Directorate headquarters bombing. Sixteen died. MB officials denied involvement.

A group named Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis (Supporters of Jerusalem) claimed responsibility. Crackdowns on MB members continue. According to journalist Shahira Amin:

"This is a new escalation in a long-running feud between the security state and the Muslim Brotherhood."

"What they are trying to achieve is to crush the Islamist group altogether and not to leave any room for that group to enter into political life again."

"Declaring the Muslim Brotherhood a terror group will mean criminalizing their activities, criminalizing their financing, and also criminalizing their membership."

"Their protests are already outlawed. Their leaders are already behind bars and thousands of their supporters languish in prisons."

IKHWAN WEB is MB's official English language web site. On December 27, it [headlined](#) 'Muslim Brotherhood Legal Committee: Classifying Group as Terrorist Legally Null and Void.'

"This classification came without investigation, without evidence."

"No entity should be so classified or disbanded, except through legal procedures."

"Thus naming the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization is completely groundless in the absence of any evidence to prove this description which is vehemently rejected by the group."

"(T)he decision is invalid and illegal, because so far no court made any definitive judgments about the group and its leaders."

"The Brotherhood's Legal Committee is considering an appeal of this decision. It will announce its course of action and legal position later."

Egypt Court of Cassation is its highest judicial authority. Seven appeals courts are next in importance.

Tanta Court of Appeals Judge Walid el Shaf'i called designating MB a terrorist organization illegal. If challenged in court, it'll be declared so, he said.

He cited Article 86 of Egypt's Penal Law. It can only be enforced by court order. Egypt's cabinet acted by executive decision. Doing so is illegal, he added.

On Thursday, dozens more MB members were arrested nationwide. Their land, funds, and other resources were confiscated.

Egypt's Islamic Medical Association hospitals are affected. An MB leader established them in the 1970s. They serve over two million patients annually.

They're mostly in poor neighborhoods. They're highly regarded. They considered preferred alternatives to poorly run government hospitals.

Since Morsi's ouster, government funding was cut. Admissions at Cairo's Nasr City district Central Hospital dropped by half. Many people fear seeking treatment. Doing so might suggest MB support.

Other network hospitals were forced to reduce services to save money. Central Hospital director Medhat Omar expressed concern, saying:

"If it goes on like this, we won't be able to take on any patients." Funds aren't available to pay salaries or other expenses.

Egypt's "war on terrorism" targets its own. It does so ruthlessly. It does it lawlessly. It aims to terrorize Egyptians into submission.

El-Sisi vowed to eradicate everyone challenging his power from "the face of the earth. Don't let these treacherous terrorist incidents affect your spirits," he said.

He referred to several recent bombings. "We're on the side of pronounced righteousness," he claimed.

Many, perhaps most, Egyptians believed it last July. Fewer do today. Police state viciousness makes everyone fearful.

Public demonstrations are banned. Anyone criticizing government policies risks arrest and imprisonment.

Dozens handing out pro-MB leaflets were arrested. One death was reported. During a Thursday army graduation ceremony, el-Sisi said:

"Egypt will stand firm in confronting terrorism and the people will never be afraid as long as the army is present."

Anyone charged with supporting MB "verbally or in writing" faces five years imprisonment. US expressed concern is too muted to matter.

Washington endorses coup d'etat harshness. A previous article asked when is a coup not one? It's when US officials suggest otherwise.

Reign of terror ruthlessness is official Egyptian policy. Rule of law principles don't matter. Government by diktat rules. No one is safe from rampaging government forces.

MB officials risk being disappeared, tortured and murdered. Others face potential life in prison. So does anyone providing funding. Supporting MB publicly is considered terrorism.

Regular protests continue. People involved do so at great risk. One MB supporter perhaps

spoke for others, saying: "People don't have anything to lose."

Rights can't be gotten without sustained struggle. Conditions today are far worse than under Mubarak.

State terror more than ever is official policy. Anyone challenging regime authority is vulnerable. Pinochet's ghost resides in Egypt. Same old, same old repeats.

London Guardian editors [headlined](#) "Egypt: back with a vengeance," saying:

"The skies are darkening over Egypt...How miserably different this is from" what most Egyptians hoped for.

Revolutionary change "is now being torn up by its roots...Mubarak regime (opponents) are now being victimized by its successor."

Egypt's rulers "are determined" to stamp out all opposition. "It is now evident that the Egyptian military, behind its unconvincing civilian facade, is ready to be as hard on its secular as on its religious opponents."

Mubarak's removal changed nothing. Junta power bided its time. It "gr(ew) a new head," said Guardian editors. "(N)ow (it's) back, quite literally, with a vengeance."

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

His new book is titled "Banker Occupation: Waging Financial War on Humanity."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanII.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com.

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Articles by: **Stephen Lendman**

About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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