



The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC
The United States of America

Mr President,

I am writing on behalf of the Egyptian Revolutionary Council on the occasion of the Countering Violent Extremism summit in the White House. Our contention is a simple one. The reason terrorism finds appeal among a minority in the Middle East is in no small part due to the region's autocratic regimes that themselves in oppressing their citizens effectively employ terrorist tactics. The aborted Arab Spring was the first real blow against terrorism in the region, and which regrettably has been reversed.

We represent a coalition of pro democracy groups and individuals from Egypt who like your founding fathers believe that all of us are endowed with certain unalienable rights among which are the rights to life and liberty.

The election of President Morsi in the first free and fair elections in the region was an attempt by Egyptians to enact the dictum that “to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed”.

In considering extremism, we therefore urge you to consider the extremism of a despotic state such as that of General Sisi and the disastrous effect it has, and will have on the region for decades to come. Both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International report that the regime has murdered thousands of innocent unarmed protestors. Both accept that the regime has imprisoned thousands of dissidents. There are well documented cases of torture and more horrifyingly of rape of dissidents, including children. The freedom of the press and of association has been abolished while the State controlled Media is openly inciting towards sectarian and civil violence.

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What is more worrying, the utter failure of the regime to provide any semblance of stability or development has pushed the general towards dangerous military adventures in Libya.

Unless democracy is restored and quickly, the legacy of General Sisi will be a deeply divided society, governed by a corrupt elite and which rules its citizens with an oppression that has more to do with totalitarian states than a 21st century one. That on its own is a recipe for fostering extremism. However, General Sisi's adventurism in Libya is an additional danger.

We therefore ask you to consider the following: General Sisi's government is purposely using terror as a method of government, and their actions which include murder, imprisonment, torture and rape mark them as terrorists. Moreover, in his attempt to hold on to power against popular will, he is sowing seeds that might develop into extremism that may come to haunt us for years to come, within Egypt and along its borders. As such the Sisi government is dangerous, destabilising and is quickly becoming itself a core source of extremism in the region and by its actions an instigator of terrorism.

Yours Sincerely,

Maha Azzam
Head, The Egyptian Revolutionary Council