

At least 73 people have been killed in clashes after a football game in the northern Egyptian city of Port Said, medics say.

About 1,000 others were injured in Wednesday's violence, including police. At least two players suffered light injuries.

Fans of the winning al-Masry team flooded the field seconds after the match with al-Ahly, Egypt's top team, was over.

A security official said the fans chased the players and cornered their supporters on the field and around the stadium, throwing stones and bottles at them.

Thousands of supporters covered the field, as seen in a video posted online.

"This is unfortunate and deeply saddening. It is the biggest disaster in Egypt's soccer history," Hesham Sheiha, deputy health minister, said.

He said most of the injuries were caused by concussion and deep cuts.

Al-Ahly football players were trapped in the changing room along with supporters. Riot police were sent in to drive the rival crowds of fans back.

'War, not football'

Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, the head of Egypt's ruling military council, sent army helicopters to transfer al-Ahly football players and injured fans from Port Said.

Private cars helped to shuttle the injured across the city to hospitals.

"This is not football. This is a war and people are dying in front of us. There is no movement and no security and no ambulances," al-Ahly player Abo Treika told the team's television channel.

"This is a horrible situation and today can never be forgotten."

State television announced that parliament will hold an emergency session over the violence. State prosecutors ordered an investigation into the pitch invasion and the violence that ensued.

The Muslim Brotherhood, the country's largest political force, accused supporters of the toppled president, Hosni Mubarak, of instigating the violence.

"The events in Port Said are planned and are a message from the remnants of the former regime," Essam al-Erian, a parliamentarian, said in a statement on the group's Freedom and Justice Party website.

Al-Ahly's supporter club, Ultras, said on their website that they would head to Port Said later in the evening.

History of clashes

FIFA President Sepp Blatter said he was "very shocked and saddened" to learn that a large number of football supporters had died or been injured".

"This is a black day for football," he said in a statement. "Such a catastrophic situation is unimaginable and should not happen."

Al-Masry team won a rare 3-1 victory against Al-Ahly on its home turn in Wednesday's match.

The two teams have a long history of bad blood, and clashes have erupted in recent years between their fans.

Al Jazeera's Rawya Rageh, reporting from Cairo, said al-Ahly fans were said to have been provoking al-Masry fans throughout the game with abusive language.

But our correspondent said the issue goes beyond the pitch, as Egypt is experiencing a "security vacuum" after the revolution which overthrew Mubarak.

"There were clearly riot police on that pitch, but they were seen either not getting involved or running in the other direction," she said.

"Some people say the police force perhaps has not been trained to deal with violence, except in the way they were trained during Mubarak, which was with sheer and brutal force. And now when they can't do that, they're unable to deal with violence."

A match in Cairo on Wednesday evening was interrupted following the news of the deaths in Port Said. Television footage showed a big fire behind the supporter stand at the Cairo stadium.

The Premier League, which the games were part of, was suspended indefinitely.

Source:

Al Jazeera and agencies

http://www.eurosport.fr/football/egypte-73-morts-au-stade_sto3135433/story.shtml

Football

01/02/2012 - 20:18 - Mis à jour le 02/02/2012 - 00:53

Egypte : au moins 77 morts à Port-Saïd

Au moins 77 personnes sont décédées en Egypte suite à un envahissement de terrain à Port-Saïd, après une rencontre entre Al-Masry et Al-Ahly (3-1) en championnat. La thèse de l'action politique planifiée dominait après les premiers éléments recueillis.

Les autorités égyptiennes ont porté le bilan des victimes des émeutes de Port-Saïd à 77 morts et 178 blessés, mercredi en fin de soirée, quelques heures après la fin d'un match de la 17e journée du Championnat marqué par un envahissement de terrain puis un déchaînement de

violences sur la pelouse et dans les tribunes. Ce bilan est confirmé par tous les grands médias ayant des correspondants sur place, même si certains évoquent un nombre de blessés cinq fois supérieur. Le directeur de l'hôpital El-Amiry, Medhat El-Esnawy, a annoncé 11 décès dans son établissement, 50 décès répartis à parts égales dans deux autres hôpitaux de la ville, et trois morts dans l'enceinte du stade, certains par suffocation. Le député de Port-Saïd Al-Badry Farghaly s'est ému : *"C'est un massacre. Je n'ai jamais vu autant de morts et de corps inanimés en un seul endroit que ce soir."*

D'après les premiers éléments recueillis, les violences ont commencé après le coup de sifflet final quand des joueurs d'Al-Ahly ont été poursuivis par des supporters du club local d'Al-Masry, qui venait de l'emporter 3-1. Des témoins ont assisté à de jets de pierres, de bouteilles et de fusées éclairantes. Une polémique a très vite éclaté en Egypte sur la passivité de la police locale face aux règlements de compte qui couvaient sur fond de tension politique. Avant la rencontre, des menaces avaient été proférées par les supporters locaux à leurs rivaux d'Al-Ahly, du Caire, club le plus titré d'Egypte (36 championnats, 6 Ligues des champions), qui a essuyé mercredi la première défaite de sa saison. Le niveau de rivalité et de violence entre groupes ultras égyptiens est connu pour être très élevé. La tension semble s'être accrue après les événements politiques qui ont chassé Hosni Moubarak du pouvoir il y a quasiment un an. Des armes blanches ont été introduites dans le stade et ont été utilisées dans des rixes selon plusieurs témoignages.

"Un de nos supporters est mort juste sous mes yeux "



"Ce n'est pas du football, c'est une guerre, les gens meurent sous nos yeux", a témoigné le joueur Mohamed Abo Treika. Pendu à son téléphone portable pour un direct sur la chaîne de son club, le joueur Mohamed Abou-Treik hurlait : "Les forces de sécurité nous ont abandonnés Elles ne nous ont pas protégés. Un de nos supporters est mort juste sous mes yeux." "J'ai pris des coups de poing et des coups de pied mais je vais bien, a détaillé de son côté l'entraîneur portugais d'Al-Ahly, Manuel José au journal A Bola. (...) Quand la rencontre s'est terminée, il y a eu une grande confusion. Plusieurs spectateurs ont pénétré sur la pelouse. J'ai vu plusieurs spectateurs blessés et beaucoup de personnes sont mortes déjà. Beaucoup sont morts dans notre vestiaire où ils s'étaient réfugiés mais ils ont succombé à leurs blessures. Les supporters étaient déjà très agités et ils avaient déjà envahi la pelouse au début du match et pendant la mi-temps. A la fin du match, c'était la folie totale. Quand ils ont tous envahi la pelouse, il n'était plus possible de contrôler quoi que ce soit. Il y avait des policiers pendant le match mais il ont tous disparu. Ils n'ont rien fait." Aucun joueur d'Al-Ahly n'est blessé selon Manuel José, alors qu'ils étaient visés que l'armée est venu assurer leur départ de l'enceinte.

Dans la foulée, un autre match de Championnat entre Al-Ismaïliya et Zamalek a été annulé au Caire, provoquant des émeutes et des incendies dans la stade. Ces chiffres placent déjà les événements de Port-Saïd parmi les dix événements les plus meurtriers de l'histoire du football. C'est le bilan le plus lourd depuis 1996 et une panique au Guatemala au stade Mateo Flores (84 morts). Le championnat égyptien est suspendu jusqu'à une date inconnue et le parlement

égyptien fraîchement élu suivra jeudi une session extraordinaire. Al Ahly et Al Zamalek, les deux grands clubs du pays, ont annoncé qu'ils gelaient toutes leurs activités sportives pour protester contre le manque de sécurité dans le pays. La dimension politique du drame ne faisait plus de doute pour personne mercredi en fin de soirée. Les partisans du président déchu Hosni Moubarak sont accusés d'être responsables des violences par les Frères musulmans, vainqueurs des dernières élections. *"Les événements de Port-Saïd ont été planifiés et sont un message des partisans de l'ancien régime"*, a affirmé le député Essam al-Erian dans un communiqué. Majoritairement loyales envers l'ancien chef de l'Etat, les forces de police sont soupçonnées de saboter l'émergence d'un nouveau régime qui se dessine au Caire.

Eurosport - C. R. avec M. Sa. (Eurosport Arabia)

<http://www.afriquinfos.com/articles/2012/2/2/afrique-boreale-195918.asp>

Egypte : 74 morts dans des émeutes autour d'un match de football

LE CAIRE (Xinhua) - Au moins 74 personnes ont été tuées et des centaines d'autres blessées dans des émeutes qui ont éclaté après un match de football à Port-Saïd, en Egypte, ont rapporté mercredi soir les médias étatiques.

Jeudi 2 février 2012 | 10:03 UTC

Les supporters se sont précipités sur la pelouse du stade, où El-Masry, une équipe de Port-Saïd, a battu El-Ahly, l'équipe la plus populaire du pays, par trois buts contre un, lors d'un match du championnat d'Egypte.

En raison d'un manque de mesures de sécurité prises, des supporters ont pu entrer dans le stade avec des bâtons et se sont affrontés.

Deux joueurs de l'équipe d'Ahly ont été légèrement blessés au cours des affrontements.

Les émeutes ont été provoquées par plusieurs affiches insultantes fabriquées par les supporters de l'équipe d'Ahly, a rapporté la télévision Nil TV. Sur l'une des affiches on pouvait y lire "Port-Saïd, c'est comme les ordures et c'est une ville où il n'y a aucun homme".

Le chef du Conseil suprême des forces armées de l'Egypte, Hussein Tantawi, a envoyé deux hélicoptères militaires pour transférer les joueurs et les supporters blessés au Caire.

Le Procureur général du pays, Abdel Maguid Mahmoud, a ordonné l'ouverture d'une enquête sur les émeutes. Le Parlement tiendra une session d'urgence jeudi à cet égard.

Un match entre les équipes de Zamalik et d'Ismaïly, organisé au Stade international du Caire, a été annulé lors de la mi-temps mercredi soir.

Lorsque les responsables techniques des deux équipes ont entendu parler de ce qui s'est passé à Port-Saïd, ils ont décidé d'annuler le match. Un grand feu a éclaté dans le stade du Caire où les supporters ont mis le feu à des drapeaux et des affiches en protestation contre l'annulation.

Les émeutes à Port-Saïd se sont répandues dans les rues en dehors du stade, obligeant les boutiques à proximité à fermer.

"Cela est profondément attristant. C'est la plus grande catastrophe dans l'histoire du football égyptien", a déclaré à la télévision d'Etat le vice-ministre de la Santé, Hesham Sheiha.

Moemn Zakaria, un joueur de l'équipe de Masry a exprimé sa tristesse, disant: "ce qui s'est passé a ruiné notre bonheur, nous avons joué un bon match et les supporters apprécient une concurrence loyale".

"Où sont les valeurs et les principes du peuple égyptien?" s'est demandé le joueur. "Si c'est le cas avec les matchs, c'est mieux de rester loin du football."

Le gouverneur de Port Saïd ,Ahmed Abdullah, a déclaré que l'état d'alerte maximum avait été déclaré dans tous les hôpitaux civils et militaires, selon l'agence de presse officielle MENA.

Le président de l'Association égyptienne de football (EFA), Samir Zahar, a annoncé le report de la Premier League égyptienne.

Il a ajouté que l'EFR tiendrait une réunion avec le Conseil national des sports pour former une commission d'enquête sur l'incident.

D'autres équipes, telles que El-Gona et Etihad Saqandary, ont décidé de boycotter le football égyptien dans une protestation contre les affrontements sanglants qui sont survenus.

http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/afrique/egypte-des-emeutes-apres-un-match-de-foot-font-74-morts_1078097.html

Egypte: des émeutes après un match de foot font 74 morts

Par L'EXPRESS.fr, publié le 01/02/2012 à 20:28, mis à jour le 02/02/2012 à 12:07



En Egypte, 74 personnes ont été tuées lors de heurts à la suite d'un match de football, ce mercredi à Port Saïd.

REUTERS

Des affrontements entre supporters ont fait des dizaines de morts et des centaines de blessés mercredi soir à Port-Saïd. Les heurts ont suivi un match opposant deux équipes locales.

Au moins 74 personnes sont mortes mercredi soir et des centaines ont été blessées dans des violences après un match de football entre deux équipes égyptiennes à Port-Saïd (nord),

amenant l'armée à se déployer dans la ville. Le ministre de l'Intérieur Mohammed Ibrahim a assuré dans un communiqué "la majorité des personnes tuées ont été écrasées" dans les mouvements de foule.

Ce bilan, encore provisoire, en fait l'un des matches les plus meurtriers de l'histoire du football. Le président de la Fédération internationale de football (Fifa), Sepp Blatter, s'est déclaré "très choqué" et a parlé d'un "jour sombre". La télévision d'Etat égyptienne a montré des images de chaos dans le stade, des supporters courant dans toutes les directions.

Des photos de joueurs en sang circulaient également sur internet. Les magasins dans Port-Saïd ont baissé leurs rideaux, tandis que des particuliers aidaient à transporter les blessés dans leurs voitures. Des coups de feu ont été entendus sur la route menant de Port-Saïd au Caire.

Des supporters se sont affrontés à coups de poings, et selon des sources médicales, plusieurs sont morts ou ont été blessés à l'arme blanche. Les heurts ont commencé après que l'arbitre eut sifflé la fin du match au cours duquel Al-Masry a fait subir à Al-Ahly, un des meilleurs clubs d'Egypte, sa première défaite (3-1) de la saison, à la 17e journée du championnat national. Des centaines de supporters d'Al-Masry, un club de Port-Saïd, ont envahi le terrain et ont commencé à lancer des pierres et des bouteilles contre ceux d'Al-Ahly, une équipe du Caire, déclenchant les violences, selon des témoins et un photographe de l'AFP.

"Il y a des morts sur le sol! Il y a des morts dans les vestiaires! Je ne jouerai plus au football tant que justice ne sera pas faite", s'est exclamé un joueur de Al-Ahly, Emad Meteab, sur la chaîne de télévision de l'équipe. "Le bilan s'élève à 74 morts, dont un policier", a indiqué le ministère de la Santé dans un communiqué, tandis que la télévision d'Etat annonçait le déploiement de l'armée dans cette ville à l'entrée nord du canal de Suez pour "éviter de nouveaux affrontements" entre supporters.

Les affrontements ont également fait 248 blessés, a indiqué le ministère de l'Intérieur, après que la télévision eut parlé d'un millier de personnes blessées. Des hôpitaux ont fait état de centaines de blessés. La police a aussi indiqué avoir arrêté 47 personnes.

Les services de sécurité ont assuré que les policiers anti-émeutes étaient présents en nombre suffisant, mais qu'ils n'ont pas voulu s'interposer en raison de consignes de modération diffusées après des manifestations meurtrières au Caire en novembre et décembre derniers.

Le maréchal Hussein Tantaoui, le chef du Conseil suprême des forces armées, au pouvoir depuis la chute en février 2011 de Hosni Moubarak sous la pression de la rue, a envoyé deux avions militaires à Port-Saïd pour évacuer les joueurs et les blessés. La sécurité de l'Egypte "est bonne" a-t-il assuré en attendant leur arrivée sur un aéroport du Caire, a rapporté la télévision. Le gouvernement devait quant à lui tenir une réunion de crise jeudi.

Les Frères musulmans, grands vainqueurs des dernières élections législatives, ont accusé les partisans du président déchu Hosni Moubarak d'être responsables des violences. "Les événements de Port-Saïd ont été planifiés et sont un message des partisans de l'ancien régime", a affirmé le député Essam al-Erian, membre du parti politique de la confrérie.

Le député libéral Amr Hamzawi a appelé de son côté au limogeage immédiat du ministre de l'Intérieur, ainsi que du gouverneur et du chef de la sécurité de Port-Saïd. Le président du

Parlement Saad al-Katatni, membre des Frères musulmans, a indiqué que l'Assemblée du peuple tiendrait une session extraordinaire jeudi.

Dans le même temps, un incendie s'est déclaré au stade du Caire lors du match opposant al-Zamalek au club Ismaïly amenant les responsables à annuler la rencontre. L'incendie a été maîtrisé, a indiqué un responsable de la sécurité.

Depuis la chute de Hosni Moubarak il y a bientôt un an, l'Egypte a connu des troubles sporadiques et parfois meurtriers, associés à une hausse de l'insécurité liée notamment à un désengagement de la police, qui a été fortement critiquée pour avoir réprimé les manifestants pendant le soulèvement populaire de janvier-février 2011.

Des heurts s'étaient déjà produits le 6 septembre dans un stade du Caire entre la police et des partisans de Al-Ahly qui lançaient des slogans hostiles à l'ex-président Moubarak. Près de 80 personnes avaient été blessées.

<http://www.thenewstribes.com/2012/02/02/football-violence-leaves-73-dead-in-egypt/#.T0ku2vIZrbg>

Football violence leaves 73 dead in Egypt

By Areeb Hasni - Feb 2nd, 2012 (No Comment)



Cairo: Riots just after a football match on Wednesday in Port Said city of Egypt left 73 people dead and thousand others injured, local media reported.

According to French news wire service “Doctors in four hospitals told that the death toll had reached 73, as ambulances continued to ferry in the injured from the stadium”.

According to Ayesha Taryam, editor of The Gulf Today “68 dead and 200 injured at Port Said stadium”.

A security official said the violence erupted as soon as the referee blew the final whistle in the match between Al-Ahly and Al-Masri clubs.

Fans of Al-Masri, which beat Al-Ahly 3-0, invaded the pitch and began to throw rocks, bottles and fireworks at the Al-Ahly fans.

Eye witnesses in stadium claim that the reason of the tragedy in Port Said was the banner of Ahly fans which insulted Masry team.

“Its not about football. Its a massacre organized and planned” said Sally Zohney in her tweet about the incident.

While Ikhwanweb said SCAF’s inaction in confronting remnants of Mubarak’s regime makes it a co-conspirer in the counter-revolution destabilizing Egypt. “we hold SCAF and Police are fully responsible for Port Said’s massacre & the deteriorating security“ They also added.

Farah Saafan, video journalist of Daily News Egypt reported that “Ahly TV aired footage from locker room where players are aided injured people and team doctor performs some sort of surgery.”

In an official response to the clashes in Egypt’s Port Said the general prosecutor announced the commencing of an investigation into the violence.

Sameer Zaher, the head of the football union decided to halt the Egyptian national football league indefinitely as a response to the violence. Zaher announced the decision on state TV late Wednesday night, adding that the “situation has proven difficult and most probably we will cancel the entire season.”

England’s Liverpool football club has sent a message to Egypt in light of the violence that erupted following a match between Egyptian clubs.

Al-Ahly issued a statement giving their condolences for the 73 people killed and the hundreds who were injured following the club’s match. The club also announced a three-day mourning period starting Thursday and the suspension of all athletic and sport activities at the club.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/02/02/egypt-football-riots-murbarak_n_1248935.html?ref=uk

Egypt Football Riots: Government To Hold Emergency Session As Protest Planned



Posted: 2/02/2012 07:21 Updated: 2/02/2012 07:21

Egypt , Arab Spring , Al Masray , Egypt Football Riots , Football Riots , Murbarak , Protests , Riots , UK News

The Egyptian parliament is to hold an emergency session after 74 people died and around 250 were injured at violence clashes at the end of a football match in Egypt.

The Egyptian government is being blamed for the violence, which saw some stabbed and others suffocated as riots broke out and hundreds surged onto the pitch, before struggling to leave the ground.

The violence follows a year of unrest in the North African state, which saw President Hosni Mubarak removed from power in one of the early charges of the Arab Spring.

Egyptian Islamists, are saying that the rampage was planned, a violent message for Mubarak from his supporters. Security forces are also being blamed for the deaths, with suggestion that they allowed it to happen, the remnants of the former regime. A protest march has been planned for 2 February, in outcry against the police's failure to prevent the deaths.

Egypt's ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has declared three days of national mourning after the clashes.

Wednesday's riots were sparked by a pitch invasion at a game in the northern coastal city of Port Said.

The fighting began after fans of Al Masry, the home team, flooded the pitch following a rare 3-1 victory over rivals Al-Ahly, the country's top team.

Missiles, flares and bottles were thrown as fans chased players from rival teams, who fled to the dressing rooms. Some were reportedly injured. State TV showed fights breaking out across the pitch. The losing team's manager was attacked.

Reuters reported that the Egyptian Army was sent to the stadium to ensure the security of the players, who were eventually removed from the ground. Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, the head of the military regime, met the Al-Ahly team at an air force base near Cairo after they were flown back on a military aircraft.

"This will not bring Egypt down," said Tantawi. "These incidents happen anywhere in the world. We will not let those behind it go ...This will not affect Egypt and its security."

Despite the presence of hundreds of police officers, security services seemed helpless to stop the melee as rival fans attacked each other with whatever weapons they could find.

The Egyptian Health Ministry told state TV that hundreds had been injured. According to the Associated Press, Egypt's state prosecutor has ordered an immediate investigation. All further football matches have been suspended.

Hesham Sheiha, Egypt's deputy health minister, told state TV: "This is unfortunate and deeply saddening."

One of the Ahli players, Mohamed Abo Treika, spoke to local TV. He said: "This is not football. This is a war and people are dying in front of us. There is no movement and no security and no ambulances. I call for the premier league to be cancelled. This is horrible situation and today can never be forgotten."

According to Sky News, some of the dead include security officials.

The riot is being described as the worst incident of football violence since 1996 when 78 people died at a World Cup qualifying match between Guatemala and Costa Rica.

Following news of the clashes in Port Said, a match between Al-Ismaili and Zamalek in Cairo was cancelled, which led to parts of the stadium being set alight by fans. The fires were quickly put out and no injuries were reported.

According to the BBC, supporters of al-Ahly, known as the Ultras, are "notoriously violent", and have been "heavily implicated" in confrontations with the police during the recent political unrest.



Team players of the Egyptian Al-Ahly club run for safety during clashes following their soccer match against Al-Masry club at the soccer stadium in Port Said, Egypt Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2012. Dozens of Egyptians were killed Wednesday in violence following a soccer match in Port Said, when fans flooded the field seconds after a match against a rival team was over, Egypt's Health ministry said.

Soccer violence turns into political protest

Critics say military regime stood by as fans kill more than 70; at least 1,000 hurt in stampede

By Yusri Mohamed, Reuters February 2, 2012

Police officers react as chaos erupts Wednesday at a soccer stadium in Port Said, Egypt. Health officials said most of the more than 70 people who were killed were either crushed in the stampede or thrown from the stands when fans of the visiting Al Ahli team stormed the pitch of their fierce rivals, Port Said's al-Masry, who won 3-1.

Police officers react as chaos erupts Wednesday at a soccer stadium in Port Said, Egypt. Health officials said most of the more than 70 people who were killed were either crushed in the stampede or thrown from the stands when fans of the visiting Al Ahli team stormed the pitch of their fierce rivals, Port Said's al-Masry, who won 3-1.

Photograph by: Reuters , Reuters

Seventy-four people were killed and at least 1,000 injured on Wednesday when Egyptian soccer fans staged a pitch invasion in the city of Port Said, the deadliest incident in the country since the ouster of president Hosni Mubarak.

Angry politicians decried a lack of security at the match between Port Said team al-Masry and Cairo's Al Ahli, Egypt's most successful club, and blamed the nation's leaders for allowing - or even causing - the tragedy.

"Down with military rule," thou-sands of Egyptians chanted at the main train station in Cairo, where they awaited the return of fans, quickly turning the biggest disaster in the nation's soccer history into a political demonstration against army rule.

"The people want the execution of the field marshal," they shouted, turning on the ruler of the military council, Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, who vowed in a phone call to a TV channel to find the culprits.

The post-match pitch invasion provoked panic as rival fans fought, with most of the deaths among people trampled in the crush of the crowd or who fell or were thrown from terraces, witnesses and health workers said.

"I saw people holding machetes and knives. Some were hit with these weapons, other victims were flung from their seats, while the invasion happened," Usama El Tafahni, a journalist in Port Said who attended the match, told Reuters.

Many of the Al Ahli fans involved were "ultras," dedicated supporters of the team with years of experience confronting police at football matches. They played a leading role in hitting back at heavy-handed security forces during the uprising that toppled Mubarak.

The ultras have been seen as at the vanguard of subsequent clashes with police and the army in violence that followed Mubarak's ouster, and were also among those who protested outside the Israeli embassy and tore down walls that the army erected to protect the embassy.

"The police and army (did not move) a muscle to prevent the bloodshed," activist Sohair Riad wrote on Facebook in reaction to the violence in Port Said. "Their silence screams complicity. This is a collective assassination of a group that continues to support the revolution and struggles against military rule."

Tantawi pledged that the violence would not derail the army's plan to hand over power to civilians.

"Egypt will be stable. We have a roadmap to transfer power to elected civilians. If anyone is plotting instability in Egypt, they will not succeed," he told Al Ahli's sports channel during his phone-in.

Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim said 47 people had been arrested and state television quoted Tantawi as saying a fact-finding committee would investigate.

The violence flared after the match between al-Masry and Al Ahli, whose fans have a history of fierce rivalry. Witnesses said Ahli fans unfurled banners insulting Port Said and one descended to the pitch carrying an iron bar at the end of the match, which al-Masry won 3-1.

Al-Masry fans reacted by pouring onto the pitch and attacking Ahli players before turning to the terraces to attack rival supporters.

Many fans died in a subsequent stampede, while some were killed when they were flung onto the pitch. At the height of the disturbances, rioting fans fired flares straight into the stands.

Hospitals throughout the Suez Canal zone were put on a state of alert and dozens of ambulances rushed to Port Said from the Canal cities of Ismailia and Suez, said an official in the zone's local ambulance service.

Live television coverage showed fans running onto the field and chasing Al Ahli players. A small group of riot police formed a corridor to try to protect the players, but they appeared overwhelmed and fans were still able to kick and punch the players as they fled.

"This is not football. This is a war and people are dying in front of us. There is no movement and no security and no ambulances," Al Ahli player Mohamed Abo Treika told his club's television channel.

Tantawi ordered two helicopters be sent to Port Said to fly out some of the visiting Al Ahli soccer team and its fans, military sources said. The helicopters would transfer the injured to military hospitals, the sources said.

Egypt's top Muslim cleric called the events a massacre that violated the words and teachings of Islam.

Another match in Cairo was halted by the referee after receiving news of the violence in Port Said, prompting fans to set parts of the stadium on fire, television footage showed.

State television reported that Egypt's football federation had suspended premier league matches indefinitely.

Sepp Blatter, president of the FIFA world soccer federation, expressed his shock at the tragedy. "This is a black day for football. Such a catastrophic situation is unimaginable and should not happen," he said in a statement.

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird offered condolences to the families of the victims via a Twitter message.

Some politicians and members of the public accused officials still in their jobs after the fall of Mubarak of complicity in the tragedy, or at least of allowing a security vacuum in which violence has flourished since last year's revolution.

"The security forces are responsible for what happened. There is no security," said shop owner Farouk Ibrahim, 42, outside a Port Said hospital where dozens of injured were treated.

"Unknown groups came between the fans and they were the ones that started the chaos. I was at the match and I saw that the group that did this are not from Port Said," he said. "They were thugs, like the thugs the National Democratic Party used in elections," he said, referring to Mubarak's former ruling party.

Essam el-Erian, a member of parliament of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, which topped the recent parliamentary election, said the violence was "pre-planned and . a message from the remnants of the regime. There are those who want the bloodshed to continue."

In a statement on its website, the Brotherhood later said the violence had been orchestrated by an "invisible" hand and that the authorities had been negligent.

"We fear that some officers are punishing the people for their revolution and for depriving them of their ability to act as tyrants and restricting their privileges," it added.

Albadry Farghali, a member of parliament for Port Said, accused officials and security forces of allowing the disaster, saying they still had ties to Mubarak's government.

"The security forces did this or allowed it to happen. The men of Mubarak are still ruling. The head of the regime has fallen, but all his men are still in their positions," he yelled in a telephone call to live television.

Thursday marks the anniversary of clashes on Tahrir Square when Mubarak supporters on camelback charged pro-democracy demonstrators, and fought with the ultras.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/02/02/egypt-football-riots-first-funerals-held-after-port-said-tragedy-_n_1249578.html

Egypt Football Riots: First Funerals Take Place After Port Said Tragedy



Huffington Post UK Sara C Nelson First Posted: 2/02/2012 14:46 Updated: 2/02/2012 16:00

Egypt , Video , Egypt Football Dead , Egypt Football Deaths , Egypt Football Fire , Egypt Football Killed , Egypt Football Pitch Invasion , Egypt Football Riot , Egypt Football Violence , Uk News , UK News

The first funerals are taking place today for some of the 74 football fans left dead following Wednesday's riot at a match in Egypt's Port Said.

Pallbearers were pictured carrying coffins from morgues in Cairo, as three days of national mourning were announced and Tahrir Square was closed off.

A protest march has been planned for Thursday in Cairo as part of an outcry against the police's failure to prevent the deaths and the Egyptian parliament is to hold an emergency session to discuss the tragedy.

The riot on Wednesday was sparked by a pitch invasion at a game in the northern coastal city of Port Said.

The fighting began after fans of Al Masry, the home team, flooded the pitch following a rare 3-1 victory over rivals Al-Ahly, the country's top team.

The Egyptian government is being blamed for the violence, which saw missiles, flares and bottles thrown as fans chased players from rival teams. Some team members were reportedly injured. State TV showed fights breaking out across the pitch. The losing team's manager was attacked.

The violence follows a year of unrest in the North African state, which saw President Hosni Mubarak removed from power in one of the early charges of the Arab Spring.

Egyptian Islamists are saying that the rampage was planned, a violent message from supporters of the deposed Mubarak. Security forces are also being blamed for the deaths, with suggestion that they allowed it to happen, the remnants of the former regime.

Reuters reported that the Egyptian Army was sent to the stadium to ensure the security of the players, who were eventually removed from the ground. Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, the head of the military regime, met the Al-Ahly team at an air force base near Cairo after they were flown back on a military aircraft.

"This will not bring Egypt down," he said. "These incidents happen anywhere in the world. We will not let those behind it go ...This will not affect Egypt and its security."

Despite the presence of hundreds of police officers, security services seemed helpless to stop the melee as rival fans attacked each other with whatever weapons they could find.

The Egyptian Health Ministry told state TV that hundreds had been injured. According to the Associated Press, Egypt's state prosecutor has ordered an immediate investigation. All further football matches have been suspended.

Hesham Sheiha, Egypt's deputy health minister, told state TV: "This is unfortunate and deeply saddening."

One of the Ahli players, Mohamed Abo Treika, spoke to local TV. He said: "This is not football. This is a war and people are dying in front of us. There is no movement and no security and no ambulances. I call for the premier league to be cancelled. This is horrible situation and today can never be forgotten."

Some of the dead include security officials.

The riot is being described as the worst incident of football violence since 1996 when 78 people died at a World Cup qualifying match between Guatemala and Costa Rica.

Following news of the clashes in Port Said, a match between Al-Ismaili and Zamalek in Cairo was cancelled, which led to parts of the stadium being set alight by fans. The fires were quickly put out and no injuries were reported.

Supporters of al-Ahly, known as the Ultras, are known for their violence, and are reported to have been involved in confrontations with the police during the recent political unrest.

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/0/33541/Egypt/0/Thousands-descend-on-Tahrir-Thursday-to-protest-fo.aspx>

Thousands descend on Tahrir Thursday to protest football disaster

Ahly's and Zamalek's football Ultras put aside rivalry to march on ministry of interior to protest security forces 'lacklustre' efforts during Wednesday's deadly disaster in Port Said stadium

Thursday 2 Feb 2012



Thousands of Egyptian soccer fans protest at Sphinx Square in Cairo (Photo: AP)
Thousands of protesters have started to gather in Tahrir Square in preparation for a joint march called by the hardcore football supporters – known as Ultras – of Cairo clubs Ahly and Zamalek, which is set to converge on parliament at 4pm.

Demonstrators are expected to voice their anger at what many see as lackluster efforts by Egypt's security forces in securing fans at last night's match between Ahly and Masry in Port Said, which left 71 dead and hundreds injured.

Ahly's Ultras Ahlawy have departed from their home stadium and joined Zamalek's Ultras White Knights on route to Tahrir Square, before marching on the ministry of interior together, along with various political groups.

In the early hours of Thursday morning, thousands of people gathered at Ramses train station in downtown Cairo to meet beleaguered Ahly fans arriving home from Port Said following the worst football tragedy in Egyptian history.

The People's Assembly has convened an emergency session on Thursday morning to discuss the disaster. Many activists have used the tragedy to step up calls for parliamentarians to demand an immediate transfer of power from the ruling military junta to a civilian authority.

<http://news.uk.msn.com/egypt-police-clash-with-protesters>

Updated: 02 February 2012 23:34 | By pa.press.net

Egypt police clash with protesters



AP

Anger over a deadly football riot in Egypt has erupted with fresh clashes that injured nearly 400 people as security forces fired tear gas at fans and other protesters who accuse police of failing to stop the violence.

The bloodshed - which comes as security has been steadily deteriorating in the country - threatens to plunge Egypt into a new crisis nearly a year after a popular uprising forced former leader Hosni Mubarak to step down.

The football riot in Port Said on Wednesday night began when local Al-Masry fans stormed the field following a rare 3-1 win against Cairo-based Al-Ahly, one of Egypt's most popular

clubs, and began attacking their rivals, forcing hundreds into a narrow stadium exit only to be crushed against a locked gate. More than 70 people died.

The fighting was rooted in a long-standing, deep rivalry between the two teams but it rapidly took on a political tone as politicians and the public widely denounced the police for standing by as the violence escalated.

Some Al-Ahly fans said they had hung banners making fun of Al-Masry supporters in Port Said before the game, apparently provoking the local fans to riot despite their victory.

Tensions spread to Cairo as many of the dead were brought home for burial and the wounded joined the protests, some in tears, clearly in distraught for the loss of friends.

What began as a peaceful march from the Al-Ahly headquarters in Cairo descended into fury as more than 10,000 protesters reached the area outside the interior ministry building near Tahrir Square, the epicentre of last year's uprising against Mubarak.

Adel Adawi, a health ministry official, was quoted by the state-run news agency as saying 388 protesters were injured outside the interior ministry, most from tear gas inhalation as well as bruises and broken bones from rocks that were thrown.

Riot police guarding the area were separated from the protesters by barricades of concrete blocks and barbed wire that were erected in November, when clashes between the police and protesters then left more than 40 people dead. But tensions rose as protesters advanced towards them, removing some of the barriers, hurling stones and setting tyres on fire.

Police responded with heavy tear gas, sending demonstrators running, with some passing out and falling to the ground.

<http://rt.com/news/egypt-police-protesters-football-385/>

Police fire tear gas at outraged Cairo protesters (VIDEO, PHOTOS)

Published: 02 February, 2012, 23:25

Edited: 03 February, 2012, 14:28

Cairo : Egyptian protesters flash victory signs during clashes near the interior ministry in downtown Cairo on February 2, 2012. (AFP Photo / Mahmud Hams)

(12.0Mb) embed video

TRENDS: Egypt unrest

TAGS: Conflict, Africa, Accident, Football

One more person has died in Egypt, where clashes between police and protesters continue to rage in the wake of Wednesday's football mayhem in Port Said in which 79 died. Two more people died in the subsequent riots.

The latest victim was reported killed on Friday in Cairo. A volunteer doctor said the man had died after being hit by birdshot fired at close range outside the Interior Ministry.

On Thursday the area around the ministry was the scene of a massive row which ended with over 400 people injured. Violence flared when some 10,000 angry protesters pushed their way through barbed wire barriers to the building near Tahrir Square.

And on Wednesday night two people died in Suez after police opened fire on a 3,000-strong mob tried to storm a police station. The crowd were furious at the failure of security forces to prevent Wednesday's tragedy.

Protesters blame the country's security forces for failing to prevent a series of brawls that killed dozens and left hundreds more injured after a football match on Wednesday.



AFP Photo/STR

A riot in the Egyptian city of Port Said has left 79 dead and hundreds wounded after football fans stormed the pitch before engaging in running battles inside the stadium. The government has announced three days of mourning in the country.



AFP Photo/Mahmud Hams

Oxford University history lecturer Mark Almond told RT that some want to use the chaos in Egypt for their own benefit, and that there are two plausible “conspiracy versions” of what is really happening there.

“One is that the government of Marshal Tantawi wants chaos in order to say, ‘Only the army can save Egypt,’” Almond explained. “The other is that there are people who want to say: ‘Look, we – the people who’ve been running Egypt for the last year, since Mubarak fell – need a complete change, we need to get rid of the military.’ Both of these have some plausibility, but no concrete evidence for them as yet.”

Almond added that the most tragic part of the situation is that Egyptian police incompetency alone has led to a huge number of deaths.

“Their incompetent behavior ... set fire to the imaginations of people who want to believe such a tragedy must have a deeper reason,” he said.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egypts-parliament-vows-to-investigate-melee-that-left-at-least-74-dead/2012/02/02/gIQAK72LkQ_story.html

Egypt’s parliament vows to investigate melee that left at least 74 dead



View Photo Gallery — At least 74 people were killed and hundreds of others injured after clashes erupted at a soccer match in Port Said, Egypt.

By Ernesto Londoño, Published: February 2

CAIRO — Throngs of young Egyptians incensed over a deadly melee at a soccer match clashed with security forces outside the Interior Ministry in Cairo on Thursday night as the episode threatened to plunge the country into a new vicious cycle of recriminations and violence.

More than 260 people were wounded Thursday night, mostly from tear gas inhalation, a Health Ministry official told state television. The Interior Ministry said in a statement that protesters were trying to tear down barricades to charge into the building.



As Egypt mourns the deaths of scores of soccer fans, activists blamed the military and police for a tragic stadium riot in Port Said. The city's governor resigned and the board of the country's Football Association was ordered disbanded. (Feb. 2)

Egyptian officials vowed to get to the bottom of Wednesday's clashes in Port Said and declared a three-day period of mourning for the 74 people killed in a barbaric fight between rival fans after a game between regional teams.

Stunned by the evening's savagery, which came in the wake of a string of rare violent incidents, Egyptians pointed to ominous plots by domestic and foreign agents they accuse of working to undermine the aims of the revolutionaries that dethroned President Hosni Mubarak a year ago.

The young, ardent soccer fans, known as "ultras," who have become a fixture of protests targeting the country's military rulers appeared convinced the fight had been somehow instigated by the generals.

"They killed our youth, they're killing us," said Aya Ibrahim, 21, a medical student who was among the thousands who streamed into Tahrir Square on Thursday afternoon. "They are totally responsible. This was planned. We will not allow any more blood to be shed."

About an hour after the sun set, however, large crowds of young men, many waving flags of regional soccer teams, walked in huddles toward the Interior Ministry headquarters, a few blocks from Tahrir. Security forces sought to keep them from breaking into the building by firing rubber bullets and tear gas, witnesses said.

The scenes were reminiscent of deadly clashes in November between riot police and young protesters, many of whom were informally organized under the banner of the soccer teams they support.

Those fights were sparked after security forces used aggressive tactics to prevent demonstrators from setting up a permanent protest camp in Tahrir. The ensuing battles sparked a nationwide revolt against the country's interim military leaders, who grudgingly agreed to a speedier transition to civilian rule than they had originally outlined.

Many Egyptians saw the day's events as the most dramatic of what they believe is an orchestrated wave of politically-motivated mischief.

The Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, which won the most seats in the country's newly elected parliament, issued a statement blaming "dubious forces that still have strong ties with the former regime." In addition to that, the statement said, "there are, no doubt, foreign fingers that failed to take control of the Egyptian revolution."

Mahmoud Ghozlan, a senior member and spokesman for the Brotherhood, said he believes foreign groups unhappy with the leading role of Islamists in post-revolutionary Egyptian politics are resorting to sabotage techniques.

"Foreign hands are paying money and training youth abroad to teach them to topple regimes, take down parliament and stage riots," he said in an interview. "This was possible when we had a fraudulently elected parliament, but it isn't possible or justified with the current freely elected one."

Wednesday night's clashes broke out at the stadium in Port Said at the conclusion of a match between the hometown Al-Masry and Cairo's Al-Ahly, according to news reports and witnesses.

Witnesses said that shortly after the local team won, 3-1, fans of the other team streamed onto the field. Rival fans used sharp objects, rocks and metal pipes against each other, according to witness accounts and television footage.

Star Al-Ahly player Mohammad Abu Treika told the team's television station that the national league tournament should be suspended indefinitely in light of the evening's bloodshed.

"Crowds are dying in front of us, and there aren't any police or security forces," he said. "Football can go to hell if this is the situation."

Television footage appeared to show security forces staying on the sidelines as the brawl intensified. The country's police and army have, in recent months, been accused of using excessive force against civilians and failing to step in to stop unrest.

Sherif Ikrami, a goalkeeper for Al-Ahly, told a private television station that he felt powerless as hundreds of fans pounced on him and his teammates.

"I'm one of the players who has marks of the fight on his face," he said, looking distraught. "It was a massacre. We're not playing soccer again! What soccer are we going to play after 70 people died? What soccer?"

Al-Masry's chief executive resigned shortly after the fight, saying carnage of that magnitude couldn't have erupted spontaneously. "There are so many hands playing with our country so we can remain in the state of chaos and instability we are living now," he said in a televised interview shortly after stepping down.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/04/world/middleeast/egypt-2-protesters-killed-in-fury-over-soccer-riot-deaths.html?_r=1&ref=middleeast&pagewanted=print

February 3, 2012

As Clashes Continue, Egypt Soccer Riot Becomes Metaphor for Government Failure

By DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK

CAIRO — Clashes between protesters and security forces left five people dead on Friday in an escalation of violence that threatened to undo Egypt's halting steps toward stability after the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak one year ago.

The protests began Thursday in anger at the police for failing to prevent a post-match fight between rival groups of soccer fans in Port Said in which 70 people were killed on Wednesday night.

But as the protests continued for a second day, the original riot had become a metaphor for the failure of the military-led government to resolve the complaints that fuel recurring street violence, including brutal but capricious police officers, a lack of accountability and implausible attempts to blame mysterious third parties for social unrest.

If the ruling military council cannot control a soccer game, many asked, how can they run a country of more than 80 million? "If you can't secure a match, tell me how will you secure Egypt?" demonstrators chanted on their way to the headquarters of the Interior Ministry.

The violence erupted just days after two much-anticipated and potentially combustible occasions managed to pass in Egypt with unexpected calm: the first anniversary of the revolt against Mr. Mubarak and the installation of a new Parliament.

Now, though, the soccer riot has come to epitomize a new wave of miscellaneous crimes around the country, from a bank robbery in Cairo last week to the kidnapping of two American tourists and their guide for six hours in the Sinai on Friday.

Addressing the resulting public anger at the police and the military-led government is the first challenge for the new Parliament and its Islamist leaders.

Initially led by die-hard soccer fans — known as ultras — the protests that began around the country on Thursday were the first since Mr. Mubarak's ouster that at least some demonstrators began not in peace but with the avowed intent to inflict violence on security forces.

By Friday, however, the ultras still on the front lines had been joined by thousands of other protesters. They marched after prayers and chanted for the end of military rule.

In both Suez and Cairo, rock-throwing protesters continued to surround and attack the Interior Ministry headquarters for a second day, after battling through the night. And in both places, the police fought back with heavy, round-the-clock volleys of tear gas, then with birdshot.

In Suez, hospital officials reported wounds from live ammunition as well. Three protesters were killed there, hospital officials said, and one was killed in Cairo. An army officer was also killed during the fighting in Cairo when he was accidentally run over by a security truck.

The fighting in Cairo resembled battles fought in some of the same streets in November, when more than 40 people died, and again in December, when more than 15 more were killed.

Whether because of the depth of the public anger over the soccer riot or because of the potential supervision of the new Parliament, the security forces seemed, if anything, more restrained. But the protesters quickly fell back into the patterns of previous battles.

Vendors sold hospital masks to protect against tear gas. Young women dispensed vinegar and other home remedies. And after working through the night, gleeful protesters partially tore down a wall of concrete blocks that the military had erected to keep them from the Interior Ministry.

Racing to respond to the outcry over the soccer riot, officials of the military-led government announced that it had imposed travel bans on certain police officials under scrutiny in an investigation into who was responsible for security at the match.

The ruling military council, which has pledged to hand over power after the writing of a constitution and the election of a president by the end of June, urged in a statement that Egyptians “confront the attempts at escalation by foreign and domestic parties.” The council did not explain who those parties were.

Leaders of the week-old Parliament, which will return Saturday to another emergency session about the riot, indicated Friday that they might take legal action against the officials responsible.

The Web page of the Muslim Brotherhood’s political party, which leads the chamber, linked to a Parliament Web site explaining that “in response to the massacre of Port Said,” Parliament had decided to “reactivate” a law allowing the trial of cabinet ministers by a tribunal of lawmakers and judges. If approved by Parliament, the law could be applied retroactively even to Mr. Mubarak, the explanation continued.

A senior figure in the Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party, Mohamed El Beltagy, said top security and intelligence officials would be called Saturday to testify about the events and could be asked to resign if they failed to identify the perpetrators.

He said that the chaotic security in the country was a deliberate ploy by the country’s military rulers to build support for an extension of their power. Other Muslim Brotherhood statements suggested that the riot in Port Said had been orchestrated by former officials of the Mubarak government or unnamed “foreign fingers.”

In Port Said on Friday, a crowd gathered around the cafe of a former Mubarak ally, Gamal Omar, after rumors suggested that he and an ally had hired hundreds of people to instigate the riot. The same rumors, without evidence, appeared on the Web site of the Freedom and Justice Party.

In the shifting crowds that filled the streets of downtown Cairo, advancing and retreating with the flow of tear gas, demonstrators said they had little faith in either the military-led government or the new Parliament.

Ahmed Hussein, 27, had come with several others to try to stop the violence by kneeling in prayer between the security forces and the protesters. But he said they fled after the police fired tear gas at their backs. "I have no idea how this situation could be resolved," he said.

On the corner, a child of about 12 was wearing a makeshift cape made from the flag of the Cairo soccer team Al Ahly and resisting advice to get home to safety. "I am responsible for getting the rights of my brothers who died," he said, referring to his fellow fans killed in Port Said. "I will avenge them."

A well-known activist, Tarek Shalaby, 27, said the Muslim Brotherhood party now running Parliament "does not want to change anything."

"They are a bunch of businessmen," he said. "They just want the economy to grow."

An armed power like the military council, Mr. Shalaby argued, "would never surrender its full authority without a struggle." The only hope, he said, was more strikes and protests. "Politics is in the street."

Mayy El Sheikh and Liam Stack contributed reporting.

<http://french.cri.cn/621/2012/02/03/301s269115.htm>

Egypte: deux morts et plus de 600 blessés dans de nouvelles émeutes

2012-02-03 16:58:01 xinhua

Deux personnes ont été tuées et plus de 600 autres blessées dans plusieurs villes d'Egypte, au cours d'une nouvelle vague de manifestations provoquées par les récentes émeutes entre supporters de deux équipes de football.

A Suez, deux personnes ont été tuées et 30 autres blessées par balle dans une fusillade dans la nuit de jeudi à vendredi, a rapporté l'agence de presse officielle MENA.

Les autorités locales ont accusé des criminels d'être responsables de ces décès, selon MENA.

Par ailleurs, 628 personnes ont été blessées lors d'affrontements entre policiers et manifestants à proximité du siège du ministère de l'Intérieur, jeudi soir au Caire. La police a utilisé des gaz lacrymogènes pour empêcher les manifestants d'atteindre le bâtiment.

Les émeutes qui ont éclaté entre les supporters des équipes de football des clubs Al-Masry et Al-Ahly, à la fin d'un match à Port-Saïd, ont fait 74 morts et des centaines de blessés dans la nuit de mercredi à jeudi. L'Egypte a décrété trois jours de deuil, de jeudi à samedi, suite à cette tragédie.



<http://www.afrik.com/breve38878.html>

Egypte : Violences de Port-Saïd, nouvelles émeutes, 2 morts

vendredi 3 février 2012 / 10:37

Deux personnes ont été tuées à Suez et plus de 600 autres blessées dans plusieurs villes d’Egypte dans la nuit de jeudi à vendredi à la suite de nouvelles protestations provoquées par les récentes émeutes entre supporters de deux équipes de football, a rapporté l’agence de presse officielle MENA. Des manifestants accusent les autorités militaires d’être à l’origine des émeutes de Port Saïd où 74 personnes ont péri à la fin du match de football ayant opposé les clubs d’Al-Masry et d’Al-Ahly. Trois jours de deuil ont été décrétés de jeudi à samedi.

<http://www.aufaitmaroc.com/sport/foot-international/2012/2/3/egypte-nouveaux-heurts-entre-manifestants-et-policiers-au-caire>

Dernière mise à jour : 03/02/2012 à 12:32

Egypte: nouveaux heurts entre manifestants et policiers au Caire





Heurts entre manifestants égyptiens et police, le 2 février 2012 au Caire

Des affrontements ont éclaté vendredi au Caire entre manifestants réclamant la fin du pouvoir militaire et policiers, une nouvelle flambée de violences dans la foulée des affrontements meurtriers après un match de football.

Les policiers anti-émeutes ont tiré des gaz lacrymogènes sur les manifestants qui leur ont jeté des pierres près du ministère de l'Intérieur, après une journée et une nuit d'accrochages qui ont fait deux morts et des centaines de blessés dans le pays.

Les militants accusent le Conseil militaire de mal gérer la fragile transition et le tiennent pour responsable des violences qui ont éclaté au stade de Port-Saïd après la fin du match qui a vu l'équipe locale d'Al-Masry infliger sa première défaite de la saison à Al-Ahly (3-1), club cairote aux innombrables trophées.

Les Egyptiens, qui dénoncent l'inaction des forces de l'ordre à Port-Saïd, sont de plus en plus exaspérés par le pouvoir militaire accusé de violations des droits de l'Homme, et réclament depuis des mois la fin des procès de civils devant des tribunaux militaires, une refonte du ministère de l'Intérieur, et le respect des libertés et de la justice sociale.

Le Conseil suprême des forces armées (CSFA), dirigé par le maréchal Hussein Tantaoui, ministre de la Défense de Hosni Moubarak pendant deux décennies, s'est engagé à maintes reprises à céder ses pouvoirs aux civils après la présidentielle prévue d'ici fin juin.

Il avait avancé l'exemple des élections législatives remportées par les islamistes pour preuve de sa bonne foi. Mais cela n'a pas calmé les esprits et maintes personnalités et organisations de défense des droits de l'Homme estiment que les militaires chercheront à garder certains pouvoirs.

Le drame de Port-Saïd a relancé la contestation contre les autorités et l'incertitude sur la transition.

AFP

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gAL5MtY7b5Dy-FYqPfhj7WoHuDkg?docId=CNG.94fa6a266cceb0a16ff66ac192b54871.881>

La violence de retour dans le centre du Caire

De Inès BEL AïBA (AFP) – 3 févr. 2012

LE CAIRE — Au milieu des gaz lacrymogènes, les yeux rouges et le nez couvert par un masque, ils brandissent le poing contre les policiers positionnés à quelques mètres de là.

Vendredi, les violences ont repris au Caire entre manifestants et forces de l'ordre autour du ministère de l'Intérieur.

Les rues Mansour et Mohammed Mahmoud, tout près du ministère et à quelques encablures de la place Tahrir, se sont transformées en champ de bataille. Des centaines de pierres destinées à la police jonchent le sol, où des feux de camp ont été allumés.

Régulièrement, les policiers anti-émeutes ripostent aux slogans hostiles et aux assauts contre leur cordon. Les grenades de gaz lacrymogènes font une longue trajectoire enfumée avant de tomber au milieu des manifestants.

"Fils de p...!", hurlent ces derniers en courant se mettre à l'abri, tandis que certains s'emparent des grenades et les renvoient à leur expéditeur.

"Le peuple veut l'exécution du maréchal! A bas, à bas le pouvoir militaire!", scandent des centaines d'Egyptiens une fois la fumée un peu dissipée.

Deux manifestants sont morts asphyxiés par des gaz lacrymogènes vendredi au Caire, selon des sources médicales, et un soldat, blessé devant le ministère de l'Intérieur jeudi, a succombé vendredi à l'hôpital, a rapporté l'agence de presse officielle Mena.

Les protestataires ont gagné du terrain par rapport à la veille, après avoir ouvert une brèche dans les blocs de pierre qui divisaient la rue Mohammed Mahmoud depuis les derniers affrontements meurtriers en novembre.

La plupart sont jeunes, beaucoup sont mineurs. Les femmes sont présentes en nombre et comme jeudi, les manifestants expriment leur colère contre "l'inertie" des services de sécurité pendant le match de football qui a fait 74 morts mercredi soir à Port-Saïd, dans le nord du pays.

Ils réclament surtout que l'armée, qu'ils rendent responsable des violences, remette le pouvoir aux civils.

Mais d'autres manifestants sont là pour se venger du ministère de l'Intérieur, symbole de répression.

"J'ai pris sept points de suture la dernière fois, je m'en fiche. Je veux vivre tranquille, j'en ai marre qu'on m'arrête dans la rue pour rien et qu'on m'humilie sans arrêt", dit un adolescent au crâne entouré d'un énorme pansement, qui veut en découdre avec les policiers anti-émeutes à peine plus âgés que lui, positionnés à quelques mètres.

Autour de lui, comme pendant la révolte qui a renversé Hosni Moubarak l'an dernier, on se protège avec les moyens du bord: foulards sur le nez, lait et vinaigre comme remède au gaz lacrymogène.

Flairant l'aubaine, des hommes vendent des masques chirurgicaux pour une livre égyptienne (0,12 centimes d'euro).

Place Tahrir, le ballet des ambulances est incessant et leurs sirènes assourdissantes. Les blessés, asphyxiés par le gaz, parfois inconscients, sont amenés jusqu'aux véhicules en mobylette.

Mais il suffit de s'éloigner de quelques dizaines de mètres pour que la vie reprenne le pas sur les affrontements: sur la trajectoire des ambulances, des femmes vendent imperturbablement sandwiches, patates douces et colifichets, tandis que des badauds se promènent sur la place Tahrir en famille.

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/egypt-two-dead-riots-continue-411461>

Egypt: Two dead as riots continue

Published February 3rd, 2012 - 09:27 GMT



Egyptian police shot dead two protesters in the city of Suez as clashes erupted all over Egypt following the death of 74 people in the country's worst football violence in 15 years.

Some 3,000 people demonstrated in front of police headquarters in Suez after news spread that one of the victims in the Port Said riot was from their city. Police fired tear gas and then opened fire, eyewitnesses said. Health official Mohammed Lasheen said two men were killed by bullets. Fifteen other protesters were hurt.

Earlier, protesters shut the doors of the People's Assembly (parliament) and refused to let MPs leave after it held an emergency session to debate the latest violence.

Many in Egypt believe that the incident was organized by supporters of the toppled regime in order to destabilize the country a year after its revolution began.

"It is not an isolated event, it is happening within a series of other incidents, it is the work of the devil," said the speaker of the Egyptian parliament, Mohamed al-Katatni.

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/33639/Egypt/Politics-/Mass-rally-in-Port-Said-marches-on-stadium-to-cond.aspx>

Mass rally in Port Said marches on stadium to condemn football killings

Port Said protesters describe Wednesday's football stadium disaster as a 'conspiracy'
Ahrum Online, Nada Hussein Rashwan, Friday 3 Feb 2012

A bloodstained seat in Port Said stadium following Egypt's deadly football night. (Photo: Reuters)

Thousands of protesters in the city of Port Said marched on the city stadium Friday afternoon to condemn the killing of at least 75 football fans in the stadium Wednesday night.

The violence that erupted right after a football match between Port Said's Masry and Cairo's Ahly teams led to the killing of at least 74 fans, mostly from Ultras Ahly, as thousands of alleged Masry fans stormed the pitch immediately after the final whistle, chasing Ahly players and technical staff members.

Some protesters were able to enter the stadium to examine the aftermath for themselves; and they captured an armed man whom they recognised as one of the assailants in the stadium, according to MP and member of People's Assembly fact-finding commission into the events Alaa El-Bahaie. El-Bahaie says the suspect was recognised thanks to a photo taken of him attacking Ahly fans during the deadly football night, adding that the man admitted to participating in the attack on being seized by protesters.

Protesters in Port Said marched in mourning of the victims killed, chanting against the current ruling military council and accusing authorities of inciting the riots.

The Port Said disaster is the deadliest episode football-related violence Egypt has ever witnessed. It also marks the highest death toll for one night since the ouster of president Hosni Mubarak in February upon the January 25 popular uprising.

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/0/33651/Egypt/0/Port-Said-disaster-reverberates-in-Cairo-street-ba.aspx>

Port Said disaster reverberates in Cairo street battles

The fresh memory of Egypt's single deadliest day since the overthrow of Mubarak continues to push protesters into the line of the interior ministry's fire in downtown Cairo

Yassin Gaber, Friday 3 Feb 2012

Protesters chant anti-government slogans during a protest condemning the death of football fans at Port Said stadium, near the Interior Ministry in Cairo, 2 February 2012 (Photo: Reuters)

PHOTO GALLERY: Clashes continue in Cairo between protestors and Central Security Forces for a second day

Clashes between Egypt's Central Security Forces (CSF) and demonstrators continue in downtown Cairo's flash-point street, Mansour, and the port city of Suez, following the death of at least 74 football fans – largely Ahly supporters – in Port Said Wednesday evening. The latest reports indicate about 1,500 injured up to now, while the death toll has not risen since Thursday night, when four people were killed. Two protesters were killed in Suez after security forces used live rounds while defending a police station, reported Reuters.

Ultras Ahlawy – hard-core Ahly supporters – hit the streets Wednesday night, demanding justice for their dead colleagues and the removal of Egypt’s military junta from power. The bitter confrontation between CSF and protesters heated up Thursday night near the reviled Ministry of Interior. Thousands of youth surrounded the four streets, parallel to Mohamed Mahmoud Street and leading to the ministry, chanting, cursing and hurling stones and deployed tear gas canisters at the armoured and armed security forces.

According to one Ultras member, who gave his name as Mohamed, the group is primarily blaming the bloody events in Port Said on the ruling military council and the interior ministry, though, he adds, “Port Said supporters should have done more to prevent the violence.”

The street response, he told Ahram Online, was an unofficial and spontaneous reaction to the deaths. Regardless, Mohamed estimates that 70 to 80 per cent of the football organisation are in the streets protesting. The 22-year-old lost three friends in Port Said. Many others, he states, have lost far more.

The Ultras have yet to release an official statement or take collective action, but the numerous Ahly flags in Tahrir Square and Mohamed Mahmoud Street speak to the large number of members and supporters unofficially taking part in the protests.

These protesters have converged on the ministry seeking justice for the fallen supporters. This demand for justice, according to Mohamed, can neither be satisfied by money nor the honouring of the dead. "Justice can only be achieved by holding those responsible for the deaths to account."

Protesters seem to have quickly shifted into gear, responding to CSF aggression with tools acquired from November and December’s clashes. Makeshift clinics and motorbike lanes – formed by protesters creating a human corridor – were immediately established to quickly aid protesters in need of medical attention.

"We've seen Kartoush [bird shot pellets], rubber bullets and tear gas as usual... I saw both the canister and the gas; it's colourless and extremely strong. At 3am this morning the injuries coming in were due to live ammunition. During the night the fighting was very intense, with injuries to the eyes and face," stated Ahmed Gamel, a 31-year-old doctor’s assistant operating out of Tahrir Square’s central island.

Doctors and medical assistants, working in clinics near and around the front-lines, find themselves also needing medical attention. Ayman Abo Zied, an activist and medic treating the wounded, suffered a bird shot injury to his hands earlier today. According to Abo Zied, injuries coming into clinics are equally due to tear gas intoxication and bird shot wounds, which he adds are largely due to the CSF tactic of aiming at protesters’ abdomens and head.

“Ceasefires only occur for one of three reasons: either the CSF are rearming, resting or changing shifts. It isn’t good enough to call for a cleansing of the Ministry of Interior; the ministry needs to be completely supplanted. Any police force that can easily kill its citizenry must go,” Abo Zied stated.

Earlier Friday in Tahrir Square, the scene was dominated ahead of Friday prayers by around 1,000 protesters gathered on the corner with Mohamed Mahmoud Street. Waving the flags of

bitter rivals Ahly and Zamalek football clubs, the protesters are chanting against the military council and for justice for those who have died.

The unofficial collaboration of Ahly and Zamalek football supporters on the ground is an indication, according to Mohamed, that this was and never will be about football. "It's political," he states, "Ultras Ahlawy is being targeted for its role in the revolution."

As night falls the intensity of the CSF assault increases. The continually shifting front line and the existence of security forces on several side streets have given the conflict a chaotic and nerve-wracking fluidity. The several fronts have also compelled protesters to split ranks, as one group wades through clouds of thick white smoke eager to lob any and all tear gas canisters fired their way and another, two streets over, engages a phalanx of CSF troops and the sporadic fire of bird shot.

Demonstrators prepare for another night of battle with no sign of diminishing zeal or numbers, following more than a day of continuous clashes. Anti-military junta slogans resound and insults pepper the air in the narrow streets between the intermittent sound of CSF fire.

All this points to there being no end in sight to bloody confrontation. The military is nowhere to be seen. Many, however, wonder when they will play their hand.

Additional reporting by Bel Trew

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2012/feb2012/egypt-f04.shtml>

Protests against Egyptian junta spread after football massacre

By Johannes Stern

4 February 2012

On Friday protests against the Egyptian military junta spread all over the country. The protests are a response to the pro-regime football riots in Port Said on Wednesday, when 74 supporters of Egypt's most famous football club El-Ahly were killed and several hundred injured.

In downtown Cairo thousands of workers and youth tore down the wall erected by the army in Mohamed Mahmoud Street during the last clashes in November and surrounded the Ministry of Interior. They called for the downfall of the regime and the execution of Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, the leader of the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) junta.

Fierce clashes between heavily armed Central Security Forces (CSF) and protesters continued during all of Thursday night and continued on Friday. The CSF attacked protesters with tear gas and rubber bullets to prevent them from storming the ministry. Reportedly one protester was killed by a pellet and over 1,400 were injured.

In the port city of Suez, security forces fired live rounds into crowds of protesters attacking a police station. Reportedly at least two were killed and many others injured. Protesters also attacked shops and destroyed the façade of the Suez Canal Bank. Police forces cordoned off the Suez state security headquarters and a compound of the justice ministry with razor wire.

In Alexandria, the funeral of 23-year-old Mahmoud El-Ghandour, the founder of the El-Ahly Ultras fan club in that city, turned into a demonstration against the junta. Protesters marched towards the military's North District Command and chanted against the SCAF.

In Port Said, where the deadly massacre took place, thousands of protesters gathered in front of the governor's headquarters chanting, "Port Said is innocent, this is the truth." This slogan means that it was not the regular fans of Al-Masry who were responsible for the violence, but infiltrators working for the security forces.

A protester told the *Egyptian Independent*: "The Ahly supporters were predominantly from Port Said. My brother was one of them. Port Said is sad today, all residents of the city are sad and feel as if their own relatives have died."

There is strong evidence that the deadly riot was an orchestrated act of violence. Eye witnesses who were in the stadium when the El-Masry team beat El-Ahly 3-1 recounted that a police officer told "supporters" of El-Masry—who had been shouting slogans in support of Tantawi and the junta during the game—to come onto the pitch after the game was finished. Some pointed out that the gate between the stands and the pitch was left open while at the same time the gates of the Ahly fan blocks have been closed. As the thugs attacked the Ahly supporters with knives, bottles, clubs and firecrackers, the security forces stood idly by.

Prosecutors arriving at the stadium on Friday found that a janitor had already washed the floor and walls of the visiting team's locker room and removed any potential traces of blood. According to Ahly players, several wounded Ahly supporters died in the dressing room from their injuries. Inside the stadium itself, a forensic team found empty bullet casings in the seats in which Ahly fans sat.

The massacre is reminiscent of the events that happened exactly one year ago, when hired pro-government thugs attacked protesters with horses and camels on Tahrir Square in an attempt to crush the revolution. The infamous attack was supported by the military, who allowed the thugs to pass through their lines into the square. However, protesting workers and youth defeated the thugs and only nine days later longtime dictator Hosni Mubarak was forced to step down after a wave of mass strikes. Ahly Ultras together with the Zamalek White Knights, hardcore supporters of the other big football club in Cairo, played a significant role in the revolution from the start. They participated in street fighting against the Mubarak regime and his successors in the SCAF.

Many observers believe that the junta deliberately organized the massacre at the football game Wednesday to take revenge and stir up the counterrevolution. Saad Hagra, a journalist of *Al Masry Al Youm*, accused the SCAF and remnants of the old regime, saying that the incident "was the result of a plot made in advance".

The director of the Arab Network for Human Rights Information, Gamal Eid, told *Al Masry Al Youm* that the SCAF aims to sow division in Egypt and that the junta would be the main beneficiary of the events.

On January 25, the anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution, millions marched all over Egypt and demanded the downfall of the military junta and the whole regime. The masses made clear that they oppose the US-sponsored "democratic transition," which is supported by the entire Egyptian political establishment. Frightened by a renewed explosion of the masses, the

junta obviously aims to instigate thuggery and violence as a pretext to justify further security crackdowns.

This plan is supported by the whole Egyptian ruling elite. The right-wing Muslim Brotherhood issued a statement calling “for firmness in applying the law to everyone” in order to end “the state of security chaos and disorder in all parts of the country”.

A coalition of youth groups, liberal and petty bourgeois “left” parties—including the April 6 Movement, Revolution Youth Union, the Socialist Alliance Party and the Revolutionary Socialists—participated in the protests on Friday. Their aim is to control the protests against the junta and prevent a further escalation.

When angry protesters climbed the tax office building in order to attack security forces with stones and Molotov cocktails, the petty bourgeois left forces intervened to stop them. Amr Hamed, the spokesman of the Revolution Youth Union, stated that his group managed to convince the demonstrators not to occupy the building. “The building was not stormed. No damage has taken place inside the building. We persuaded the protesters to climb down to avoid blemishing their image. We don’t want anyone to accuse our peaceful demonstrations of damaging public property.”

The position of Hamed and his liberal and pseudo-left allies could not show more clearly the class gulf between the revolutionary workers and youth and the petty bourgeois defenders of order. While the first understand that the junta and the system it defends must be brought down through continued revolutionary struggle, the second desperately seek to promote illusions in a “peaceful democratic transition.”

In a statement issued on Thursday, the petty bourgeois alliance calls on the new parliament—which is dominated by right-wing Islamists and was elected on a low turnout under military rule—to assume political responsibility and undertake measures to counter “the recent deliberate and systematic acts of killing and instigating chaos for the aim of sabotaging and aborting the revolution,” demanding that the military council should hand over power to a civilian authority immediately.

This amounts to nothing more than changing the parliamentary façade behind which the junta rules, even though the masses themselves have made clear they demand the overthrow of the US-backed junta itself.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iUfZnB220FzOCtuEKI-JBWKjp8Kg?docId=CNG.ddadf90066729f00ed39ac1bc1c47d91.2b1>

Egypte: heurts entre policiers et manifestants pour le troisième jour

De Samer AL-ATRUSH (AFP) – 4 févr. 2012

LE CAIRE — Des affrontements ont opposé samedi pour le troisième jour consécutif au Caire la police à des manifestants qui persistent à réclamer le départ du pouvoir militaire, accusé d'inaction face aux violences ayant fait 74 morts après un match de football.

Au Caire, des colonnes d'épaisse fumée s'élevaient au-dessus des ruelles menant au ministère de l'Intérieur, où les manifestants ont lancé des pierres sur les policiers anti-émeutes et où les ambulances ont fait des aller-retours pour évacuer les blessés.

Depuis le début des manifestations et des affrontements jeudi au lendemain du drame du football à Port-Saïd (nord), douze manifestants ont été tués au Caire et à Suez (est) et 2.532 personnes blessées, dont des policiers et des manifestants, selon le ministère de l'Intérieur.

Certaines victimes sont mortes asphyxiées par les gaz lacrymogènes, selon des sources médicales. Parmi les blessés se trouvent 211 policiers, dont un général qui a perdu un oeil. Selon la chaîne nationale Nile News, un de ses journalistes a également été blessé à un oeil par un tir de chevrotine.

Dans l'après-midi, des manifestants ont essayé de s'interposer entre leurs camarades et la police qui tirait des gaz lacrymogènes et à la chevrotine, mais les affrontements ont repris dans le centre du Caire, à quelques mètres de la Place Tahrir.

En fin de soirée, la situation s'est calmée mais la tension était palpable parmi les centaines de personnes encore dans les rues.

Les manifestations ont éclaté après des affrontements terriblement meurtriers entre supporters mercredi à Port-Saïd (nord) après la première défaite de la saison pour le célèbre club cairote Al-Ahly face aux locaux d'Al-Masry (3-1). Le pouvoir militaire et le ministère de l'Intérieur sont accusés de n'avoir rien fait pour arrêter le drame.

Le siège du ministère se situe dans le secteur de la célèbre place Tahrir, haut-lieu de la révolte contre le président Hosni Moubarak de janvier/février 2011 resté depuis le site privilégié des nombreuses manifestations qui jalonnent le difficile processus de transition.

Les manifestants, parmi lesquels de nombreux supporters de clubs de football, surnommés les "ultras", réclament la fin du pouvoir militaire qui tient les rênes du pays depuis la chute du régime Moubarak le 11 février 2011.

Les "ultras", bien organisés et politisés, ont participé à de nombreuses manifestations contre le pouvoir militaire ces derniers mois.

Le Conseil suprême des forces armées (CSFA), dirigé par le maréchal Hussein Tantaoui et chargé de la délicate transition promise vers la démocratie, a accusé "des mains étrangères et intérieures de viser le pays" et appelé "toutes les forces politiques (...) à intervenir pour rétablir la stabilité".

Le gouvernement a annoncé le limogeage de la direction de la fédération égyptienne de football, qui a remis sa démission. Le pouvoir a également démis de leurs fonctions les responsables locaux de Port-Saïd.

Mais l'affaire a pris une dimension politique avec des appels à la démission du ministre de l'Intérieur, Mohammed Ibrahim, et une relance de la contestation contre le CSFA, accusé de chercher à maintenir les privilèges et l'influence de l'armée, sur fond de dégradation de la sécurité et de hausse de la criminalité.

Les Frères musulmans, qui dominent le Parlement, ont évoqué la possibilité que les heurts de Port-Saïd aient été provoqués par des partisans de M. Moubarak.

Le président de la Fédération internationale de football, Sepp Blatter, a dénoncé l'"ingérence politique" dans le football égyptien.

La veille, le bref enlèvement dans la péninsule du Sinaï de deux touristes américaines et de leur guide par des Bédouins a également illustré la dégradation de la sécurité en Egypte, qui contribue à la chute du tourisme, l'une des toutes premières sources de devises du pays.

La nouvelle Egypte est en proie à l'instabilité depuis que la police de M. Moubarak, omniprésente et honnie par la population, a disparu des rues lors de la révolte. Et les manifestants qui descendent régulièrement dans les rues réclament toujours une restructuration du ministère de l'Intérieur.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Africa/Anger-refuses-to-die-down-in-Egypt-10-killed-in-three-days/Article1-806748.aspx>

Anger refuses to die down in Egypt; 10 killed in three days

Press Trust Of India

Cairo, February 04, 2012

First Published: 19:18 IST(4/2/2012)

Last Updated: 19:20 IST(4/2/2012)

Egypt's streets continued to simmer with anger with 10 lives lost over three days, as fuming protesters clashed with police over its failure to prevent Port Said's unprecedented football violence.

Police in Cairo fired teargas and birdshots at protesters who tried to march on to the interior ministry and threw stones at security forces guarding the building on Saturday even as anti-government activists smelled conspiracy in the deadly riots that claimed 74 lives on Wednesday.

Six people died in the eastern port city of Suez, as police used live rounds to hold back crowds on Friday, according to a report in Al Jazeera.

Three protesters were also killed in Cairo as crowds broke down walls and barbed wire barriers to reach the heavily guarded interior ministry.

The government said one soldier was also killed when a riot police truck hit him and more than 2,500 people stood injured in the clashes.

The fresh unrest in Egypt began on Thursday as angry protesters took to the streets, shaken by violence that occurred after a soccer match in the northern city of Port Said.

The protesters chanted anti-military slogans as witnesses said riot police did little to prevent the violence when fans of the victorious Al Masry club flooded the ground and chased the players and supporters of the popular club Al Ahly.

Many anti-government activists and hardcore fans of Egypt's popular clubs, known as 'ultras', have blamed the country's military leadership for either conspiring to foment the Port Said violence or negligently allowing it to occur, said Al Jazeera.

The 'Ultras' have been among those at the forefront of last year's uprising that overthrew Hosni Mubarak and the following anti-military protests.

The channel also pointed out at "security vacuum" in the country that is going through a delicate phase of transition to democracy, a year after the fall of an entrenched dictator.

The protests were not limited to Cairo and Suez. In southern Egypt's Minya governorate, 11 people were injured in protests outside the security directorate and police station.

In Alexandria, tear gas and fireworks were traded between security forces and protesters into the night outside the main security directorate.

In al-Marg, armed men attacked a police station and freed detainees after setting the station on fire, state-owned al-Ahram newspaper reported.

The protesters demanded retribution for the deaths that occurred on Wednesday. While most deaths happened due to stampede, several people reportedly died of stab wounds.

Fans of the home side, Al Masry, had stormed the pitch after a 3-1 victory against visiting favourites Al Ahly and witnesses said security forces had allowed men into the stadium carrying knives and sticks.

Egypt has witnessed periods of unrest for a year with protesters, frustrated at the slow pace of reforms, taking to streets repeatedly to demand that the military cede power to a civilian government quickly.

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2012/02/04/65316025.html>

Suez clash death toll grows to 5

Tags: News, Society, Egypt unrest, clashes , Egypt, World

Feb 4, 2012 13:45 Moscow Time

The death toll of recent clashes between protesters and police in the Egyptian city of Suez has grown to five. According to the local authorities, all the victims are young people aged 20 to 23.

The number of those injured, including people with gunshot wounds, has exceeded 500. Mass-scale riots erupted in Suez on Thursday and have since continued unabated.

Sporadic clashes erupt in Cairo, with more than 2,500 having sought medical aid to date.

Egyptians are protesting against the inaction of police during the fistfight and the subsequent stampede during the recent football game in Port Said where 74 people died as a result.

(TASS)

Egyptian security forces are 'settling score with revolutionaries': Political movements charge

At a press conference Saturday, a coalition of political groups demand early presidential elections and the sacking of the Cabinet over what they believe was premeditated violence against the Ahly Ultras in Port Said

Nada Hussein Rashwan, Saturday 4 Feb 2012



A police officer (L) takes a photo as fans descend onto the pitch in Egypt's worst football violence (Photo: Reuters)

Dozens of political groups condemned the ruling military council and the current government over the killing of 73 football fans in the Port Said stadium Wednesday night.

The groups accused security forces of facilitating the entrance of infiltrators among fans gathered to watch Al-Masry play Al-Ahly, and of not stepping in to control the crowd when riots erupted immediately after the match.

The groups issued a joint statement at a press conference organised at the liberal El-Shorouk newspaper headquarters in Cairo Saturday afternoon, demanding the newly-elected People's Assembly assume political responsibility over the disaster and take definitive actions to respond to the depth of the crisis.

Signatories to the statement included the Coalition of Revolutionary Forces, the April 6 Movement (Democratic Front), the Revolution Youth Coalition, the Revolution Youth Union, the Kazaboon (Liars) Campaign, the Maspero Youth Union, a Coptic activist group, the Popular Movement for Supporting Al-Azhar, Maspero Media Revolutionaries and the Revolutionary Socialists.

The statement cited Tantawi's speech on 24 January, the eve of the revolution's first anniversary, declaring a partial lift on the state of emergency, with the statement suggesting

that the recent spate of violent events, ranging from armed robbery to the deadly football clashes, have been orchestrated to justify continued resort to emergency law in the country.

The signatories also demanded the current government, led by Kamal El-Ganzouri, be discharged over its responsibility for the security failure that facilitated the riots Wednesday night.

"The only entity that has democratic legitimacy in Egypt is the parliament, and it has the right to withdraw confidence from the government. We demand that the People's Assembly, which was elected by over 30 million Egyptians, protect us from a government that is killing us," said Khaled Abdel-Hamid, a member of socialist Popular Alliance Party, a signatory to the statement.

The press conference was held as intermittent violent clashes continue between the police and protesters, sparked Thursday night when thousands of protesters marched on the Ministry of Interior near Tahrir Square, condemning the police for not preventing the football killings.

The same groups who spearheaded the press conference presented an initiative to the People's Assembly less than a week before the football tragedy, asking MPs to call for early presidential elections.

The groups demand the floor be opened for candidacies on 11 February, the first anniversary of Hosni Mubarak's ouster, and that presidential elections be completed within 60 days of that date to prevent the drafting of a new constitution under military rule.

The initiative also demanded that parliament forms a committee to investigate all prior attacks on demonstrations, including attacks after Mubarak's ouster when the military council was in charge of the country.

Political parties who signed the statement included the liberal Egypt Freedom Party founded by MP Amr Hamzawy, the moderate Islamist Al-Wasat Party, the Socialist Popular Alliance Party, and the Egyptian Current Party.

Some 73 football fans, mostly supporters of Al-Ahly, known as the Ultras, were killed Wednesday night after rival Al-Masry fans stormed the pitch at the end of an Egyptian League game between the two teams. The game witnessed tensions from the opening minute and lacklustre security, according to many eyewitnesses.

According to the Egyptian Ministry of Health, the death toll in clashes that broke out on Thursday between thousands of protesters and police in a number of Egyptian cities, expressing popular anger over the Port Said massacre, rose to 12 by midday Saturday.

Five protesters were killed in Cairo, and seven in Suez.

1500 protesters have been injured.

Protesters blame the police for the deaths of the Ultras, a group that has played a key role in the Egyptian revolution since 25 January 2011, and has increasingly demanded the end of military rule.

Retour au calme en Egypte après deux jours d'émeutes

samedi 4 février 2012 09h46

par Marwa Awad

LE CAIRE (Reuters) - Suez et le Caire ont retrouvé leur calme samedi au terme de violents affrontements entre manifestants et forces de l'ordre égyptiennes, trois jours après la mort de 74 supporters lors d'un match de football à Port-Saïd.

Quatre personnes ont trouvé la mort dans la capitale et deux autres à Suez, jeudi et vendredi. Nombreux sont ceux qui imputent la catastrophe de Port-Saïd aux partisans d'Hosni Moubarak, chassé du pouvoir le 11 février 2011, soupçonnés de chercher à plonger l'Egypte dans le chaos.

Dénonçant l'incapacité des forces de l'ordre à assurer la sécurité du match, les manifestants du Caire ont assiégé les locaux du ministère de l'Intérieur, défendus à coups de grenades lacrymogènes et de matraques, mais aussi à balles réelles.

Selon de jeunes contestataires, l'objectif n'était pas de prendre le bâtiment, mais de provoquer une réaction des autorités à même d'élargir la mobilisation contre les militaires qui assurent l'intérim depuis un an.

"La majorité des Egyptiens ne veulent pas manifester. Nous essayons de les galvaniser. ça vient, petit à petit", a expliqué Mohamed Fahmy, un militant socialiste. Les nombreux mouvements contestataires n'ont toutefois pas de stratégie claire et certains reconnaissent que l'insécurité n'encourage pas les Egyptiens à se mobiliser.

"Nous voulons que l'armée s'en aille et que le ministère de l'Intérieur soit restructuré. Nous resterons là jusqu'à ce que ce ça soit fait", assure Ahmed Shaban, tandis qu'un manifestant distribue des masques à gaz. Une fois équipés, les jeunes s'engouffrent dans le nuage de gaz lacrymogène, en direction du ministère de l'Intérieur .

SITUATION MAÎTRISÉE

Non loin du bâtiment, plusieurs dizaines de véhicules des forces de l'ordre sont alignés et des centaines de policiers anti-émeutes s'affairent, certains donnant des ordres, d'autres nettoyant les yeux irrités par les gaz.

"Les forces du ministère de l'Intérieur maîtrisent la situation. L'armée n'a pas encore été déployée", assure un fonctionnaire du ministère.

De source proche des services de sécurité, on précise que les militaires, placés en état d'alerte, doivent être déployés dans la journée pour assurer la sécurité du bâtiment, mais l'ordre n'aurait pas encore été donné.

A Suez, la police a également fait usage de gaz lacrymogène pour protéger des locaux des services de sécurité et du ministère de l'Intérieur, autour desquels des fils de fer barbelés ont

été déroulés. Deux corps présentant des blessures par balles ont été admis à la morgue locale, selon un médecin.

Parmi les six tués recensés ces deux derniers jours figure un militaire. Selon un correspondant de Reuters sur place, des tirs ont retenti vendredi au Caire et des plombs de chasse ont été découverts au sol.

Les violences de mercredi ont éclaté à l'issue du match de football qui opposait Al Masry, le club local, à l'équipe cairote d'Al Ahli. Outre les 74 morts, elles ont fait un millier de blessés. La plupart des tués ont succombé à une bousculade provoquée par des affrontements entre supporters, mais les manifestants tiennent la police et l'armée pour responsables de ce drame.

Pour certains, les violences auraient été déclenchées sciemment pour punir les Ultras d'Al Ahli, un groupe de supporters dont l'expérience des confrontations avec les forces de l'ordre a servi il y a un an, au plus fort des journées révolutionnaires, pour défendre la place Tahrir.

Jean-Philippe Lefief pour le service français

<http://french.ruvr.ru/2012/02/04/65301363.html>

«Le mouvement des Jeunes du 6 avril» essaie de calmer les émeutes au Caire

Mots clés: Egypte, manifestations, Société, Monde, Actualités

4.02.2012, 12:10

Le «mouvement des Jeunes du 6 avril», qui était à l'origine du soulèvement populaire en Egypte, serait en train d'essayer d'arrêter les émeutes aux alentours du bâtiment du ministère de l'Intérieur dans le centre du Caire.

Pour la deuxième journée, des milliers de manifestants sont attaqués par les forces de la police, déployées dans toutes les rues menant au ministère. Les policiers utilisent le gaz lacrymogène, et des informations sur l'utilisation des armes à feu par les manifestants sont apparues dans les médias. Des centaines de manifestants et 138 policiers ont été blessés lors des affrontements.

Les militants du «mouvement de la Jeunesse du 6 avril» ont déclaré qu'ils ont l'intention de créer un «bouclier humain» entre les manifestants et la police pour mettre fin aux affrontements. Ils ont appelé tous ceux qui se trouvent sur la place Tahrir au centre du Caire de prendre part à cette action maintien de la paix.

<http://www.rtl.be/info/monde/international/854396/egypte-nouveaux-heurts-entre-manifestants-et-policiers-au-caire>

Egypte: nouveaux heurts entre manifestants et policiers au Caire

Afp | 05 Février 2012 10h59

Protestataires et police anti-émeutes s'affrontaient au Caire dimanche, au quatrième jour de heurts déclenchés par la mort de 74 personnes lors de violences à l'issue d'un match de football, que les forces de sécurité sont accusées de ne rien avoir fait pour empêcher.

Des centaines de policiers bloquaient les rues menant au ministère de l'Intérieur, dans le centre de la capitale égyptienne, et tiraient des gaz lacrymogène pour contrôler des dizaines de manifestants lançant des pierres et des cocktails Molotov.

La police a construit un mur de béton en travers de la rue Mansour, devenue l'épicentre des violences, et s'abritaient derrière des rouleaux de fils barbelés dans d'autres rues.

Des manifestants ont capturé un homme qu'ils ont présenté comme étant un officier de police en civil, le ramenant derrière leurs lignes sous les hourras, pendant que certains tentaient de protéger l'homme des coups portés par des protestataires.

Selon un docteur sur place, Mostafa Nabil, la police a lancé un assaut sur les positions des manifestants, tirant à la chevrotine et arrêtant des médecins d'un hôpital de campagne, qui ont été libérés peu après.

En milieu de journée, l'intensité des violences a décliné. Ces trois derniers jours, les heurts reprenaient de plus belle en fin de journée.

"Mon cœur brûle quand je pense à ce qui s'est passé à Port-Saïd, et nous savons tous que la police est responsable", a lancé un manifestant, Ahmed Farag, expliquant que les protestataires n'avaient pas l'intention d'attaquer le ministère de l'Intérieur, mais de manifester devant le siège de la police.

Depuis le début des manifestations et des affrontements jeudi, au lendemain du drame du football à Port-Saïd (nord), douze personnes ont été tuées au Caire et à Suez (est) et 2.532 blessées, dont des policiers et des manifestants, a annoncé samedi le ministère de l'Intérieur.

Des Egyptiens sont descendus dans la rue pour réclamer le départ du pouvoir militaire, accusé d'inaction face aux violences dans le stade.

Parmi les victimes du drame de mercredi se trouvaient de nombreux "ultras", supporters de foot bien organisés et politisés, qui ont participé aux manifestations ces derniers mois contre l'armée au pouvoir en Egypte depuis la chute du président Hosni Moubarak il y a un an.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/02/201222174712848617.html>

Deadly clashes in Egypt over football riots

Nine killed and more than 2,500 wounded in clashes over authorities' failure to prevent Port Said football violence.

Last Modified: 04 Feb 2012 08:36

At least nine people have been killed in clashes in Egypt, as protesters fought with security forces over their alleged failure to prevent deadly football riots on Wednesday.

Six people died in the eastern port city of Suez, as police used live rounds to hold back crowds on Friday.

Three protesters were also killed in the capital, Cairo, as crowds broke down walls and barbed wire barriers to reach the heavily guarded interior ministry. Police fired birdshot and salvos of tear gas. One soldier was killed when a riot police truck backed into him, the government said.

According to the state health ministry, more than 2,500 people were wounded in the Cairo clashes.

Al Jazeera's Sue Turton, reporting from Cairo, said the ongoing nationwide protests are "another symptom of the security vacuum going on across the country".

In southern Egypt, 11 people were injured in protests outside the security directorate and police station in Minya governorate.

In Alexandria, Egypt's coastal second city, tear gas and fireworks were traded between security forces and protesters into the night outside the main security directorate.

In al-Marg, armed men attacked a police station and freed detainees after setting the station on fire, state-owned *al-Ahram* newspaper reported.

The crisis began when thousands of protesters took to the streets on Thursday to demand retribution for the deaths of at least 74 people who died a day earlier during a stampede at a premier league football match in the city of Port Said.

'Breakdown in security'

Many anti-government activists and hardcore football fans, known as ultras, blame the country's military leadership for either conspiring to foment the Port Said violence or negligently allowing it to occur.

Al Jazeera's Rawya Rageh, reporting from Cairo, said that during Friday prayers held in Tahrir Square, the leading cleric was questioning where the security forces were when the bloodshed happened.

She went on to say that since prayers ended the confrontations in front of the ministry of interior were continuing.

"The people wanted answers as to how exactly the football disaster happened," she said. "The question is, what exactly was the responsibility of the governor and the head of the police force there?"

"Furthermore, why did the police force, as seen on cameras, remain on the sidelines and not engage the crowds?"

"More importantly, people are directing their anger at the ruling military council, saying it is not just about the failure of the police force, but a whole failure of leadership."

Fans of the home side, Al Masry, stormed the pitch after a 3-1 victory against visiting favourites Al Ahly. Witnesses said security forces had allowed men into the stadium carrying knives and sticks. Though the majority of deaths reportedly came from those crushed or forced to fall off of terraces during the stampede, some were reportedly stabbed to death.

The stampede capped a week of violence in which several armed robberies and kidnappings were reported across Egypt, leading some to suspect the government had arranged the escalating chaos in an attempt to convince citizens of the need to maintain harsh emergency laws.

On Friday, gunmen intercepted a tourist minivan and snatched two female US tourists at gunpoint, along with their Egyptian tour guide near St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai, the region's security chief said.

Our correspondent said they were taken "by a Bedouin tribe that has been protesting over the past couple of months ... and is certainly part of larger breakdown in security ... an explosion in incidents from kidnappings to armed robberies".

Spreading chaos

In Tahrir Square on Thursday some demonstrators tried to move big concrete blocks erected around the interior ministry since November, when clashes between the police and protesters then left more than 40 people dead.

In scenes reminiscent of those clashes, protesters set tyres on fire, sending black smoke in the air. Egyptian state TV said 100 people had passed out from the tear gas.

The interior ministry said in a statement that the protesters had cut the barbed wire, and crossed over the concrete blocks to reach the roads leading to the headquarters.

It urged the protesters "to listen to the sound of wisdom ... at these critical moments" to prevent the spread of chaos.

Earlier in the day, hundreds joined funeral processions in the streets of Port Said.

A security official said Masry fans had chased Ahly players and cornered their supporters on the field and around the stadium, throwing stones and bottles at them.

Al-Ahly players were trapped in the changing room along with supporters and riot police were sent in to drive back the rival crowds of fans.

Mohamed Ibrahim, Egypt's interior minister, said many of the victims had died in a crush of people at the stadium.

At least 52 people have been arrested and authorities said the search for suspects linked to the violence was continuing.

Revenge attacks

A network of rabid football fans known as Ultras pledged vengeance, accusing the police of intentionally letting rivals attack them because they have been at the forefront of protests over the past year, first against Hosni Mubarak, the deposed president, and now the military.

Many of the fans who were among the protesters said they would storm the ministry.

Egypt declared three days of mourning for those killed in the football riots and angry members of parliament denounced the lack of security at the match during an emergency session on Thursday.

Addressing parliament, Kamal Ganzouri, the military-appointed prime minister, said Port Said's senior security chiefs and the governor had been suspended.

He also said the Egyptian football federation's board had been removed, but he still disappointed those seeking tougher steps, including dismissal of the interior minister.

"Egypt went through a difficult night yesterday. Egypt spent its night crying [over] its dead," Saad Katatni, the parliament speaker, said in the session's opening remarks.

Essam el-Erian, a politician from the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice party, said the military and police were complicit in the violence, accusing them of trying to show that emergency regulations giving security forces wide-ranging powers must be maintained.

"This tragedy is a result of intentional reluctance by the military and the police," he said.

Source:

Al Jazeera and agencies

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/05/egypt-football-massacre-police-arab-spring?newsfeed=true>

Egyptian police incited massacre at stadium, say angry footballers

Captain of team and his brother say violence in which more 70 fans died had been planned

The Observer, Sunday 5 February 2012



Fans rush the pitch during the riots that erupted after the match between Al-Masry and Al-Ahl in Port Said. Photograph: -/AFP/Getty Images

Twin brothers who play for the football team Al-Masry, whose match against a rival team in Egypt ended in a massacre, claim the violence was encouraged by the police with the backing of the army.

Captain Karim Zekri and his brother, Mohamed, told the website CommentMidEast.com that there was strong evidence the bloodshed was planned. More than 70 people were killed and at least 1,000 injured in the violence at the Port Said stadium following the home side Al-Masry's victory over Cairo-based Al-Ahly.

After the match finished, hundreds of Al-Masry supporters were seen to surge across the pitch to the visitors' end as panicked Ahly fans made for the exit. But it has emerged the steel doors were bolted shut, resulting in dozens being crushed to death.

"I have many friends who were in the stadium, and they swear to me that the police were saying to them 'Go and beat the shit out of them [Ahly fans] – they're saying you're not men'," said Mohamed, who was not playing and watched the game in a cafe near the stadium.

"During the second half, I saw about 10 armed thugs gathering outside the stadium, right in front of the police; there were about 50 policemen, but not a single one of them moved. The thugs had swords and were probably hiding other weapons. But I found the response of the police really odd. Other thugs arrived in cars and some went straight round to the away stand."

The 26-year-old brothers are symbols of Port Said football. Karim is a household name in Egypt, while his brother was considered the golden boy of Egyptian football earlier in his career.

Karim told the Egyptian football commentator Islam Issa that both teams had been ordered to their changing rooms after the match finished and the violence had broken out. It was only later that he realised what had happened. "We'd left our changing rooms and gone to the Ahly players' changing rooms to make sure they were OK, and there, we saw the disaster," Karim said. "I found corpses on the floor, and most of the deaths were from suffocation. People were squashed together and ended up dying that way. I went out of the changing rooms to help the Ahly fans get out."

He said the stadium's floodlights had been switched off. "We found out later that this happened as soon as we'd gone in – and this was one of the main causes of the disaster because people stamped on each other. I found people on the floor and I kept taking as many out of the stadium as I could and returning. The strange thing is that there were no police in the stands or in the player's tunnel where I was taking them out from."

The twins' claims are likely to reinforce the belief that the violence was orchestrated by the army against the "Ultras", the Al-Ahly fans whose experience confronting police at football matches was deployed with devastating effect against Egypt's security forces during the Arab spring.

Mohamed said he had felt something was wrong before kick-off. "Firstly, there was no real searching of fans as they entered the stadium, which is really unusual," he said. "Tickets weren't being checked, and there was no searching at all. And for the first time in the history of our town, the governor and chief of police did not attend this game."

Karim said he had heard that a man arrested on Friday had confessed to helping orchestrate the violence. "He said that there were more than 600 people hired from outside Port Said who entered the game. They'd taken money from one of the sacked National Democratic party members ... He told them to kill and cause havoc in the stadium, and now everyone is searching for him."

The brothers said they believed they were risking their lives by speaking out. "We are both ready to die like those who already have, if that's what it takes for the truth to emerge, and God willing, everyone will know the truth soon," Mohamed declared.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/02/201224131423624977.html>

Cairo street battles enter fourth day

Tax office in capital set on fire amid continuing anger at authorities' failure to prevent Port Said football violence.

Last Modified: 05 Feb 2012 06:42

Deadly clashes in Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt have entered their fourth day, as anger at the ruling military continues to boil after 72 people died in football-related violence.

Egypt's tax authority building in central Cairo was set on fire as the street protests against army rule raged into the early hours of Sunday, state television footage showed.

Parts of the building, close to the interior ministry, were set ablaze, media said.

Dozens of protesters remained in Mohamed Mahmoud street on Sunday morning, where riot police continued to occasionally fire tear gas to prevent the crowds from reaching the interior ministry building a few blocks away.

Police fired tear gas and birdshot at protesters throughout Saturday, after protesters threw stones at officers guarding the ministry, which is hundreds of metres from the capital's Tahrir Square.

In the canal city of Suez, two people died from wounds sustained in clashes overnight, medics said. The health ministry said 2,532 people have been injured since the violence erupted.

Five people were also hurt in overnight clashes outside police headquarters in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, the official MENA news agency reported.

'Security vacuum'

Violence began after a Wednesday football riot in Port Said that left at least 72 dead was blamed on poor security and an intentional plan to set fans from one side against the other.

Anger quickly focused on the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) - which has ruled Egypt since the ousting of ex-President Hosni Mubarak - and marchers took to the streets nationwide on Friday to demand that the generals cede power immediately.

Protesters, many of them organised supporters of Cairo's main football clubs known as the ultras, held up a huge banner to the police that read: "Those who didn't deserve to die have died at the hands of those who don't deserve to live."

Many of the dead in Wednesday's football riot in the northern city of Port Said were thought to have been Al-Ahly supporters, set upon by supporters of the local Al-Masry side after the home team won 3-1.

The ultras played a prominent role among anti-government elements in the uprising that toppled president Hosni Mubarak a year ago, and commentators and citizens have suggested pro-Mubarak forces were behind the incident, or at least complicit.

Al Jazeera's Rawya Rageh, reporting from Cairo on Friday, said that a cleric leading prayers in Tahrir Square questioned where the security forces were when the Port Said bloodshed happened.

"The people wanted answers as to how exactly the football disaster happened," she said. "The question is, what exactly was the responsibility of the governor and the head of the police force there?"

"Furthermore, why did the police force, as seen on cameras, remain on the sidelines and not engage the crowds?"

'Foreign hands'

In the ongoing aftermath, rocks and stones flew in all directions on Friday as police vans in Cairo repeatedly charged demonstrators.

At one point, police clubbed protesters just metres away from the interior ministry.

A soldier injured outside the interior ministry on Thursday died in hospital on Friday, MENA said.

In a sign of increased insecurity, armed assailants carrying automatic weapons stormed a police station in al-Marg, east Cairo, freeing detainees before torching it.

In the Dokki neighbourhood, a group of men attacked a police station, taking weapons from the building.

Al Jazeera's Sue Turton, reporting from Cairo, said the ongoing nationwide protests are "another symptom of the security vacuum going on across the country".

The SCAF blamed the unrest on "foreign and domestic hands targeting the country".

In a statement on Facebook, it urged "all political and national forces of this great nation to take a national and historic role and intervene ... to return stability".

The military has pledged to cede full powers to civilian rule when a president is elected by the end of June, but its opponents believe it intends to hold on to power behind the scenes after a transfer to civilian rule.

Spreading unrest

Fans of the home side, Al Masry, stormed the pitch after a 3-1 victory against visiting favourites Al Ahly.

Witnesses said security forces had allowed men into the stadium carrying knives and sticks. Though the majority of deaths reportedly came from those crushed or forced to fall off of terraces during the stampede, some were reportedly stabbed to death.

At least 52 people have been arrested and authorities said the search for suspects linked to the violence was continuing.

The stampede capped a week of violence in which several armed robberies and kidnappings were reported across Egypt, leading some to suspect the government had arranged the escalating chaos in an attempt to convince citizens of the need to maintain harsh emergency laws.

Pipeline attack

In a separate development, a gas pipeline running from Egypt to Israel was blown up on Sunday west of the Mediterranean coastal town of el-Arish.

Gas pumping was stopped, and security and fire fighting forces were responding to the scene.

The pipeline has been attacked at least 12 times since Mubarak stepped down. Many Egyptians are angry that Israel is able to purchase gas at allegedly reduced prices.

In the Sinai, the brief abduction on Friday of two US tourists and their guide by masked gunmen dealt a new blow to Egypt's already hard-hit tourism sector, despite their release unharmed several hours later.

Rageh said they were taken "by a Bedouin tribe that has been protesting over the past couple of months ... and is certainly part of larger breakdown in security ... an explosion in incidents from kidnappings to armed robberies".

Source:

Al Jazeera and agencies

<http://juralib.noblogs.org/2012/02/04/egypte-%C2%AB-les-crimes-commis-contre-les-forces-revolutionnaires-ne-stopperont-pas-la-revolution-%C2%BB-3/>

Le Caire : 3e jour d'affrontements continus

Les affrontements continuent à proximité du Ministère de l'Intérieur, ce soir, samedi 4 février, et se sont même étendus, en surface et en intensité.



Le 3 février

Jusqu'à hier concentrés dans la rue Mansour, les affrontements ont aujourd'hui également gagné la rue Noubar, sa parallèle, toutes deux donnant sur le Ministère de l'Intérieur. Toutes ces rues, et leurs parallèles des deux côtés, sont d'ailleurs plongées dans le noir, l'éclairage public ayant été coupé. Dans la rue Mansour, ce sont donc les feux allumés par les manifestant-es, et les tirs des policiers, qui apportent de la lumière. Ceux-ci sont d'ailleurs passés aux balles réelles. On a pu également assister au limogeage en règle de certaines personnes prises dans le filet policier, qui se faisaient littéralement tabasser à coups de pieds, de bâtons, dans la rue devant le Ministère. Les camions blindés de la police sont accompagnés par des alliés embusqués dans les immeubles du côté gauche de la rue Mansour, alors que du côté droit, ce sont les manifestant-es qui ont pris le contrôle du toit de l'université américaine, plus élevé, et qui balancent des projectiles pour faire reculer les flics.

Tous les immeubles des rues alentour semblent sortir d'une guerre : vitres brisées, marques d'incendies... À plusieurs rues autour, l'odeur et les effets du gaz lacrymogène se font ressentir : rue du Parlement, rue Cheikh Rihan, rue Abdel Aziz Gaouch, les passant-es, les travailleur-euses et les habitant-es sont obligé-es de porter un masque, alors que les affrontements se déroulent à quelques centaines de mètres de là !!!

Le bilan continue de s'alourdir, la presse officielle fait état ce soir de 12 morts au Caire, 2 à Suez. Les manifestations se sont étendues à d'autres villes, Port-Saïd évidemment, Suez foyer de la révolution, Alexandrie, Assiout... et rien ne semble pouvoir arrêter la colère populaire. De plus en plus de voix officielles appellent à la démission au moins du Ministre de l'Intérieur, et le régime militaire, pour essayer de sauvegarder son emprise, fait tomber des têtes : des officiels de la fédération de foot, le gouverneur de Port-Saïd... Mais cela ne suffira pas. Les Égyptien-nes le disent depuis plusieurs mois déjà : « Le peuple veut la chute du régime », tout entier, et cela pourrait bien égratigner au passage les Frères musulmans, bien timides à dénoncer les agissements de l'armée...

La même armée aurait d'ailleurs prévu d'intervenir si la situation perdure, demain ou lundi, ce qui ne risque pas de ramener le calme...

Indymedia Paris, 5 février 2012.

Dépêches Le 5 février à 19h34

Egypte: quatrième journée de heurts entre manifestants et policiers au Caire



Protestataires et police anti-émeutes s'affrontaient au Caire dimanche, au quatrième jour de heurts déclenchés par la mort de 74 personnes lors de violences à l'issue d'un match de football, que les forces de sécurité sont accusées de ne rien avoir fait pour empêcher. (© AFP Mahmud Hams)

LE CAIRE (AFP) - Des heurts sporadiques ont opposé dimanche des protestataires à la police anti-émeutes au Caire, pour la quatrième journée consécutive après la mort de 74 personnes à l'issue d'un match de football, imputée par les manifestants à l'inertie des forces de sécurité.

Des centaines de policiers ont bloqué les rues menant au ministère de l'Intérieur, dans le centre de la capitale égyptienne, et tiré des gaz lacrymogènes pour contrôler des dizaines de manifestants qui lançaient des pierres et des cocktails molotov.

La police a érigé un mur de béton en travers de la rue Mansour, devenue l'épicentre des violences, et placé des rouleaux de fils barbelés dans les autres rues de ce secteur proche de la place Tahrir.

Selon Mostafa Nabil, un médecin sur place, la police a lancé un assaut sur les positions des manifestants, tirant à la chevrotine et détenant brièvement des médecins d'un hôpital de campagne.

Après avoir baissé d'intensité en milieu de journée, les accrochages ont repris de manière sporadique dans l'après-midi.

Selon un bilan du ministère de l'Intérieur samedi, douze personnes ont été tuées au Caire et à Suez (est) et 2.532 autres blessées depuis le début jeudi matin des manifestations et des affrontements entre policiers et manifestants en colère après le drame du match de Port-Saïd (nord) mercredi soir.

Des milliers d'Égyptiens sont descendus dans les rues pour réclamer le départ du pouvoir militaire, accusé d'inaction pendant les violences dans le stade.

"Mon cœur brûle quand je pense à ce qui s'est passé à Port-Saïd, et nous savons tous que la police est responsable", a lancé Ahmed Farag, un manifestant, expliquant que les protestataires ne cherchaient pas à attaquer le ministère de l'Intérieur mais à manifester devant le siège de la police.

Parmi les victimes du drame de mercredi se trouveraient de nombreux "ultras", supporters de foot bien organisés et politisés, qui ont participé aux manifestations ces derniers mois contre l'armée au pouvoir en Égypte depuis la chute du président Hosni Moubarak il y a un an.

Le ministre de l'Intérieur, Mohamed Ibrahim, a dénoncé devant la presse "la volonté constante" des manifestants d'envahir son ministère, qu'il a mise sur le compte d'un "complot" visant à "affaiblir le pays".

La police ne veut porter préjudice à aucun "révolutionnaire" mais elle est prête à faire face à ceux "qui veulent détruire le pays", a-t-il insisté.

Il a également démenti les rumeurs selon lesquelles l'ancien ministre de l'Intérieur de Hosni Moubarak, Habib el-Adli, serait derrière les événements de Port-Saïd et les troubles qui ont suivi.

"Adli est en prison et il n'a plus de partisans dans ce ministère", a-t-il déclaré.

M. Adli est actuellement jugé en même temps que M. Moubarak et d'autres anciens responsables de la sécurité. Tous sont détenus à la prison de Torah, dans la banlieue du Caire, mais le ministère de l'Intérieur a annoncé dimanche qu'à la demande des manifestants, ils seraient répartis dans cinq établissements différents.

Et une unité médicale est en préparation à Torah, afin que M. Moubarak, actuellement en détention dans un hôpital militaire du Caire, puisse y être transféré, a ajouté le ministère.

Ces tensions interviennent dans un climat où le pouvoir et les médias gouvernementaux mettent régulièrement la contestation et les manifestations contre l'armée sur le compte de "complots" ourdis hors du pays et de "mains étrangères".

Les autorités s'apprêtent d'ailleurs à juger 44 prévenus, parmi lesquelles 19 Américains et d'autres étrangers, accusés de financement illégal d'organisations non-gouvernementales opérant en Égypte, a-t-on appris dimanche de source judiciaire égyptienne.

Toutes ces personnes sont pour l'instant en liberté conditionnelle et aucune date n'a été précisée pour le procès.

Ces ONG sont accusées d'avoir "établi des filiales d'organisations internationales en Égypte sans avoir obtenu l'agrément du gouvernement égyptien", et d'avoir "reçu des financements illégaux de l'étranger", selon la source judiciaire.

Signe que la situation sécuritaire ne s'améliore pas, des hommes armés ont saboté dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche dans le nord du Sinaï le gazoduc fournissant Israël et la Jordanie. Il s'agit du 12e acte de sabotage en un an contre cette installation stratégique.

La fourniture de gaz égyptien à Israël, négociée sous le règne de Hosni Moubarak, chassé par la rue en février 2011, fait l'objet de vives critiques en Egypte, où l'on estime en particulier que le prix a été sous-évalué.

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/06/world/middleeast/egyptian-forces-appear-to-end-siege-of-ministry.html>

Walls Prove No Barrier to Clashes on Streets of Cairo



Moises Saman for The New York Times

Demonstrators clashed with Egyptian riot police near the Interior Ministry in Cairo on Monday.

By DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK
Published: February 5, 2012

CAIRO — Egypt's military-led government built three new walls of heavy concrete blocks surrounding Egypt's Interior Ministry on Sunday. But they failed to stop a fourth night of violent clashes between security forces and protesters demanding an end to military rule.

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Muhammed Muheisen/Associated Press

Near where security forces used tear gas against protesters in Cairo on Sunday, many people on the street covered up.

By late Sunday night, the fighting in the streets of the capital had grown more intense than at any time since it began after a deadly riot at a soccer match on Wednesday night. Thousands of protesters alternately scurried and swarmed through the streets, hurling rocks and Molotov cocktails at rows of riot police officers.

The police chased protesters through the streets in at least three armored personnel carriers. They filled several blocks with thick clouds of tear gas, and walked through the white smoke blasting fleeing protesters with rubber bullets and birdshot.

The escalating violence raised new questions about the government's ability to control the fighting, in part because it showed the failure of what has become the military's favorite tactic in crowd control.

The military ultimately halted two previous outbreaks of street fighting, in November and December, by erecting 24-foot-tall concrete barriers bisecting streets leading from the symbolic center of the protests, Tahrir Square, to their most despised target, the Interior Ministry.

Before dawn on Sunday, the military erected three more, bringing the total number of walls to eight, including one that was partly toppled in protests this week. Along with the tableau of burned-out buildings and cars, rubble-strewn streets, and a thick dust of settled tear gas, the maze of barriers has completed the picture of a virtual war zone in the heart of the capital.

"It is a beautiful illustration of the poverty of political imagination in Egypt," said Heba Morayef, a researcher for Human Rights Watch. "This is policy making? Building walls?"

The identity and demands of the protesters continuing to battle the police were also unclear. At the forefront of the violence were die-hard soccer fans, known as ultras, who are convinced that the police bore responsibility for the soccer riot that killed more than 70 fans Wednesday night.

But leaders of Cairo's ultras, groups dedicated to the capital's two rival teams, Al Ahly and Zamalek, had said they would not officially join the protests during a period of mourning for those killed in the riots. The ultras who were at the protests were joined by even less organized antagonists who were angry at the police for their own reasons.

All of them called for the end of military rule, often in chants about the execution of the top officer, Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi or, more obscenely, about his mother, but even the seasoned political activists who joined the fight did not agree on specific demands about how the military should give up power. Nor was it clear who could negotiate on their behalf to end the street fight.

During a lull in the fighting that prevailed for most of the day Sunday, newly elected members of Parliament, mothers who had lost sons in the fighting, and Muslim religious scholars all came to the scene to try to broker an end to the violence. But as the sun set and the crowds grew, a standoff in front of a line of riot police officers grew increasingly tense, and by about 7:30 p.m. the fight had resumed.

Liam Stack and Mayy El Sheikh contributed reporting.

A version of this article appeared in print on February 6, 2012, on page A9 of the New York edition with the headline: Walls Prove No Barrier to Clashes on Streets of Cairo.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/02/2012265541989641.html>

Protesters continue to battle police in Egypt

Activists demand early presidential elections and swift handover of power by military in wake of deadly football match.

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Clashes have continued in Egypt with police firing tear gas at demonstrators hurling stones and broken tiles, as the protesters demanded swift presidential election and an early handover of power by the ruling military.

Thousands of people protested outside the interior ministry in Cairo, the capital, accusing the ruling Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) of failing to prevent the deaths of 72 people during last week's football violence.

At least 12 people have been killed in clashes in Cairo and Suez since the match in the Mediterranean city of Port Said.

"The demand is that the army step down politically and announce the start of nominations for the presidential election immediately," Waleed Saleh, an activist, said on Sunday.

Al Jazeera's Sherine Tadros, reporting from Cairo, said, "The protesters have set a building and one armed vehicle on fire, while the police have been firing tear gas for several hours. The security forces have also fired bird shots."

"The situation is really deteriorating, looking much like a war zone in that area around the interior ministry building," she said.

"Whereas the fighting was confined to one or two streets in the past few days, now seems to be spreading," the Al Jazeera correspondent said.

"What is happening is more and more protesters are coming out because they feel their friends and brothers are being injured and killed, and they are going to fight in solidarity."

The football disaster and tactics of security forces in dealing with protesters have added to anger at the military's handling of the transition, and fuelled calls for the army to return to barracks sooner than it had envisaged.

Protesters blame the police for allowing or even encouraging the violence during the match between al-Ahly and al-Masry on February 1.

Many say the police are using the same heavy-handed tactics against protests as the era of Hosni Mubarak, the toppled president.

The minister of interior has blamed provocations by rival fans for the violence at the match, although he said there were also security shortcomings.

Mubarak move

Meanwhile, the military-backed government's reported plan to move Mubarak to a Cairo prison hospital, appeared to have done little to quell the anger of those demonstrating.

Protesters have long complained that the army was sparing its former commander the humiliation of jail by keeping him in a military hospital during his trial.

Mubarak has been charged over the deaths of protesters during the 18-day uprising that deposed him.

The hospital in Torah prison, where other former Mubarak officials and allies are held, had been deemed by officials not fit to handle Mubarak's treatment, though the former president's precise ailment is unclear.

Political figures and a civilian advisory body to the military have suggested bringing forward a presidential vote to April or May, from the June date foreseen in the transition timetable of the army, which took power after Mubarak stepped down.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which forms the biggest bloc in a newly elected parliament, added its voice on Saturday to calls for a faster transition.

US seeks 'clarification'

In a separate development, the US has demanded "clarification" over Cairo's apparent plans to put dozens of pro-democracy activists, including 19 US citizens, on trial over charges of illegal funding of aid groups.

Victoria Nuland, the US state department spokeswoman, said Washington was "deeply concerned" over the developments, which threatened to further strain ties with Egypt's military rulers.

"We have seen media reports that judicial officials in Egypt intend to forward a number of cases involving US-funded NGOs to the Cairo criminal court," Nuland said.

"We are deeply concerned by these reports and are seeking clarification from the government of Egypt."

A top official at Freedom House, one of the groups targeted, called Egypt's handling of the matter "a disaster".

A judicial source in Cairo told the AFP news agency that 44 people, including Egyptians, would be tried over the alleged illegal funding of aid groups, a day after the US said it would review \$1.3bn aid to Egypt over the crackdown.

The offices of Freedom House and the International Republican Institute were among 17 local and international NGOs raided in December by Egyptian authorities as part of an investigation into funding.

The aid workers are accused of "setting up branches of international organizations in Egypt without a license from the Egyptian government" and of "receiving illegal foreign funding".

A travel ban on all the NGO workers who were detained remains in place.

Source:

Al Jazeera and agencies

<http://www.firstpost.com/world/street-battle-breaks-out-near-egypts-interior-ministry-205303.html>

Street battle breaks out near Egypt's Interior Ministry

Feb 7, 2012

#Al-Ahly #Egypt #Hosni Mubarak #NewsTracker #Port Said

Cairo: Rock-throwing protesters fought riot police through clouds of tear gas near Egypt's Interior Ministry on a second day of clashes triggered by the deaths in Port Said of 74 people – the country's worst soccer disaster.

A demonstrator and an army officer were reported dead in Cairo and in the city of Suez two people were killed on Friday as police used live rounds to hold back crowds trying to break into a police station and fought in front of the state security headquarters, witnesses and the ambulance service said.

Hundreds of protesters blocked roads near state security headquarters in Egypt's second-largest city Alexandria.

Most of those killed in the Port Said football stadium on Wednesday night were crushed in a stampede and the government declared three days of mourning. Protesters hold the military-led authorities responsible.

A protester returns a gas canister during clashes with security forces near the Interior Ministry. Reuters

It was the country's deadliest incident since an uprising ousted Hosni Mubarak almost a year ago and it gave fresh impetus to regular street protests against Egypt's ruling generals.

"We will stay until we get our rights. Did you see what happened in Port Said?" said 22-year-old Abu Hanafy, who arrived from work on Thursday evening and decided to join the protest.

The ministry in Cairo, a focus of hatred for football fans who say lax policing was to blame for the stadium disaster, has been hemmed in by street battles since Thursday.

Thousands staged running battles with riot police throughout Friday, ignoring government appeals to end the violence.

Tens of thousands were protesting peacefully nearby in Cairo's landmark Tahrir Square after 28 youth activist groups and political parties called for a "Friday of Anger."

A Reuters witness heard firing and found gun pellets on the ground. Demonstrators had heaved aside a concrete barrier blocking a main road near the ministry overnight to get closer to the building.

"We pulled it down with our bare hands," said Abdul-Ghani Mohamed, a 32-year-old construction worker. "We are the sons of the pharaohs."

Ambulances had to intervene overnight to extract riot police whose truck took a wrong turn into a street full of protesters.

Police fired round after round of tear gas and the wind picked up on Friday afternoon to waft the fumes back to the police lines, leading the rioting protesters, some of whom waved soccer team flags, to cry "God is Greatest."

Some of the demonstrators, mostly men in their late teens and 20s, goaded police defending the neat five-story ministry building, shouting "The army, the police – one filthy hand."

DESTRUCTION IN SUEZ

Almost 1,700 people had been hurt by late morning in the latest confrontations in Cairo and 207 in Suez, the Health Ministry said, many of them from inhaling tear gas.

An army lieutenant was killed by a security vehicle that ran over him by mistake, Health Ministry officials said.

Rocks thrown by protesters littered streets that two months ago saw clashes between police and activists who view the Interior Ministry as an unreformed vestige of Mubarak's rule.

Hardcore football fans known as "ultras," who often clash with the police and were at the forefront of the uprising against Mubarak, vowed to continue their protests.

"The crimes committed against the revolutionary forces will not stop the revolution or scare the revolutionaries," said a pamphlet printed in the name of the ultras.

In Suez, witnesses said fighting broke out at a police station. "We received two corpses of protesters shot dead by live ammunition," said a doctor at a morgue.

Police cordoned off the Suez state security headquarters and a Justice Ministry compound with razor wire and seven burned-out vehicles were nearby.

Many shops in Suez were wrecked and the facade of the Suez Canal Bank was destroyed. Police fired tear gas and shotgun pellets at protesters throwing stones.

The soccer stadium deaths have heaped fresh criticism on the military council that has governed Egypt since Mubarak stepped down. Critics regard the generals as part of his administration and an obstacle to change.

The army leadership, in turn, has presented itself as the guardian of the “January 25 revolution” and promised to hand power to an elected president by the end of June.

INTERIOR MINISTER BLAMES FANS

Health officials said at least 1,000 people were hurt in Port Said when fans invaded the pitch after local team al-Masry beat Cairo’s Al Ahli, Africa’s most successful club.

Hundreds of al-Masry supporters surged across the pitch to the visitors’ end and panicked Al Ahli fans dashed for the exit. But the steel doors were bolted shut and dozens were crushed to death in the stampede, witnesses said.

The cause of the violence has been the focus of intense speculation. Some believe it was triggered by unknown provocateurs working for remnants of the Mubarak administration who are seeking to sabotage the transition to democracy.

Fans were puzzled at how match officials allowed the game to continue even as rival supporters threw stones and fired flares.

They also pointed to a thin police presence given the tense build-up to the game and a precedent of violence at such highly charged events.

Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim said the fans started it by insulting and provoking each other.

The public prosecutor ordered 52 suspects in the Port Said incident detained for 15 days pending investigation, state news agency MENA said.

They all face charges of premeditated murder, causing bodily harm, thuggery and destroying public property, MENA quoted deputy public prosecutor Abdul-Maguid Mahoumd as saying. The prosecutor will base his case partly on footage from 33 video cameras running in the stadium during the violence.

Ibrahim was widely blamed for the deaths during an emergency parliamentary session on Thursday. MPs including the Islamists who control some 70 percent of the chamber called for him to be held to account and accused him of negligence.

Safwat Zayat, an analyst, said the incident had done further damage to the image of the country’s military rulers. “The current events push in the direction of speeding up the transfer of power to civilians,” Zayat said.

Reuters

<http://msn.foxsports.com/foxsoccer/world/story/egypt-soccer-tragedy-riots-arab-spring-uprising-military-doubts-020712>

Port Said turns to uprising focal point



Egyptians gather around an area of clashes between anti-military protesters, police.

SpecialtoFoxSoccer JOHN DUERDEN

Updated Feb 7, 2012 4:52 PM ET

Disaster and soccer have had a distressing relationship almost since the game wormed its way into the world's hearts and minds.

The list of countries that have seen fans attend a game from which they never made it home is depressingly long. The Hillsborough Stadium disaster in 1989 saw 96 Liverpool fans killed and was a turning point in the history of the game in England.

What happened in Port Said on February 1 is going to be a turning point in the history of Egypt as a nation. It could prove to be the catalyst that takes the uprising of the early part of 2011 - which swept Hosni Mubarak from power - to the next stage, though considering what happened after the dictator departed (or, rather, what didn't happen), nobody will take anything for granted.

The future of the country is, of course, not on the minds on those who lost loved ones last Wednesday as Al Ahly, one of Egypt's two biggest clubs (along with Cairo rivals Zamalek), traveled north to take on Al Masri. At the match, the home fans charged the visitors and 74 people lost their lives.

In the bad old days in England, any untoward incident in a stadium was quickly laid by the media at the feet and fists of the fans, and blame quickly followed by police and politicians. This basic instinct was sometimes correct but sometimes, as in the case of Hillsborough, badly wrong. Last week in Egypt, however, it was different. The country has been in mourning, but there is also a rising tide of anger at those who many think are responsible – not the fans, but those still in power and the security forces.

Politics is absent from soccer in very few countries, but in Egypt it is hard to imagine just how close that relationship is, especially in recent times. Mubarak, like other dictators in the region (whether they are based in Tehran, Baghdad or Tripoli), was never slow to use the popularity of the game, which cuts across all divides in Egypt - including class, religion or politician persuasion - to increase his own standing.

The beautiful game can wriggle out of the tightest embrace to bite back. In June 2009, Iran, convulsed by popular demonstrations at home, watched in shock, and for many, excitement, as members of their beloved national team donned green armbands in a vital World Cup qualifier in Seoul: an open display of support for the opposition candidate at the recently-contested (and according to the opposition, manipulated) election.

Egypt is as passionate about soccer as Iran, if not more so. For one thing, it has the Ultras, the hardcore fans who take after those in places like Italy and Serbia. Increasingly politicized over the years, these young men were already well-organized, disaffected and accustomed to clashing with security forces during the Mubarak era. It was perhaps inevitable that they would play a prominent part in the Egyptian edition of the Arab Spring.

During the initial protests that started in January 2011 in Tahrir Square, fans battled with security forces, helping others to lose their fear of fighting back and helping to repel pro-Mubarak supporters on camels on February 2. Nine days later, the old man was gone, but that doesn't mean that democracy followed. The fans, as well as others, have been increasingly frustrated with the fact that the people's revolution was in danger of becoming not much more than a military coup. Mubarak was gone, elections had been held but the military council, backed by the hated security forces, was calling the shots.

The hardcore at clubs like Al Ahly (who are currently part of a united front with rivals Zamalek to fight back against what they see as a general attack on fans after the events in Port Said), have been vocal since the departure of Mubarak in calling for the military council to go the same way. It didn't stop at chanting. Fans have been fighting in the streets, stormed the State Security offices in February and were involved in September's siege of the Israeli embassy and street violence around Tahrir Square late last year in which more than 50 people were killed.

TRAGEDY IN EGYPT

Football violence rears its ugly head in Egypt. Here's a look at the tragedy from the soccer stadium in Port Said.

It is this activity that has led to the widespread belief that what happened in Port Said was not a simple soccer riot but the generals getting revenge on the hardcore fans of Al Ahly - fans who have proven to be one of their most hardcore opponents. Debates have been raging as to whether the large number of Al Masri followers with weapons were actually fans of the club or rented troublemakers working on behalf of the regime. Mubarak was accused of something similar last year amid reports of prisoners being released to attack protestors. However, there are other questions, such as why did the police do nothing, or why were the stadium gates locked, preventing Al Ahly fans from escaping.

These questions are being asked in a forceful manner. Seven people have been killed as protestors stormed the country's interior ministry seeking answers, clashing with police and demanding the end of the generals. Another five died in Suez. There were those that had become weary of the ultras - the constant protests, demonstrations and upheaval - but now there is pressure coming from all sides. The Muslim Brotherhood, the biggest political party after January's parliamentary elections, now wants the presidential elections that were due to be held in June to take place in April or May. A civilian council, appointed by the army, has proposed something similar and requested that nominations for the presidency should be allowed from February 23 (and not April 15) to try to calm the situation.

What this tragedy, whether orchestrated or not, may have done is unite the country to a much greater extent than before against the ruling military council. It is possible that it could contribute to genuine democracy in the country and civilian rule. If so, and it may sound trite, their deaths, shocking and tragic though they were, may not have been completely in vain.

John Duerden resides in East Asia and has been called 'The Voice of Asian Football' by BBC Radio. He covers football on the giant continent for The Guardian, Sports Illustrated, FourFourTwo, the Associated Press and a number of newspapers and sites around Asia. He can be found on Twitter at @JohnnyDuerden.

<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2012/02/06/01003-20120206ARTFIG00722-egypte-les-islamistes-face-a-la-crise.php>

Égypte : les islamistes face à la crise

Mots clés : Frères musulmans, Émeutes, Égypte, Le Caire, Mohamed Badie

Par Marion Guénard Mis à jour le 07/02/2012 à 09:04 | publié le 06/02/2012 à 08:07



Des échauffourées entre les manifestants et les forces de l'ordre se sont poursuivies, lundi, aux alentours du ministère de l'Intérieur, au Caire. Crédits photo : MARCO LONGARI/AFP

Alors que les manifestations violentes se poursuivent dans le centre de la capitale, les Frères musulmans, devenus la première force politique au Parlement, évitent de critiquer trop durement l'armée au pouvoir.

Après cinq jours d'émeutes, qui ont fait 12 morts, le centre du Caire ressemble à une zone de guerre. Depuis la nuit de samedi, les autorités ont élevé cinq murs autour du ministère de l'Intérieur pour contenir plusieurs centaines d'Égyptiens qui continuent de défier la police dans une atmosphère irrespirable de gaz irritants. Ces manifestants ne décolèrent pas et accusent toujours le pouvoir d'être responsable du drame de Port-Saïd, où au moins 74 supporters ont péri dans des affrontements à l'issue d'un match de football. Signe de son embarras, ces cinq murs de lourds blocs de béton sont la seule réponse concrète du Conseil suprême des forces armées, qui, sourd aux demandes des Égyptiens, évoque l'œuvre de forces intérieures et extérieures, cherchant à «faire chuter la police, l'armée et l'Égypte tout entière».

Ce nouveau sursaut de violences décontenance également les Frères musulmans, qui depuis les élections législatives constituent la première force politique du pays, avec 47 % des sièges

au Parlement. Sur Misr25, la chaîne télévisée de la confrérie, le guide suprême Mohammed Badie a pointé du doigt «des individus, qui projettent de détruire le pays. Ils sont connus du Conseil suprême des forces armées et de la police, qui retardent le moment de les traduire en justice, ce qui est inacceptable».

Une déclaration jugée largement insuffisante pour les révolutionnaires et pour une poignée de députés libéraux, qui, eux, mettent directement en cause la responsabilité de l'armée et exigent, en plus du départ des militaires au pouvoir, la démission du ministre de l'Intérieur et du procureur général.

Une situation délétère

«Les Frères se trompent de cible et ne veulent pas prendre leur responsabilité en tant que parlementaires. C'est grave car cela révèle que le Parlement n'a pas d'autorité. On voit bien que le conseil militaire mène la danse, sans se soucier du choix électoral des Égyptiens», regrette Abdel Rahman Ayyash, jeune activiste indépendant, proche des Frères musulmans.

Pour l'heure, le pouvoir n'a cédé qu'à une des demandes des parlementaires: désormais les anciens du régime incarcérés depuis la révolution seront séparés les uns des autres dans des prisons différentes, afin qu'ils n'aient plus l'occasion de communiquer entre eux. Le président déchu, Hosni Moubarak, devrait quant à lui être transféré de son hôpital militaire à la prison de Tora.

Beaucoup de groupes révolutionnaires, soutenus par une poignée de députés libéraux, dont certains sont d'anciens membres des Frères musulmans, appellent aujourd'hui le Parlement à prendre les rênes du pays.

L'une des options possibles consisterait à transférer le pouvoir exécutif au chef de l'Assemblée élue, dont la mission serait alors d'organiser une élection présidentielle dans les soixante jours. Mais les Frères musulmans refusent ce scénario. Conscients de la situation délétère après un an de gestion du pays par l'armée, ils veulent à tout prix retarder le moment de gouverner et s'accrochent au calendrier fixé par les militaires, qui prévoit le retour du pouvoir aux civils en juin, une fois le président élu.

Déception

Par ailleurs, ils cherchent à éviter une confrontation directe avec l'armée. «En cas de conflit, les Frères musulmans ont peur que le conseil militaire cède le pouvoir tout d'un coup au Parlement et cela va à l'encontre de leur stratégie. Ils ne veulent pas non plus former un gouvernement d'union nationale car cela montrerait qu'ils ne maîtrisent pas tout. Entre-temps, des gens continuent d'attaquer le ministère de l'Intérieur et le nombre des victimes augmente. Les Frères musulmans ne sont pas à la hauteur de la situation», avance Moaaz Mahmoud, chercheur en sciences politiques au Caire.

Beaucoup dénoncent aujourd'hui cette situation absurde d'un Parlement récemment élu, qui marque la première étape de la reconstruction de l'Égypte, mais qui est pourtant bloqué dans son fonctionnement par sa principale force politique. «Je ne pense pas que les Frères musulmans peuvent perdre en popularité. Pour être honnête, la majorité des gens en Égypte aujourd'hui, ne veut pas d'un changement radical. Ils veulent la stabilité, qu'incarnent les Frères. Mais si la confrérie s'attaquait directement au conseil militaire, tout le spectre

politique approuverait et la soutiendrait», remarque le jeune activiste, qui cache mal sa déception. «Les seuls qui défendent le sang des martyrs sont des libéraux. Les Frères, alors qu'ils sont au pouvoir, ne font rien du tout. Seulement des réunions, vides de sens et d'actions!»

Des militants d'ONG en justice

Les États-Unis ont exprimé leur «profonde inquiétude» en apprenant que des dizaines de militants associatifs, dont 19 Américains, pourraient être renvoyés devant la justice en Égypte. Ce sont 44 personnes en tout qui ont été déférées devant la cour criminelle du Caire après des perquisitions fin décembre dans 17 locaux d'ONG égyptiennes et internationales parmi lesquelles le National Democratic Institute ou encore la fondation allemande Konrad-Adenauer. Elles sont accusées de s'être installées sans «l'agrément» du gouvernement et d'avoir reçu «des financements illégaux». Le pouvoir évoque régulièrement des «complots ourdis» par des «mains étrangères».

<http://www.afriquinfos.com/articles/2012/2/9/afrique-boreale-196394.asp>

Egypte: une nouvelle série d'émeutes rend la transition politique urgente

LE CAIRE (Xinhua) - Selon les chiffres publiés mardi par le ministère égyptien de la Santé, les affrontements qui se sont produits ces derniers jours en Egypte ont fait 15 morts et plus de 2 000 blessés.

Jeudi 9 février 2012 | 12:38 UTC

Les responsables égyptiens chargés de l'organisation des élections ont annoncé lundi que la nomination des candidats aux élections présidentielles pourrait être ouverte dès le 10 mars, un mois avant la date prévue.

Les analystes ont souligné le fait que les manifestants en Egypte avaient exhorté le conseil militaire, provisoirement à la tête du pays, à remettre immédiatement le pouvoir à un gouvernement élu, après le choc causé dans le pays par une émeute sanglante à la fin d'un match de football au début du mois. Les récentes déclarations faites par les forces armées ont également montré que toutes les parties en Egypte envisageaient d'accélérer le processus électoral, ont-ils ajouté.

RECRUESCENCE DE LA VIOLENCE

Une émeute qui a éclaté mercredi dernier à la fin d'un match de football dans la ville de Port-Saïd, dans le nord-est de l'Égypte, a tué au moins 74 personnes et en a blessé des centaines.

Choqués par cette émeute sanglante, des manifestants sont descendus dans la rue au Caire, à Alexandrie et à Suez, accusant la police et le Conseil suprême des forces armées, qui a pris le pouvoir après le départ de l'ancien président Hosni Moubarak en février dernier, d'être incapables de contrôler la situation.

Les manifestants ont également exhorté les responsables de l'armée à transférer immédiatement le pouvoir à un gouvernement civil.

Plusieurs manifestations de grande ampleur ont en fait eu lieu en Egypte depuis janvier, les protestataires réclamant un transfert de pouvoir immédiat dans le pays. Beaucoup de manifestants se sont engagés à poursuivre leur action jusqu'à ce que leurs demandes soit entendues. L'insatisfaction à l'égard des forces armées et du ministère de l'Intérieur n'a été que renforcée par l'émeute de Port-Saïd.

L'ARMEE FERA-T-ELLE DES CONCESSIONS ?

Hussein Tantawi, chef du Conseil suprême des forces armées, a rencontré lundi le chef de la Cour constitutionnelle suprême, Farouk Sultan, pour discuter des procédures à mettre en place en vue de la nomination des candidats aux élections présidentielles à venir.

Outre leur demande d'élections présidentielles anticipées, les manifestants égyptiens réclament également de l'armée qu'elle envoie Hosni Moubarak en prison.

L'ancien leader égyptien est en procès pour son rôle présumé dans la répression des manifestants durant les protestations de l'année dernière. Pour des raisons de santé, Hosni Moubarak est détenu dans un centre médical international, dans l'est du Caire.

Fakhry el-Tahtawi, professeur de sciences politiques à l'Université du Caire, a indiqué que l'armée pourrait accepter de faire davantage de concessions afin d'apaiser les manifestants.

UNE NOUVELLE DISTRIBUTION DU POUVOIR

Le 23 janvier, l'armée égyptienne a remis le pouvoir législatif aux mains de l'Assemblée du peuple (chambre basse du Parlement) nouvellement élue.

Environ 25% des membres de l'Assemblée du peuple ont blâmé le ministre de l'Intérieur, Mohamed Ibrahim, pour l'émeute de Port-Saïd, et ont exigé une réforme du ministère de l'Intérieur.

Les Frères musulmans, qui détiennent une majorité à l'Assemblée du peuple, ont déclaré que le budget militaire devait être soumis à l'approbation du Parlement, et que le corps législatif devait jouer un rôle central dans l'enquête sur les causes de l'émeute.

Des analystes ont souligné que l'émeute de Port-Saïd avait entraîné davantage d'incertitudes quant à la situation sécuritaire en Egypte. Cependant, le soutien apporté par les Frères musulmans à un transfert de pouvoir immédiat pourrait contribuer à accélérer la transition politique en Egypte, évitant que la situation ne s'aggrave davantage.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j4Hasf1AVSL_W2PfdUgV9lji8EqQ?docId=CNG.4436a6d41c14c4cc05defb81e2b6e08c.311

Egypt's Brotherhood says it should govern

(AFP) – Feb 9, 2012

CAIRO — A spokesman for Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood which now dominates parliament called on Thursday for the caretaker cabinet to be sacked and replaced with a Brotherhood one after deadly football riots.

The Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, which won almost half of parliament's seats in elections over November and December, had said it would work with the military-appointed cabinet for a transitional period.

But the Brotherhood's spokesman Mahmud Ghozlan said the February 1 riot at a football stadium in the Mediterranean town of Port Said, which left more than 70 dead, showed that the government had failed to manage the country.

The incident "proved that the cabinet has failed in administering the country," he told AFP.

"If this happens, the party that won the most votes is best suited" to form a government, he said in response to a question on whether the Brotherhood's party should form the cabinet.

The Brotherhood was the most organised opposition movement during president Hosni Mubarak's rule, which ended with a popular uprising that toppled him a year ago and ushered in military rule.

Since then, the Islamist movement has in turn cooperated with the ruling generals and opposed them over such matters as a military role in drafting a new constitution.

But it has also opposed sometimes deadly anti-military protests, saying Egyptians can express their grievances through the parliament it dominates.

The military has promised to hand over power after presidential elections later this year.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/02/09/uk-egypt-idUKTRE8181PJ20120209>

Call for open-ended strike divides Egypt



By Tamim Elyan

CAIRO | Thu Feb 9, 2012 4:51pm GMT

(Reuters) - Egypt's religious authorities called on unions and youth groups to scrap plans for a wave of strikes aimed at forcing the ruling generals from power, saying the people must show duty to the nation and spare its tattered economy fresh damage.

The first strike planned from Saturday - the anniversary of Hosni Mubarak's overthrow - would close universities and factories, cancel trains and slash public services.

Analysts say Egypt is in desperate need of foreign support to avert a financial crisis caused by a year of economic and political turmoil. Investment and tourism have shrivelled, unemployment has grown and foreign reserves are at danger level.

"I appeal to you ... not to disrupt work even for one hour and commit yourselves to meet your duties toward yourselves, your families and your country," Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayib, Grand Imam of Egypt's highest Islamic authority al-Azhar, said in a message to the nation of 80 million people.

In a statement carried in newspapers, Coptic Orthodox Pope Shenouda III said: "Civil disobedience is not accepted by religion and the state does not accept it and there are many verses in the Holy Book that talk of following the ruler."

An estimated 10 percent of Egypt's population is Christian.

The scale of response to the strike call will offer clues to the appetite of Egyptians for more confrontation with the army, which oversaw the first free election in six decades and is pledging to hand full power to elected civilians by mid-year.

Critics say the military will try to keep wielding power from behind the scenes.

The army has deployed extra soldiers and tanks to protect state buildings and public property in the build-up to the strike, which has highlighted deep divisions between liberal and leftist youth groups on one side and the army, Islamist politicians and religious leaders on the other.

Activists say the strike will begin a wave of national disobedience to raise the heat on the military council that took power from Mubarak. They say the council stands in the way of democracy, social justice and individual freedoms.

"VERY DANGEROUS"

Many youth activists believe the military must be forced to give up power but say that conventional street protests are failing to exert enough pressure, especially since the election of a parliament dominated by Islamists who oppose confronting the army on the street.

"The strike is just a beginning to carry the revolutionary battle forward, to link political and democratic demands with social and economic ones," said a statement signed by 39 youth groups.

The Muslim Brotherhood, whose party is the biggest bloc in the new parliament, has refused to back the strike.

"This call is very dangerous to the interests of the nation and its future," Mahmoud Hussein, general secretary of the Brotherhood, said in a statement on its website.

A group supporting the military council launched an online campaign entitled "hire me instead," calling on the authorities to fire strikers and hire unemployed people in their place.

Successive street clashes between riot police and revolutionary groups have drawn an angry response from citizens waiting for a return to stability in the hope it will lead to more jobs and less poverty.

At least 15 people were killed in the latest spate of street violence in Cairo and the eastern city of Suez, sparked by the death of 74 people after a soccer match.

Even some of the strike organisers are playing down the prospect of 100 percent success. Labour leaders say they have been spreading calls for strike in workplaces but they still lack grassroots organization to mobilize successfully.

The protests are set to continue spontaneously until May, activists say, to press demands including a return of the army to its barracks, forming a national salvation government, prosecuting those responsible for incidents of violence against protesters and better pay and conditions for workers.

"We are tired of blood and dead people ... the military council is the reason behind this," said Sherif Hany of Cairo University student union, which has called for an open strike.

(Editing by Tom Pfeiffer and Mark Heinrich)

<http://www.wsws.org/francais/News/2012/fev2012/egyp-f09.shtml>

Les protestations contre la junte égyptienne se propagent après le massacre à l'issue d'un match de football

Par Johannes Stern

9 février 2012

Vendredi, les protestations contre la junte militaire égyptienne se sont répandues à l'ensemble du pays. Les protestations sont une réaction aux émeutes pro-régime survenues après un match de football qui ont eu lieu mercredi à Port-Saïd et lors desquelles 74 supporters du plus célèbre club de football El-Ahly ont été tués et plusieurs centaines d'autres blessés.

Dans le centre-ville du Caire, des milliers de travailleurs et de jeunes ont démolé dans la rue Mohamed Mahmoud le mur érigé par l'armée durant les derniers affrontements en novembre pour encercler le ministère de l'Intérieur. Ils ont exigé la chute du régime et l'exécution du général Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, dirigeant du Conseil suprême des Forces armées (SCAF) de la junte.

De violents affrontements entre les Forces de sécurité centrales (CSF) et les manifestants se sont poursuivis toute la nuit de jeudi à vendredi. Les CSF ont attaqué les manifestants avec du gaz lacrymogène et des balles en caoutchouc pour empêcher qu'ils n'envahissent le ministère. Un manifestant aurait été tué par une balle en caoutchouc et plus de 1.400 ont été blessés.

Dans le port de la ville de Suez, les forces de sécurité ont tiré à balles réelles dans la foule de manifestants qui attaquaient le poste de police. Au moins deux personnes auraient été tuées et de nombreux autres blessés. Les manifestants ont aussi attaqué des magasins et détruit la façade de la Banque du Canal de Suez. Les forces de police ont bouclé avec des barbelés les quartiers généraux de la sécurité d'État de Suez et le ministère de la Justice.

À Alexandrie, les obsèques de Mahmoud El-Ghandour, 23 ans, fondateur du club de supporters des El-Ahly Ultras de la ville, se sont transformés en une manifestation contre la junte. Les protestataires se sont dirigés vers le commandement militaire du district Nord en scandant des slogans contre le SCAF.

À Port-Saïd, où le carnage a eu lieu, des milliers de manifestants se sont rassemblés devant le siège du gouverneur en scandant : « Port-Saïd est innocent, c'est la vérité ». Ce slogan signifie que ce n'étaient pas les supporters ordinaires d'Al-Masry qui étaient responsables de la violence, mais des agents infiltrés travaillant pour les forces de sécurité.

Un manifestant a dit au journal *Egyptian Independent* : « Les supporters d'Ahly étaient en grande majorité de Port-Saïd. Mon frère était l'un d'entre eux. Port-Saïd est triste aujourd'hui, tous les habitants de la ville sont tristes et ont l'impression que leurs propres proches sont morts. »

Tout porte à croire que les émeutes mortelles étaient un acte de violence orchestré. Des témoins oculaires qui étaient sur les lieux au stade lorsque l'équipe d'El-Masry a battu El-Ahly 3-1 ont raconté qu'un policier avait dit aux « supporters » d'El-Masry - qui scandaient des slogans en faveur de Tantawi et de la junte durant le match - de venir sur le terrain à la fin du match. Certains ont signalé que la porte entre les stands et le terrain avait été laissée ouverte alors que les portes des blocs des supporters d'Ahly étaient fermées. Au moment où les fier-à-bras ont attaqué les supporters d'Ahly avec des couteaux, des bouteilles, des gourdins et des pétards, les forces de sécurité n'ont pas bougé.

Les enquêteurs qui sont arrivés sur le stade vendredi ont constaté qu'un concierge avait déjà nettoyé le sol et les murs des vestiaires de l'équipe visiteuse en élimant toute trace de sang éventuelle. Selon les joueurs d'Ahly, plusieurs supporters blessés d'Ahly sont morts dans les vestiaires des joueurs des suites de leurs blessures. Dans le stade même, une équipe médico-légale a trouvé des douilles vides sur les sièges où étaient assis les supporters d'Ahly.

Le massacre rappelle les événements qui étaient survenus il y a exactement un an lorsque des nervis engagés par le gouvernement avaient attaqué les manifestants avec des chevaux et des chameaux sur la place Tahrir pour tenter d'écraser la révolution. L'attaque tristement célèbre avait été soutenue par l'armée qui avait permis aux nervis de franchir leurs lignes pour accéder à la place. Toutefois, les travailleurs et les jeunes qui manifestaient sur la place avaient vaincu les voyous et neuf jours plus tard seulement le dictateur de longue date, Hosni Moubarak, était contraint de démissionner après une vague de grèves de masse. Les Ahly Ultras, de concert avec les Zamalek White Knights, noyau dur des supporters de l'autre grand club de football du Caire, Zamalek SC, ont joué dès le départ un rôle significatif dans la révolution. Ils ont participé aux combats de rue contre le régime Moubarak et ses successeurs au SCAF.

De nombreux observateurs croient que la junte a délibérément organisé le massacre après le match de football mercredi pour se venger et déchaîner une contre-révolution. Saad Hagra, un journaliste d'*Al Masry Al Youm*, a accusé le SCAF et les vestiges de l'ancien régime, en disant que l'incident « était le fruit d'une machination préparée d'avance. »

Le directeur du réseau arabe pour l'information sur les droits de l'homme, Gamal Eid, a dit à *Al Masry Al Youm* que le SCAF visait à semer des dissensions en Égypte et que la junte serait le principal bénéficiaire des événements.

Le 25 janvier, jour de l'anniversaire de la révolution égyptienne, des millions de personnes ont défilé partout en Égypte en exigeant la chute de la junte militaire et de l'ensemble du régime. Les masses ont clairement fait savoir qu'elles s'opposaient à la « transition démocratique » parrainée par les États-Unis, et qui est soutenue par l'ensemble de *l'establishment* politique égyptien. Effrayée par une nouvelle explosion des masses, la junte vise de toute évidence à inciter à la violence aveugle comme prétexte pour justifier davantage de mesures de répression.

Ce plan est soutenu par l'ensemble de l'élite dirigeante égyptienne. Les Frères musulmans de droite ont publié une déclaration appelant « à la fermeté dans l'application de la loi à tout un chacun » afin de mettre fin au « règne de l'insécurité et du chaos partout dans le pays. »

Une coalition de groupes de jeunes, de partis libéraux et petits bourgeois de « gauche » - dont le Mouvement du 6 avril, la Coalition de la Jeunesse révolutionnaire, le Parti de l'Alliance socialiste et les Socialistes révolutionnaires - ont participé aux protestations de vendredi. Leur but était de contrôler les protestations face à la junte afin d'empêcher une nouvelle escalade.

Lorsque des manifestants en colère ont escaladé le mur de la perception pour s'en prendre aux forces de sécurité à l'aide de pierres et de cocktails Molotov, les forces petites bourgeoises de gauche sont intervenues pour les en empêcher. Amr Hamed, porte-parole de la Coalition de la Jeunesse révolutionnaire, a dit que son groupe avait réussi à convaincre les manifestants de ne pas occuper le bâtiment. « Le bâtiment n'a pas été pris d'assaut. Aucun dégât n'a été fait à l'intérieur du bâtiment. Nous avons persuadé les manifestants de redescendre pour ne pas ternir leur image. Nous ne voulons pas que quelqu'un accuse nos protestations pacifiques d'avoir endommagé la propriété publique. »

La position d'Ahmad et de ses alliés libéraux et pseudo-gauches ne pourrait montrer plus clairement le gouffre de classe qui sépare les travailleurs et les jeunes révolutionnaires des défenseurs petits bourgeois de l'ordre. Tandis que les premiers comprennent que la junte et le système qu'elle défend doivent être renversés par la poursuite de la lutte révolutionnaire, les seconds cherchent désespérément à promouvoir les illusions dans une « transition démocratique pacifique. »

Dans un communiqué publié jeudi, l'alliance petite bourgeoise a appelé le nouveau parlement - qui est dominé par les Islamistes de droite et qui a été élu avec un faible taux de participation sous le régime militaire - à assumer une responsabilité politique en prenant des mesures contre « les récents actes délibérés et systématiques de meurtre et d'incitation au chaos dans le but de saborder et de stopper la révolution, » en exigeant que le conseil militaire remette immédiatement le pouvoir à une autorité civile.

Ceci ne correspond à rien d'autre qu'au changement de la façade parlementaire derrière laquelle la junte règne, même si les masses elles-mêmes ont clairement formulé leur revendication pour le renversement même de la junte qui est soutenue par les États-Unis.

(Article original paru le 4 février 2012)

Strikes mark anniversary of Mubarak's removal

Protesters in Egypt begin day of civil disobedience, amid concern over military rule a year after president's ousting.

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Activists in Egypt have begun a day of civil disobedience to mark the first anniversary since the toppling Hosni Mubarak, the former president.

The call for strikes in universities and workplaces on Saturday comes after a series of protests aimed at pressuring the military to transfer power immediately to civilians.

The demonstrators say the military should hand power to parliament, which was elected over three rounds in November and December, or to a civilian council, ahead of presidential elections set to take place before the end of June.

The military, headed by Mubarak's long-time defence minister Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, has said it will deploy additional troops across the country in response to the calls for a day of disobedience.

Tareq al-Khouly, an organiser of the April 6 youth group, said the plan was for a one-day strike which could be extended.

'Support the strikes'

In a joint statement on Friday, the protesting groups urged Egyptians "to support these strikes in order to end the unjust rule and build a nation in which justice, freedom and dignity prevail".

The call for strikes and protests has divided the country's political forces, with the Muslim Brotherhood, the big winner in the recent parliamentary elections, coming out against it.

Many Egyptians complain that the economy has been battered by the lack of security and deadly violence in the wake of the 18-day revolt that forced Mubarak to resign on February 11 last year.

On Friday, thousands of protesters marched through Cairo's streets to bypass military cordons and reach the defence ministry, chanting "Down with military rule!"

In a statement read out on state television late on Friday, the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) said it would not bow to threats or plots against the state.

"We will never yield to threats, and we will never give in to pressure," the SCAF said.

"We tell you quite frankly that our dear Egypt faces plans aimed at striking at the heart of our revolution.

"We are facing plots against the nation aiming to undermine the institutions of the Egyptian state, and to topple the state itself so that chaos reigns."

The SCAF statement also said it was determined to transfer power to an elected civilian body.

"We have kept the first promise and returned legislative power to the people's assembly," it said, adding that the parliamentary election took place in an atmosphere of "liberty and integrity".

"Presidential power will pass to the president of the republic after the election ending the period of transition, and your faithful army will revert to its original role," the statement said.

Source:

Al Jazeera and agencies

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/20/opinion/empty-talk-on-tahrir-square.html?ref=egypt>

Op-Ed Contributor

Empty Talk on Tahrir Square

By TIM SEBASTIAN

Published: February 19, 2012

CAIRO — Someone has turned out the light in Tahrir Square, and that breathless, undreamed-of conviction that a better country was suddenly within grasp is no longer here.



Marco Longari/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

A group of Egyptians gather near mock gallows in Tahrir Square.

Multimedia

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- Opinion: Egypt's Never-Ending Revolution (February 12, 2012)
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Only the props remain — the rumor-sellers and spinners and blaring loudspeakers, the committed, the angry and those who still dream. But they seem to matter less these days. Or maybe we've heard them all before.

"We've agreed on a plan," says a young man, as if carrying tablets down from the mountain. He shows us photos of his once-beaten face on his mobile phone. "We have a new initiative. Yes, we argued a lot amongst ourselves but now we're going places." But he won't say where.

In the square, stories abound of sexual abuse. A woman is reported to have been raped last month in one of the tents, another was groped after she'd spoken at the podium and had to punch her way through a crowd of jeering men, none of whom lifted a finger to help her.

So even the moral high ground seems to have packed up and gone elsewhere. And with it one of the better-known presidential hopefuls — Mohamed Elbaradei, erstwhile champion of many revolutionaries — who didn't want to play the game anymore because he didn't like the rules. Or lack of them.

The military, he said, had assumed control of Egypt “as if no revolution had taken place and no regime had fallen.” And he may be right.

In December the generals did something that in almost any other country would have been outrageous and unimaginable. They offered the central bank a billion-dollar loan to help it through hard times.

Let's be clear about this: The military high command was offering to loan the Egyptian people money that rightfully belongs to the country anyway — money that is exempt from public scrutiny and on which, as far as anyone can tell, not a penny in tax has ever been paid.

Of course the military has been allowed to run its own finances for decades. But consider this: In these days of political turmoil it takes a supremely confident and powerful group of men to offer the country back its own money and dress it up as largesse.

The move provoked not a single squeak of indignation from a new Parliament that has attached far greater importance to discussing when it should talk and when it should pray. Apparently, no one from this assembly is about to ask any awkward questions about this billion, or any other billion in military accounts. So the army can relax after all — the good times are here to stay.

Parliament's unwillingness to confront the generals is understandable. After all, they still have higher than 80 percent approval ratings across the country — and they're still making the key decisions. But it does mean that the new politicians' first days at school risk being defined by what they won't do, rather than what they will.

A recent survey of the assembly's political parties, conducted by Amnesty International, found, for instance, a depressingly patchy response to the question of women's rights and very little appetite to campaign for female equality.

More alarming, though, is the re-emergence of fear. Once again, I was told, Egyptians are starting to look over their shoulder to see who might be listening, to be careful what they say on the phone, to begin considering all over again who they can and cannot trust.

“The intelligence services are extremely active,” says a well-known commentator.

Fear has been a major by-product of the crisis over American NGOs, now facing prosecution in Egyptian courts and accusations that they were operating illegally in the country. Other foreign-funded organizations report a new hesitation from their Egyptian partners, a “let's-put-this-on-hold” attitude, a sense that foreigners may become toxic.

That is serious. If the old curtain of fear descends again over Egypt then the climate could be right for a return to full-strength dictatorship. Fear would give it the power.

Of course “it” is chaotic. Of course “it” will take time. But few can agree what “it” is and large swathes of the public no longer seem interested.

Big Egypt, which creaked and trundled about its business for decades, is crying out for some certainty, some normality. The poor want to eat; the business community wants and needs to earn money; one in seven people, employed by the tourist industry, are desperate for the holiday makers to come back. And no one can understand why the dying goes on incessantly in the streets of Cairo and elsewhere.

I don't hear too many predictions about Egypt's future. But let me cite a couple of strong impressions: Egyptians have tasted revolution and will likely want to do so again. And no leader here can ever again count on a compliant, docile population.

For now, though, the share-out of spoils from last year's revolt is more or less complete. Real power has gone back to the military; a Parliament of new faces gets to do the talking; a president is due to be elected later this year.

The only people who don't seem to know that this uprising is over still argue and dream and make speeches in Tahrir Square.

Tim Sebastian is a television journalist and chairman of The New Arab Debates.

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