

Fact Sheet: Egypt

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“Egypt’s political and economic success is important, of course, not only for Egyptians, but it’s important for the region, for the United States, and the international community.”

Secretary of State John Kerry

Egypt’s social and political landscape has been at the forefront of several discussions over the past several years. With neighboring countries like Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Israel, it is no wonder that Egypt’s current situation is so precarious. Egypt was not immune to the revolutionary tide that swept North Africa and the Middle East.

Key Statistics

- Egypt is about 1,001,450 sq km, in between the size of Texas and Alaska.
- About 85 million people reside in the country.
- 90 percent of the population is Muslim, 9 percent Coptic, and 1 percent other Christian.¹
- GDP is \$548.8 billion dollars (2012 est.)
- The unemployment rate is 12.5 percent (2012 est.)



Historical Background:

- Egypt was considered one of the greatest civilizations ever, being ruled by various dynasties for thousands of years.
- From 332 BC to the 600s AD, Egypt was ruled by empires such as the Greek, Roman, and Byzantine.
- In the mid 600’s, Islam spread throughout Egypt, converting many of its inhabitants and making Arabic the common language.



Political History from 1869

- The Suez Canal is built in 1869.
- The British government bought Egypt's interest in the Suez Canal in 1875.
- To protect its investment, Great Britain takes over the Egyptian government.
- In 1922, Egypt achieves partial independence from Great Britain and becomes a Constitutional Monarchy.
- Egypt achieves complete independence in 1952.
- In the same year, Gamal Abdel Nasser leads a coup and overthrows the monarchy.²
- He becomes the President of Egypt and is declared the prime minister in 1954.
- Nasser dies in 1970 and is succeeded by Anwar Sadat.
- In 1971, a new constitution is drafted and adopted which makes Egypt a democratic, socialist state and names Islam the state religion.
- The Yom Kippur war begins in 1973.
- In 1977, Sadat makes historic trip to Jerusalem to address the Knesset.³
- In 1979, Egypt and Israel sign a peace treaty.
- In 1981, Sadat is assassinated by Islamic fundamentalists and is succeeded by Hosni Mubarak.
- Mubarak is elected via referendum in 1987 and wins subsequent elections in 1993,1999, and 2005.⁴



Egyptian Military

- Egypt is the largest benefactor of U.S. military aid, receiving \$13 billion over a ten-year period in a 2007 agreement.⁵
- Since 1948, Egypt has received \$70 billion in aid from the United States, a bulk of it from the 1980's in the form of a \$1.3 billion appropriation for military assistance annually.⁶
- Military service is mandatory.
- After Mubarak was ousted, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) ran Egyptian affairs and oversaw new elections.
- The growing unrest over Morsi's rule in the summer of 2013 prompted a new transition of power.⁷

The Egyptian military has always seen itself as a guarantor of national stability⁸, and an arm of the peoples' will, giving it the justification for intervening so heavily in Egyptian politics over the last couple of years.

Recent Political Change

- In January 2011, Egyptian citizens begin protesting corruption and poverty in the country.
- In February, Mubarak steps down and Vice President Omar Suleiman assigned the SCAF to run the country.⁹
- In February 2011, the Supreme Council dissolves Egypt's parliament.
- In March, Essam Sharaf is sworn in as New Prime Minister.
- On November 28th, 2011, the first parliamentary elections are held after Mubarak was removed from office.
- Islamist parties won about 70 percent of seats for the lower house of parliament.¹⁰
- In May 2012, the presidential elections are held and Mohamed Morsi is the winner in a runoff election, winning just 51.7 percent of the vote (while just receiving 24.7% in the first round).¹¹



Broken Promises

- Many in Egypt hoped that the revolution would install a democratic, secular government committed to equal treatment of all groups in the country.¹²
- However, as President, Morsi avoided appointing secularists in his cabinet and opted to install Islamists and technocrats.¹³
- On June 14th 2012, the Egyptian parliament is declared invalid by the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court because all the law regulating the 2011 parliamentary elections was invalid. The parliament is dissolved.¹⁴
- Eroding the prospect of civil advancement, Morsi issues an order preventing judicial review of his decisions plus many other key constitutional changes on November 2012.¹⁵
- Morsi annuls some of his sweeping decree in December 2012, but then he used it to protect an Islamist-dominated panel in charge of writing the new constitution.¹⁶
- On June 30th, 2013, around millions protestors take to the streets on the one year anniversary of Morsi's presidency to demand his removal.¹⁷
- On July 3, 2013, President Morsi is removed and Adly Mansour is sworn in as the interim president.

Despite the numerous setbacks to democracy that the country has faced, there are still prospects of success. Never underestimate Egyptian optimism, the driving force behind recent political changes in the country.

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Endnotes

1. [Egypt.](#)” CIA World Factbook. Last updated: November 2013.
2. [Egypt Fast Facts.](#)” CNN. October 21, 2013.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. “[Egypt’s military: key facts.](#)” CNN. February 11, 2011.
6. “[In US military aid to Egypt, business as usual](#)” Al Jazeera. October 11th, 2013.
7. “[Egypt’s ‘Military Coup:’ 5 fast facts you need to know.](#)” Heavy. July 3rd, 2013.
8. “[Egypt’s military: key facts.](#)” CNN. February 11, 2011.
9. “[Timeline of Egyptian Protests.](#)” CNN. February 3rd. 2011.
10. “[Islamists Win 70% of Seats in the Egyptian Parliament](#)” NY Times. January 21, 2012.
11. “[Profile: Egypt’s Mohammed Morsi.](#)” BBC. November 4, 2013.
12. “[By the Millions, Egyptians Seek Morsi’s Ouster.](#)” NY Times. June 30th, 2013.
13. “[Egypt’s Morsi Brings More Islamists into Cabinet.](#)” Voice Of America. May 7th, 2013.
14. [Egypt Fast Facts.](#)” CNN. October 21, 2013.
15. Ibid.
16. “[Egypt’s Morsi annuls most of contested decree, stays firm on Dec. 15 referendum.](#)” Washington Post. December 8th, 2012.
17. “[By the Millions, Egyptians Seek Morsi’s Ouster.](#)” NY Times. June 30th, 2013.



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