

Kerry in Cairo

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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On July 3, Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) ousted President Mohamed Morsi.

Doing so was an old-fashioned coup. It has no legitimacy. It doesn't matter. Junta power replaced an elected government. Interim officials were appointed.

A previous article asked when is a coup not one? When John Kerry says so. When he claims lawlessness restores democracy. Junta rule is polar opposite.

It maintains hardline control. It tolerates no opposition. It killed hundreds since July. It did so in cold blood. It arrested thousands. It warns others not to resist. It reflects the worst of despotic rule.

Not according to Kerry. He continues touring Middle East capitals. He included a Tuesday Poland stop.

On Monday, he reassured Saudi King Abdullah and other Kingdom officials. Washington and Riyadh share common objectives. They do so on Syria, Iran and Egypt, he said.

Both sides downplayed reports of a major rift. Kerry's need to offer reassurance shows it's real.

On Sunday, he showed up in Cairo. On November 3, The [New York Times](#) headlined "Egyptians Following the Right Path, Kerry Says."

His visit shows Washington supports despotism. It's no surprise. America backs some of the world's worst regimes. Saudi monarchical rule is brutal.

Human rights abuses persist. Arbitrary arrests are commonplace. Civil liberties don't exist. Thousands of political prisoners languish in Saudi's gulag. Corruption is deep-seated.

The Kingdom is a poster child for ruthlessness. State terror is official policy. Ordinary citizens have no rights. Democracy is verboten.

Political parties and national elections are prohibited. State power rests solely with King Abdullah and Al Saud family members.

Junta power runs Egypt. It's firmly entrenched. It tolerates no opposition. Kerry claimed coup leaders act responsibly.

He won't admit a coup occurred. "(T)here are indications" the regime intends to restore democracy, he claimed.

He arrived a day before Morsi's trial. Egyptian scholar Michael Wahid Hanna called his visit "unbelievable timing." He ignored Morsi's detention. His presence showed support for junta power.

Morsi's charged with inciting murder. Kerry said nothing about his kangaroo court trial. It began Monday. It was chaotic.

Judge Ahmed Sabry Youssef banned cameras, recording equipment and telephones from the courtroom.

Egyptian state media alone was allowed to control carefully selected audio and video clips.

Morsi justifiably denies judicial legitimacy. He refused to wear prison white garments. He came dressed in a suit with no tie. He was placed in a cage-like dock.

He's representing himself. He addressed judges saying:

"I am Dr. Mohamed Morsi. I am the president of the republic according to the Constitution of the state, and I am forcibly detained. You have no right to conduct a trial into presidential matters." He warned them adding:

"This trial is illegitimate." It's being used as cover "for a standing military coup." He called the coup ousting him criminal. He said "I am here involuntarily and through force."

Co-defendants came dressed in white. They stood with backs to the bench. They gave a four-finger salute. It symbolizes anti-coup solidarity.

Proceeding were initially scheduled for Tora prison. Interim officials ordered them moved to Cairo's police academy. It's a compound ringed with high walls and concertina wire.

It's distant from neighborhoods expressing pro-Morsi sentiment. It's harder for them protest in force.

Security forces kept them and journalists about a mile away from the police academy. Riot gear clad police stood ready to challenge anyone daring to come too close.

Dozens of lawyers applied for permits to attend Morsi's trial. They demanded access to him and his co-defendants.

They want alleged evidence revealed so they can review it. Most were denied entry to the proceedings. One lawyer yelled:

"There is not a single attorney for Mohamed Morsi. Go check with your commanders. We are the defense committee." An officer responded saying "(t)hat's not my problem. I need written authorization."

Disruptions inside and outside court forced Judge Ahmed Sabry Youssef to postpone proceedings. They'll resume on January 8. Morsi supporters shouted "Down with the military rule."

He's been held incommunicado in secret detention for four months. Monday was his first public appearance since July 3. He's on trial with 14 other senior Muslim Brotherhood

members.

They're charged with inciting murder. They face possible capital punishment if convicted. For the first time in Egypt's history, two former presidents are on trial at the same time.

Mubarak is widely detested. His 30 year rule was despotic. It was brutal. He's responsible for hundreds of deaths. Thousands were wrongfully imprisoned and tortured on his watch.

He allied with Washington's rendition program. His most serious crimes were whitewashed. He's on trial for failing to protect victims. His August conviction was overturned. He's being retried.

He was found not guilty of involvement in killing 2011 protesters. Charges of profiteering and corruption were dropped.

His sons and six senior police officials were acquitted on charges of killing demonstrators. Lack of evidence was cited.

In August, an Egyptian court ordered Mubarak released from detention. It ruled he could no longer be legally held. He was transferred to house arrest at a military hospital.

Compared to Morsi, he's treated with kid gloves. He's ill and aging. He may never serve more prison time.

Egyptians are split on Morsi. He was taken to Borj al Arab prison near Alexandria without explanation. Co-defendants are held in Cairo's Tora prison.

Muslim Brotherhood supporters and others elected him. They want him freed. They want him reinstated in office.

IkhwanWeb is the official Muslim Brotherhood web site. It rejects Morsi's ouster, detention and trial.

On November 4, it [published](#) the Itehadia Martyrs Families Association (IMFA) first public statement. In part, it said:

"We reject the false trial of the legitimate President Mohamed Morsi on charges related to Itehadia Presidential Palace clashes (of December 5 and 6, 2012), especially as the legal complaints we made formally were clearly against the National Salvation Front leaders and thugs."

"These are the real murderers. They were never referred for trial or criminal prosecution. They include Hamdan Sabbahi, Amr Moussa and Wael Ibrashi."

"We demand an end to the trial, a new independent investigation judge known for his integrity and non-involvement in the current conflict between coup authorities and supporters of the of constitutional legitimacy, and a fresh investigation of the case as a whole."

"IMFA will begin a legal and peaceful popular struggle for retribution for the blood of the martyrs, reaffirming that the martyrs who died in Itehadia Palace events were Egyptian supporters of legitimacy who belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood, in addition to one

journalist who was killed as he stood among them.”

“IMFA will further start a mass media campaign to restore the rights of the oppressed victims of the coup.”

During four months of detention, Morsi was denied legal representation. He refused to cooperate with interrogators. His trial is a political sham. It has no legitimacy.

Egyptians want real change. They hoped for the best when Mubarak was ousted. They elected Morsi to replace him.

They're stuck with junta power rule. Coups don't create democracy. Nor do politicized trials.

Thousands of military and police were deployed to suppress protesters challenging it. Roadblocks and other barriers cordoned off Tahrir Square.

In late September, pro-junta court Judge Mohamed al-Sayed ruled the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and its NGO illegal. He banned them from “all activities (they) participate in and any organization derived from it.”

Interim government officials appointed a committee to manage MB assets. It's charged with doing so until a final decree is issued.

Following the court ruling, police shut down MB's Freedom and Justice party's newspaper. Many of its members were arrested. Others remain in hiding.

Since Morsi's ouster, mass killings and arrests followed. Unelected SCAF General Abdul Fatah al-Sisi is commander-in-chief, defense minister and deputy prime minister.

He heads SCAF. He's a US War College graduate. He maintains close Pentagon ties. He and other generals have final say.

They propose and veto legislation. They convene and adjourn parliament. They appointed interim officials.

They serve at SCAF's pleasure. It maintains full political, economic and military control.

It decides when or if to suspend constitutional rights, institute martial law, enforce censorship, curtail anti-regime protests, marginalize opposition, as well as restrict assemblies and free movement.

It controls arrests and indefinite detentions. They persist with or without charges. Military tribunals replace civil ones. Extrajudicial police state harshness persists.

Pro-Morsi supporters called for mass protests. On Monday, clashes broke out in Cairo and Alexandria. Security forces responded harshly. Eight deaths were reported. No charges were filed.

An intimidation campaign followed Morsi's ouster. Thousands were arrested. One Morsi supporter spoke for others saying:

“It has gotten much more difficult (to protest) because anyone who wants to oppose the current regime gets (arrested) immediately.”

Brute force confronts regime opponents. A state of emergency continues. It's hated. It's unlikely to be lifted on expiration later this month.

Despotism substitutes for democracy. Rogue states operate this way. Kerry reassured SCAF. Washington offers full support.

Obama's in lockstep with despotism. He's heading America down the same slippery slope.

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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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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