Forum: Special Political and Decolonization Committee

Issue: The issue of political stability in Egypt

Student Officer: Orsalia Toutouza

Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Orsalia Toutouza and it is my honor and pleasure to serve as Co-Chair in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in the 8th session of the Platon School Model United Nations. Having participated twice as a delegate in the PSMUN, this will be my third time serving as a Student Officer and my 13th conference in total. Despite planning to study medicine, participating in MUN conferences for the past 3 years is an experience that I truly adore and it is unquestionable that for me MUN is an extremely rewarding and invaluable activity.

The issue of political stability in Egypt is of paramount interest and this study guide aims at familiarizing you with some key events and providing you with the historic information deemed necessary for a better understanding of the topic and for more effective and implementable solutions to be produced. Considering that the starting point of your preparation, it is highly advisable that you extend your research to various sources and that you are fully informed regarding your delegation's policy.

Should you come up with any question concerning the issue or the procedures, feel free to contact me via my email address (toutouza.orsalia@hotmail.com). Wishing you good luck and hoping for fruitful and challenging debate to take place during our session, I am looking forward to meeting you all.

Sincerely,

Orsalia Toutouza

INTRODUCING TOPIC

Being the largest Arab state, Egypt is a key-player in the Middle East region and the de facto leader of the Arab Spring. Long known for its ancient civilization and culture, Egypt has been in an ongoing state of political instability due to numerous conflicts of the past, with the most recent one being the Egyptian Crisis that followed the Egyptian Revolution of 2011.

This popular uprising has only been the beginning of a long period of political instability, with leaders being overthrown and military paralyzing the governing power. Political institutions have been dissolved, former political leaders were subjects to trial and there was constant political instability and uncertainty. The aftermath of this revolution has truly altered the political and the financial background in Egypt and the country was left destabilized and with a number of problems to face. Instability was not only present in politics, but expanded to economy and society, as well.

Currently, political unrest is still present and is paralyzing all efforts made by the government to address the issues that arose after the revolution of 2011. The current Egyptian government has been keen to foster investments and economic development, through major fiscal reforms, with progress being made. Nonetheless, economy is still far from the goals set and uncertainty is still present. As Egypt is a decisive factor in the Arab region, political turmoil is of great and global concern and it is imperative that Egypt deals with political instability immediately, in order for Egypt and thus, for the region in general to develop and prosper once more.

KEY TERMS

Arab League

The Arab League or formally, the League of Arab States, is a local organization of 22 Arab States, including Egypt as a fundamental member of the organization, which was established on March 1945, in Cairo. Through its subsidiary organs, the League of Arab states aims at promoting the interests of the Arab community and the political, economic and social development of its member-states.

Egyptian Crisis

The period starting from the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 until 2014 is described to be the Egyptian Crisis. During this period, Egypt has faced political instability and uncertainty, along with major economic and social problems, due to a number of mass protests taking place and overthrowing two presidents of the country. While the crisis is believed to be over, political figures argue that since political unrest is still present in the country, the crisis is still in progress.

Supreme Council of Armed Forces

The SCAF is an Egyptian statutory organ which includes approximately 25 military officers. Its main goal is to intervene in cases of internal emergencies, such as military coups and conflicts, in order to restore peace and security.

Hacktivism

''Hacktivism is the act of hacking, or breaking into a computer system, for a politically or socially motivated purpose. The individual who performs an act of hacktivism is said to be a hacktivist.''[1]

Coup d'état

Based on the Macmillan Dictionary, a coup d'état or military coup can be described as "an occasion when a group of people takes control of a country, usually by means of military force."[2]

GDP

GDP stands for Gross Domestic Product and describes all goods and services produced over a specific time period, usually being a trimester or a year. As a monetary measure, it is divided to sub-indicators with the most used being the per capita GDP, a monetary measure describing how the GDP of a country is distributed to its population. Overall, GDP is regarded as the most important statistical indicator of fiscal development of a state and thus, in cases such as the one of Egypt, where economic development is essential, GDP greatly depicts the progress made.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Egyptian Revolution

The Egyptian Crisis began in February 2011, with the Egyptian Revolution, when numerous Egyptians participated in an ideological mass demonstration against the former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The people formed a political movement against the President, asking him to step down. Finally, after 18 days of mass protesting President Mubarak was ousted by military forces and handed the power over SCAF, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. He was later convicted of

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[1] "What is hacktivism? - Definition from WhatIs.Com." SearchSecurity, searchsecurity.techtarget.com/definition/hacktivism.

[2] "Coup - Definition and Synonyms." *Coup (Noun) Definition and Synonyms | Macmillan Dictionary*, www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/coup.

complicity in the deaths of approximately 900 people, who have lost their lives during the protests.

SCAF remained in power until Mohammed Morsi was elected President, after a series of electoral procedures. During his rule, he dissolved the SCAF, as it limited his power, as well as the House of Representatives. In the army, he set Abdul Fattah al-Sisi to be the chief of staff and the Egyptian defence minister. In 2012, he was accused of abuse of power and he was overthrown in 2013, after a series of anti-government demonstrations in June of the same year. After he was deposed, an interim government was placed by the protesters and his overthrown was considered to be a military coup, as the involvement of the army was great. In January 2014, a referendum took place which finally approved a new constitution.

Figure 1: Mass protest against the government in Tahrir Square, one of the numerous protests that took place since 2011

A few months later, when the presidential elections took place, the chief of the Egyptian army, Abdul Fattah al-Sisi become the leader of Egypt, winning the elections with a clear majority. During his service, the political situation is Egypt was relatively stable, with only few protests and terrorist attacks taking place. There was economic growth and significant progress in investments, as tourism revived. Agriculture also revived, in spite of the relatively small amount of arable land.

Egypt after the Revolution

In the aftermath of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, Egypt has faced major socio-economic issues in addition to numerous changes in the political system. With approximately 5.540 people having lost their lives during the revolutions after 2011, the country was left destabilized and unprotected. The Egyptian people have witnessed the violent overthrow of two leaders and thus, the sense of political instability has been present and has caused uncertainty. Even with Abdul Fattah al-

Sisi, being the leader up until now, demonstrations continued and a new wave of terrorism was created, especially after 2013.

Figure 2: Egypt's key digital statistical indicators for January 2016

The political system has undergone fundamental reforms. There has been a new constitution setting new principles, after the referendum of 2014. The country's institutions have also been reformed and had their responsibilities changed by the different leaders, causing great confusion as to their role and scope. Political instability was solely coped with by frequent presidential and parliamentary elections, which finally led to even more instability.

At the same time, economy met little development during this crisis and the government had little time to spend on potential investors and agriculture, reflecting the political turmoil settled in Egypt since 2011. Sporadic unrest has had a negative effect on the Egyptian people who felt lost in this ongoing crisis and poverty has been a vital issue, as well. Following the revolution of 2011, when the participants gained global publicity because of the use of social media, the Egyptian government moved on with limiting public access to social platforms and as a result, there was public dissatisfaction and cases of hacktivism against the government. All cases of hacktivism at that time were a form of civil disobedience and pointed towards democracy and freedom. However, hacktivism was disruptive for the government, who had a lot of issues to combat after the major revolution of 2011 and a number of the attacks came in violent forms, which have been referred to as cyberterrorism or have been named to be attempts to fulfill political motives. Be that as it may, the Egyptian people have not been alone after the revolution. Neighboring countries have had solidarity protests in favor of them and some UN member-states have offered considerable financial aid to the Egyptian government.

Egyptian Crisis and Political Instability

Since the revolution 2011, there has been a period of instability in Egypt, with various problems arising in economy and society. This period has been called Egyptian Crisis and most argue that the crisis is still existing today. The fundamental characteristic of this crisis is the political instability, which has been the cause for more issues to arise.
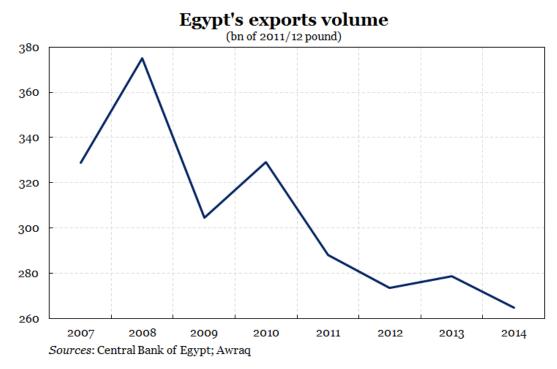
Egypt's exports volume
(bn of 2011/12 pound)

Sources: Central Bank of Egypt; Awraq

Figure 3: Diagram depicting Egypt's declining number of exports from 2010

Nevertheless, Egypt's issue of political instability dates back to the previous centuries, when a number of revolutions destabilized the political system. In fact, the average value of political stability for Egypt, as provided by World Bank's data, is -0.84 points. The lowest value was -1.65 points in 2013, while the highest one was -0.01 points in 2000. Hence, political instability is not a new issue that Egypt is now called to face. A decisive factor that party justifies this situation is the country's autocratic history. Nowadays, Egypt is making great steps towards democracy, but the establishment of democratic institutions and the democratic organization of the police forces and the judiciary systems are key improvements that are to be made by the Egyptian government.

That being said, the last years of political reform and instability have taken a toll on the economy, with chronic financial issues having been left unaddressed and the market having been left unattended. Economic growth was very little during the period of the crisis and the situation has not significantly changed until today. Rapid

population growth and small amount of arable land strain Egyptian resources and trading is very limited, as figure 3 depicts.

GDP's decline since 2011 has contributed to a rise in unemployment, with an estimated 3.5 million people being unemployed. Women and youth labor have significantly declined and job insecurity rates are higher than ever before. All social indicators are high because of the limited economic growth, while over 20 millions of Egyptians are estimated to live close to the poverty line and poverty being 26.3% in 2015.

With this being the current situation in Egypt, the government has major and immediate reforms as its targets, and wishes to invest in restoring the Egyptian economy and market, hoping that in that way political instability will be reduced, as well. The government is aiming at a 5% GDP growth and at achieving lower budget deficits and inflation within the next years. However, this policy is conflicting with the great social needs of the population, which seeks for better living standards, better healthcare and educational systems and more job opportunities.

COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE

Egypt

Being the most populated and economically developed Arab state, Egypt's stability is crucial for the whole Middle East region. Its diversified economy, ranging from agricultural production to fuels' trading, is of major importance for the global economy. During the Arab Spring, Egypt has faced a major popular uprising which resulted in the depose of its long-time dictator and for more political reforms to come. Economic growth was little and the political system was left destabilized and disorganized. Currently, there are numerous programs being run in the country with the view of restoring stability and economic development.

United States of America

The former US President, Barack Obama, condemned the military crackdown and asked for the Egyptian army to respect the Egyptian people and their right of demonstration. They have expressed their full support for the Egyptian government, but named the downfall of Mohamed Morsi a result of a military coup and not of a popular uprising. However, during the crisis, USA's aid has been limited to the ethical support of the people and the government. Currently, the USA support all actions of the government to restore stability within the state and have stated that they are more than willing to offer any kind of help to Egypt, in order to implement all approved programs targeting at economic growth.

Figure 4: Demonstrations against former Egyptian President Mubarak and former US President Barack Obama, in Cairo's Tahrir square on February 7, 2011

Turkey

Turkey's Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has been standing with the Egyptian government and has asked for the United Nations Security Council to have a conversation on the Egyptian political crisis. The Security Council has finally recommended and supported national reconciliation, after Turkey's request.

Libya

Libya has been a fundamental supporter of the former President Mubarak, while the Libyan government has named the revolution of 2011 meaningless and the overthrow of Mubarak unfair and destructive for Egypt's stability. Hence, Libya supports the autocratic regime of Egypt and considers the current political crisis a result of freedom being given to the people to rise against power.

Iraq

During the Egyptian Crisis, Iraq has stressed the importance of democracy for political stability and has underlined that the Egyptian political crisis is a clear result of the Egypt's autocratic character, where the ones who exercise the right to express their political aspirations are being prosecuted and where there is lack of democratic principles, as a leader might remain in power for decades. Iraq does not tolerate these situations and has supported that the transition of Egypt to democracy is the only way for stability to be achieved in the long term.

Saudi Arabia

As a fellow member of the Arab League, Saudi Arabia has been a great supporter of Egypt. Its king Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz, supporter of the former president Mubarak, has stated that Saudi Arabia stands with the Egyptian people and government will all its resources and does not tolerate any action that interferes with the stability and the security of the Egyptian nation.

European Union

In a statement made by Catherine Ashton, the foreign policy chief of the European Union, the Union urged the Egyptian police and military authorities to respect the right of the Egyptian people to demonstrate and manifest for their rights, while suggested that the Egyptian government acted based on the public benefit and will. With regards to the current situation of Egypt, the EU has been involved by recommending vital fiscal reforms, which will hopefully lead to economic growth and political stability.

World Bank

The World Bank has been providing significant data for Egypt's political stability and public satisfaction since 1996. These data are of paramount importance for the Egyptian government and give a strong message for the progress being made on restoring political stability in the region.

International Monetary Fund

As an international economic institution aiming at offering financial guidance aid to more economically developed countries (MEDCs), the IMF remains committed to offering Egypt financial aid, in order to achieve better living standards for its citizens, by implementing programs designed by the institution.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT
January, 2011	Hacktivist group under the name "Anonymous" attacks and shuts down the websites of the Egyptian Ministry of Information and of the National Democratic Party
February, 2011	The former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak steps down after 30 years of rule following public protests. The power is handed over to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces

	(SCAF)
October, 2011	Police forces attack peaceful Coptic demonstrators and the death toll rises to 25 people
January, 2012	The Islamists' parties are given a majority within the People's Assembly, as the results of the legislative elections of 2011 are publicly announced
April, 2012	The Constituent Assembly is dissolved by Egypt's Administrative Court
June, 2012	Mohamed Morsi becomes the first civilian President of Egypt
June, 2013	Mohammed Morsi narrowly wins the presidential elections of 2013
July, 2013	President Morsi is overthrown by the Egyptian army amid mass demonstrations calling him to step down
August, 2013	An Anonymous hacktivist group conducts massive cyber-attack on Egyptian governmental websites, with some of them being the ones of the Center for Information and Decision Support, the National Planning Institute, the Ministry of Planning and the Egyptian Government
January, 2014	A referendum is taking place and a new constitution is being approved by the Egyptian people
May, 2014	Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, former chief of the Egyptian army, wins the presidential elections

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

As political instability is directly linked to economic growth and social stability, it is crucial that measures on all the aforementioned ones are taken, in order to combat the political unrest that has settled in Egypt. In this section, there is a number of possible measures that could be taken with the view of restoring stability in Egypt, in both the economic sector and the political one. You are highly advised to take these ideas into consideration, while you should not be limited to them and extend beyond them, by carrying further research and seeking for recommendations which are in accordance with your delegation's policy.

1. Fundamental reforms in economy

In order for the economy to be boosted, the Egyptian government could work on ensuring three basic pillars within its market: equality, exports and production. Fair access to the job market and other economic opportunities could be fostered by the government. At the same time, the government, alongside the UN, could collaborate on promoting economy within the state by supporting the fuel industry and increasing the fuel prices and by promoting the agricultural production via educational programs and workshops for the unemployed who could potentially engage in the agricultural sector.

2. Social Infrastructure

Funds provided by the World Bank and the IMF could be used for building schools, hospitals, clinics and shelters for the homeless and the unemployed population.

3. Rate flexibility

In consultation with the IMF, the Egyptian government could work on a flexible exchange rate that will fuel investments in tourism, which will help competitiveness and establish new workplaces.

4. Structural reforms

Overall, Egypt could start making efforts towards establishing more democratic institutions. At the first, the Egyptian police forces could be organized and trained. The juridical system could be monitored by a non-governmental organ, with the view of ensuring that the system is independent and fair and has no link to the governing power.

5. Businesses and Investments

Fostering the business life in Egypt could be achieved by battling bureaucracy in both public and private institutions by radical structural reforms and by establishing effective regulations that will attract foreign investment in the country.

6. Transparency

A healthy and stable political system might only come if people are actively engaged in it and for that reason, being informed is crucial for every citizen. Granting full media-coverage of all political events and meetings and using social media for informing the population concerning the government's activities and policy are two actions that could possibly achieve transparency.

7. Educational system

As a long-term solution, the future Egyptian citizens should be properly educated in order to address the issue within the following years. Vocational guidance could be offered to all students, while the free provision of school books and textbooks is crucial. At last, the government could ensure that all children enjoy the right of attending school via establishing fines and penalties for families which purposefully do not send their children to school.

8. Social Media

Free access of all in social media and Internet should be immediately granted by the Egyptian government, as it is a fundamental human right of all citizens to be in the position to access global informative platforms and to connect and communicate with people in other countries.

9. Financial and humanitarian aid and assistance

As the Egyptian economy is destabilized and a number of initiatives must be implemented for stability to be achieved, the Egyptian government could seek for funds from major non-governmental organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and through voluntary assets by UN member-states.

10. Anti-corruption programs

Working on both a preventive and a monitoring basis, the UN could co-operate with Transparency International to detect any corrupted official in the Egyptian government, while supporting the implementation of measures suggested in the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

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MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

- **World Report 2017: Egypt**

https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/egypt

- **Political Instability in Egypt - Council on Foreign Relations**

https://www.cfr.org/.../CPA_contingencymemo_4.pdf

- **Special Series - Egypt: The unfolding crisis**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKdFMowc9jQ

- **What direction is Egypt headed, almost four years after the Revolution?**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOByvu0exiA