



# The birth of democracy ; the role of women in the revolution and beyond

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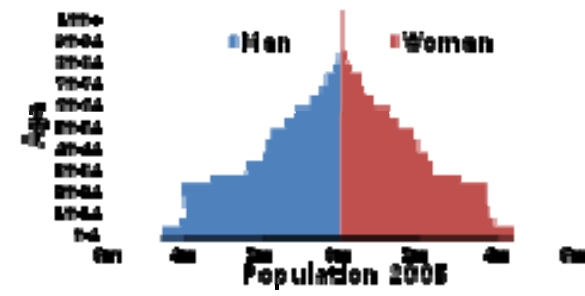
## Land of the birth of civilization

- A unified Kingdom arose 3200 B.C. and a series of Dynasties ruled in Egypt for three millennia.
- In 341 B.C., the last Egyptian Dynasty fell to the Persians who were followed by the Greeks, Romans and Byzantines.
- In the 7 Century A.D., Islam and the Arabic language were introduced by the Arabs, who ruled for the next six centuries.

- 1952 Revolution and the change from the monarchy to the republic.
- The October war of 1973, and peace treaty of 1979
- The assignation of President Sadat in October 1981
- The Revolution of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011

▶ Population : 81 million (2011 est.)  
 Age range (15-60): represents 62.2%  
 Many of those 30 and younger are educated citizens who are experiencing difficulty finding work.

Highest density: in Cairo, 2136.1 (pers./km<sup>2</sup>), against 63.7 (pers./km<sup>2</sup>) for all Egypt



## **Important dates for Egyptian women**

**1- Mr Kasim Amin , 1899 publishes a book the "liberation of women" followed by another book" the new women "which started a lot of community discussion about the role of women in society**

**2-The revolution of 1919 against the British occupation of Egypt with women participated and first women martyr**

**3- In 1930 first women to be admitted to University**

**4- The new constitution after 1952 revolution permitted the women to elect and to be a representative in parliament, 4 women elected in 1957 parliament**

**5- In 1962 first women to be appointed Minister**

**6- In 2000 Establishment of National council for women**

**Now in Egypt women are in every profession and in all elected councils**

**There are 16000 organization and society working in the field of women empowerment in Egypt**

**[www.women](http://www.women) and memory forum**



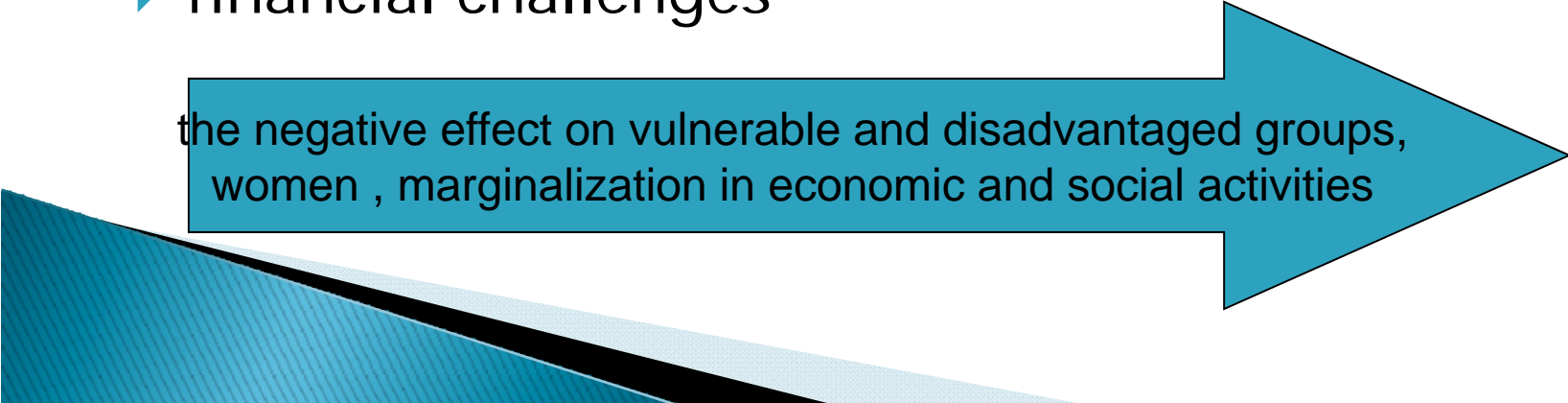


## Egyptian main Challenges – some common with many other Arab countries

- ▶ High Population growth rate (women has a role in the solution)
- ▶ The urban /rural huge difference , upper and lower Egypt regional development differences
- ▶ wide income gap, growing inequalities ,rising unemployment, high literacy rates especially female
- ▶ Egypt development is on only 6% of it's territory
- ▶ Growth of urban areas on surrounding fertile arable land consuming 30-50 thousand acres a year –unsustainable , while desert land is undeveloped
- ▶ Primacy -Greater Cairo region where 20 million inhabitants live that is 25% of Egyptian population
- ▶ Economic development (agriculture ,industrial ,service )finding the way
- ▶ High urban densities and growth of informal urban areas , that lack services , poverty , crime, environmental problems
- ▶ High Foreign dept
- ▶ Egypt carried a Structural adjustment policy , reducing public spending but these policies affected the poor more than the rich

# Young community

- ▶ Egypt as many of the Arab countries experience demographic structure that includes a majority of youth
- ▶ In the Arab region 26% of the population is younger than 26 years
- ▶ Of the youth 52% are young women
- ▶ these groups face unemployment , exclusion of some social groups , urban migration,
- ▶ There is a mismatch between natural resources and growing population even in rich countries
- ▶ financial challenges



the negative effect on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups,  
women , marginalization in economic and social activities

# Egypt 2011 revolution

## Background for protests

- ▶ Inheritance of Power(President's son)
- ▶ Emergency law
- ▶ Police brutality
- ▶ Corruption in parliament elections
- ▶ Restrictions on free speech and press
- ▶ Corruption among government officials [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) in 2010 (CPI )3.1 (with 10 being clean and 0 being totally corrupt).<sup>[96]</sup>
- ▶ Demographic and economic challenges such as high unemployment and food price inflation and low minimum wages
- ▶ **Tunisian Revolution**

## Description of protests

The uprising was mainly a campaign of non-violent civil resistance that started on National Police day 25th Jan featuring demonstrations and marches. Millions of protesters all over the demanded the overthrow of the regime of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak

**Demanding freedom , social justice and dignity**

It is called

Lotus revolution  
White revolution

Thousands of citizens , strangers to each other within just a few days collaborated to build an organized community or a miniature city or village in Tahrir square , with camp sites , rubbish collection system , food stalls , clinic, toilets , artwork galleries, lost and found desk and even some kind of kinder garden.

They collaborated after the resignation to sweep and clean the square .

Other squares within Egyptian cities had similar arrangements of tasks to provide livable conditions and to coordinate between different citizens efforts to reach desirable ends .Citizens , men and women, young and old , Muslims and Christians were all involved no exclusion or marginalization .

Other square all over the Arab world witnessed the same thing

**Egypt , Libya, Yemen for all**





From space to place making  
Reshaping the urban landscape- unique, original ,  
vibrant, expressive



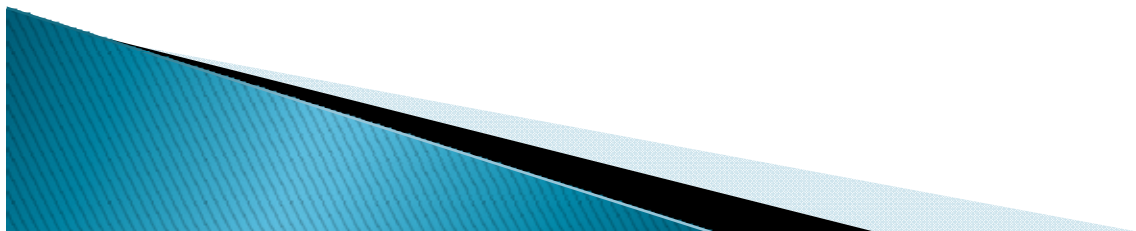


# Egypt for all Egyptians for 18 days



- ▶ "Ghada Shahbandar, an activist with the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, estimated the crowd downtown to be 20 percent female. Other estimates were as high as 50 percent. In past protests, the female presence would rarely rise to 10 percent."

The extent of Egyptian or Arab female participation may be less important than the question: Were democracy revolutions possible without the women?



## My answer is no

- ▶ The women were behind men , husband , or son or brother, encouraging instead of previous fearing
- ▶ women have taken an active role: promoting the protests, through online campaigns that led up to the protests ,leading crowds, and providing aid to harmed protesters.
- ▶ In a country where it is not accepted that women and men be together if not related they were close to each other these protests were largely free of sexual harassment because they all had a common goal .

**"Egypt for all Egyptians"**



# The role of women

The first voice of the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia was the Liala the sister of Mohamed Bouazizi, the young man who immolated himself and set off the protests. She advocated political equality

In Egypt Khalid Saeed's sister and mother along with his friends adopted several events in Alexandria against police brutality and lack of freedom. Twenty-six-year-old Asmaa Mahfouz had a major role in sparking the protests. In a video blog posted two weeks before National Police Day, she urged the Egyptian people to join her on 25 January in Tahrir Square to bring down Mubarak's regime.

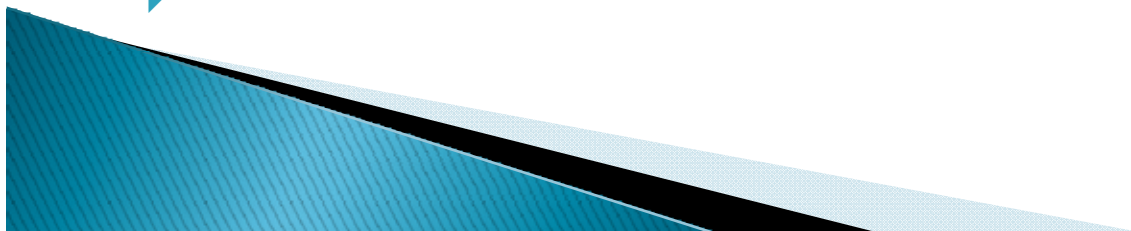
The EU parliament 2011 Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought goes to Asmaa Mahfouz (Egypt), Ahmed al-Zubair Ahmed al-Sanusi (Libya), Razan Zaitouneh (Syria), Ali Farzat (Syria) and posthumously to Mohamed Bouazizi (Tunisia)

Israa Abdel Fatah, 32 year old activities who posted calling for 2008 protests of 6 April - she was imprisoned for it. Sally Zahran, among those who died was during one of the demonstrations. NASA reportedly plans to name one of its exploration spacecraft by her name.



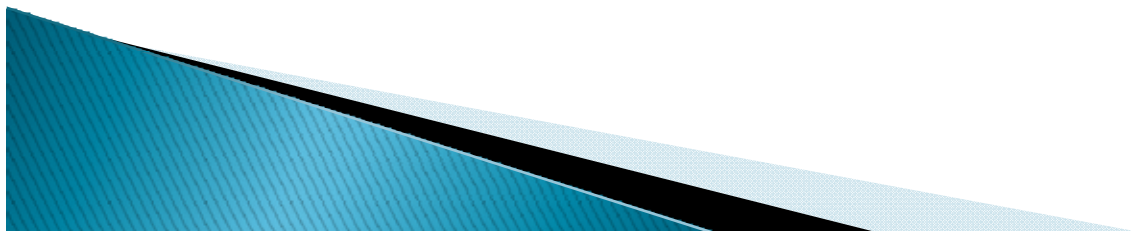
# Just after the revolution

- ▶ Demonstrations celebrating International women's day in March 2011 was attacked in Cairo's Tahrir Square the same square that has witnessed the unique relation between all Egyptians
- ▶ It was a shocking wake-up call that change in society does not happen in two weeks
- ▶ In the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 171 protester in Tahrir were detained of them 17 were women and they were presented to court marshal were they were sentenced to jail



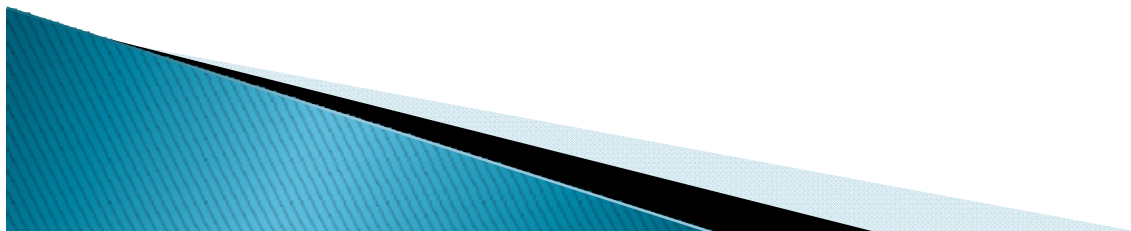
# Lessons from history

- ▶ During Algeria's 1954-62 war for independence against France, women played roles as combatants, bombers, spies, nurses and communication officers.
- ▶ But after the French left, revolutionary slogans about equality dissipated and women were pushed back into submissive roles. Islamic groups linked women's rights to Western cultures and discouraged legal reforms. Women's participation in the work force dropped.
- ▶ The Iranian revolution tells a similar story. In 1979, thousands of women in Iran protested the regime of the Shah, only to see the demonstrations usher in the start of Islamic rule and limitations on several of their freedoms.
- ▶ Egyptian revolution was not against occupation or a monarch it was against lack of freedom , corruption , and inequalities
- ▶ But will Egyptian women have the same fate



# Transitional period

- ▶ The Supreme council of the Armed Forces is responsible for transitional period in Egypt until a civilian government takes over.
- ▶ There 9 big parties and more than 30 small ones 41 in all after revolution.



# The constitutional referendum of 19 March

- ▶ The committee responsible for preparing the referendum had no women
- ▶ The referendum stated that the election (for both the People's Assembly and the Shura Council) would be held in three rounds in November – January, with 15-day intervals in-between;
- ▶ that half the seats would be reserved for workers and farmers;
- ▶ The Egyptian government before revolution passed a law that mandated the creation of 64 new seats in the house that must go to women. With only four women elected in 2005
- ▶ that women's quota introduced under Mubarak was abolished in the constitutional referendum of March 2011

The argument is that additional representation is advantages for women only if women who assume these seats want to be in those roles and intend to do all they can as representatives of their constituents. Giving a job or seat solely because they are women only leads to the idea that women can not earn such positions on their own may be that is the argument that lead to abolishing the Quota after revolution along with the quota being seen as an act from the previous first lady Suzan Mubarak . The quota system adopted by some governments in Egypt and



# Issues of society discussion during the transitional period

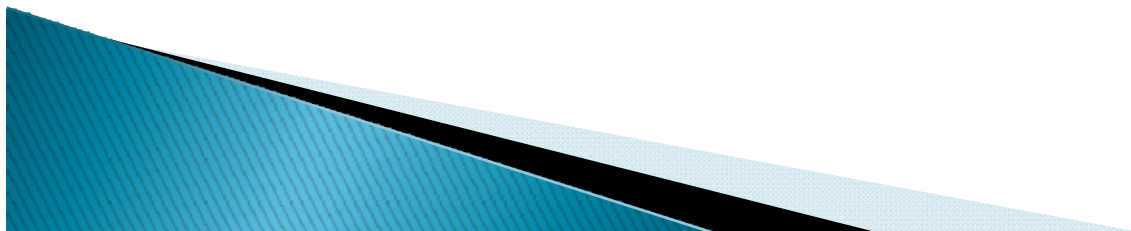
- ▶ Child support and custody , guardianship and visiting regulations relation to" *shari* "
- ▶ Violence against women and gap between law and enforcement especially as the law enforcement in general is weak during this period
- ▶ Cultural stigma against victim not religious
- ▶ Women's access to information about their rights, lack of awareness , should be improved by revolution



# Beyond the revolution

The aspiration of the whole society has been that Change has to come to both women and society

- ▶ But changes do not happen over night they gradually happen with government encouragement and not regulations



# Conclusion

- ▶ Although the social problems were among the major reasons for the revolution after its success the political issues became dominant . The constitution ,and the elections and not the social issues such as women , poverty, improving service became the main issues . while the social problems remain as concrete as ever Egypt looks to a new future. “political” versus “social “
- ▶ There is a misunderstanding in Egypt between the old regime’s corruption and failures and some social achievements that happened during that regime.  
Ex. Family law , Khoel , family courts, first women appoint as judge are seen by some not as women earned benefits but as part of the inheritance of the regime , and first lady’s work ,that has to be revised or erased .
- ▶ Due to the fact that the women activists were always form the elite thus the issues pressed upon were far away from the problems of the common women in rural and poor areas .Thus the women movement did not gain any popularity in the past to safeguard these achievements
- ▶ We see higher percent of Women involvement in political arena (one presidential candidate , many in parliament I myself is running for engineers syndicate )  
The answer then is to establish a new cultural understanding of how women are an important part of society this can be done through dialogue , discussion and education

Egyptian women deserve better. It is our time to make a new country, for all Egyptians

## The presentation depended on many sites among them

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian\\_Revolution\\_of\\_2011](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Revolution_of_2011)
- [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/30/egypt-revolution-2011\\_n\\_816026.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/30/egypt-revolution-2011_n_816026.html)
- <http://www.womendialogue.org/women-organization/egypt-new-woman-foundation-nwf>
- <http://www.npr.org/2011/02/04/133497422/Women-Play-Vital-Role-In-Egypt-Uprising>. Retrieved 14 March 2011.
- ▶ ["http://gulfnews.com/news/region/egypt/revolutionary-blogger-asma-threatened-1.757171](http://gulfnews.com/news/region/egypt/revolutionary-blogger-asma-threatened-1.757171)  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/headlines/content/20111014FCS29297/1/html/The-Arab-Spring-wins-Sakharov-Prize-2011>  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/series/egypt-protests>.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian\\_parliamentary\\_election,\\_2011](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_parliamentary_election,_2011)

