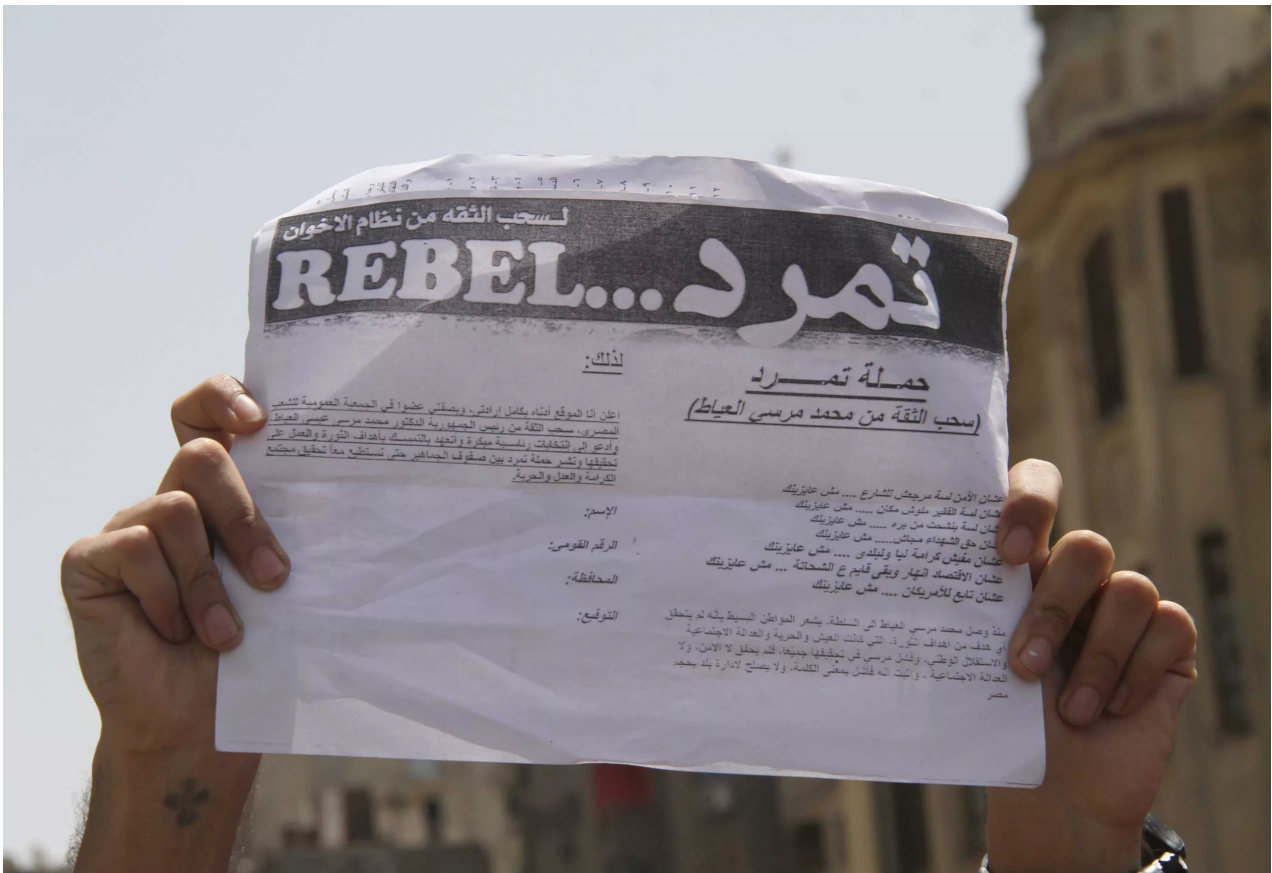


Sisi's Waning Narrative on June 30 Anniversary



Every year since 2014, on this very date, pro-regime Egyptian media have erected grand stages and festive fairs to commemorate the June 30, 2013 demonstrations. Those protests paved the way for the elimination of Egypt's first civilian-led government when it toppled President Mohamed Morsi and reinstated the generals at the helm of power.

In the days—or sometimes weeks—preceding the anniversary, the United Media Services Company (owned by the state's security apparatus), mobilizes its forces across dozens of TV channels, websites, and platforms to roll out pre-written, officially approved narratives lauding the achievements of the nation since July 3—the date often credited with launching the “modern republic.”

But the winds turned against the regime's script. What should have been a celebratory atmosphere fell flat in the wake of the Monufia tragedy: 18 young women died struggling for basic sustenance. The incident exposed rampant corruption, a lack of oversight, egregious wasting of public funds, and an institutional disregard for responsibility. Grief enveloped the streets of Egypt.

This calamity was not the only factor undermining this year's commemorative spectacle. The usual pomp was replaced by a somber backdrop, shaped by the

unrelenting suffering of Egyptians facing soaring living costs well beyond their capacity. The regime scrambled to find a new narrative that aligned with this grim reality, desperately trying to keep the anniversary alive on life support, fearing the political death of its foundational myth.

From Incentives to Intimidation: Shifting Narratives

In the early years following the protests, the regime relied on a strategy of intimidation. It demonized the ousted government, caricatured the Muslim Brotherhood, and framed them as conspirators intent on destabilizing the nation. This narrative tapped into patriotic zeal and successfully mobilized public support for a time.

President Sisi was cast as “the man of the moment,” willing to defend the homeland, even at the cost of his life, from a faction threatening national progress. The June 30 anniversary thus became synonymous with Sisi himself: mention one, and the other naturally followed.

However, over time, the regime shifted away from this personal branding toward a focus on “systemic success.” It emphasized macro-projects—such as the New Suez Canal and the New Administrative Capital—promoted more for their symbolic effect than their substantive impact.

But this narrative faltered as economic hardship worsened. Egyptians endured austerity levels unprecedented in modern times, revealing that the regime’s “story of progress” was little more than an alluring facade, a drug of distraction to placate citizens.

Recognizing the futility of flaunting grand achievements when living standards were collapsing, the regime pivoted again. Faced with political isolation and regional turbulence, it revived its earlier scare tactics—launching a coordinated campaign across television, press, and social media to depict life under current hardship as better than the alternative: return to Brotherhood rule.

A Twelve-Year Record of Mismanagement

Sisi began his tenure with an emotional appeal, promising immediate improvements. During a televised campaign interview on May 6, 2014—just two months before taking power—he told media figures:

“Citizens will feel relief within two years. They will see improvement in the economy, education, health—for life overall.”

Once in office, he declared 2015 a “Year of Prosperity,” pledging visible change. On inaugurating the Hurghada International Airport and seaport, he urged Egyptians to wait another two years:

“Simple Egyptians, rest assured—you’ll see the results in two years.”

By December 28, 2016—the target date for delivering on his promises—he requested a further six-month extension. Then, on July 24, 2018, he reiterated, “Be patient, and you’ll witness wonders in Egypt,” without setting a fixed deadline. Still, by the end of that year, he vowed Egypt would become “a different country” by June 30, 2020.

Yet, 2015’s “prosperity,” 2016–17’s “marvels,” 2018’s “wonders,” and the promised “different country” in 2020 never materialized. Instead, Egyptians were left with a harsh reality far removed from their hopes.

The Stark Reality in Numbers

Earnings Loss: Despite raising the minimum wage sixfold—from 1,200 to 7,000 EGP—the real value fell from approximately \$170 in 2014 to \$140 by mid-2025.

Currency Collapse & Debt: The Egyptian pound lost 85.7% of its value, plummeting from 7.15 EGP/USD in 2014 to 50.12 EGP/USD by mid-2025.

External debt quadrupled—from \$43.2 billion in 2013 to \$155.2 billion in 2025.

Fuel Prices: Since June 30, 2013, fuel prices surged over 1,000%—gasoline 80 went from 0.90 EGP/L to 15.75 EGP, 92 rose from 1.30 EGP to 17.25 EGP, and 95 shifted from 2.75 EGP to 19 EGP.

Medicine Costs: Increases unfolded in 2015 (affecting 800 drugs), early 2017 (15% on local, 20% on imports), again in May 2017 (50%), and mid-2024 (20–25% on 200 drugs), leaving over 10 million chronic patients facing shortages.

Corruption: Egypt fell on Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index, from 114th in 2013 to 130th in 2024—placing it among nations with high levels of perceived corruption.

Water Security: Eleven years of negotiations over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam yielded deadlock—and Egypt’s water future remains precarious.

Regional Role: Egypt’s influence across vital regional crises—Palestine, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Iran—has diminished dramatically.

Political Repression: The hope for multi-party democracy collapsed into single-party dominance, with opposition suppressed, independent media muzzled, and the judiciary stripped of real autonomy.

Faced with this dramatic divergence between expectations and lived reality, the regime’s narratives of triumph and glory have lost their resonance. Instead, it has reverted to fear-mongering. It implores citizens to tolerate wage erosion,

inflation, and corruption—because the only alternative, it warns, is the return of the Brotherhood.

But is this revived deterrent narrative still as compelling? As this year's June 30 marks twelve years since those pivotal protests, the myth seems to be losing its sheen. Egyptians know now that the shining promises of the past were illusions—what remains is a stark choice between current hardships or an uncertain return to the old order.

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