

The Egyptian-African Relations following June 30 Revolution

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The African continent has a special status in Egypt's national security system since the security of Egypt starts from Africa, and on the other hand Egypt is a vital area of the continent, not to mention the role of the Nile and its importance in the Egyptian civilization. Therefore, the Egyptian realization of the strategic importance of the African continent is deeply rooted in history since the Pharaonic era, where Egypt used to send expeditions to the headwaters of the Nile in search of the source of this artery, the Grantor of civilization in the Valley of Egypt.

The affiliation of Egypt to Africa transcends the traditional geographical, ethnic and historical dimensions, where such affiliation is a key component of the Egyptian "identity" through the ages, and a main element in the formation of cultural traits of the Egyptian character. And thus, all the Egyptian constitutions and charters were keen to highlight Egypt's affiliation to Africa. This was sound clear in the preamble to the Constitution of 2014, which confirmed that: "Egypt is the gift of the Nile to the Egyptians, and is the gift of Egyptians to humanity" .. Egypt is the heart of the whole world thanks to its genius strategic location and its history. It is a meeting point of all the continent's civilizations and cultures. It is also, a crossroad to all the continent's maritime transport since it is the head of Africa that overlooks the Mediterranean, and the mouth of its continent's greatest rivers: the Nile ."

According to the Egyptian-African relations study, there are clear factors of rapprochement between both sides based on the following: a- the African identity of Egypt b- the geographic location of Egypt: North East Africa c- the common language and religion with many African countries. d- the common history and cultural heritage e- the common participation in the same regional as well as international organizations and blocs: The African Union (AU) - The United Nations (UN) - The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (formerly Organization of the Islamic Conference) - The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) - The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) - The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).



Therefore, Egypt's African policy and in particular its support for African liberation movements has not been some sort of political luxury, but rather a practical translation to the priorities of the three Egyptian national security circles: the Arab, African and international. And in this context, the late President Gamal Abdel Nasser says: "How can we ignore the existence of the continent of Africa? .. It is the will of Destiny that Egypt has a share in the continent.. And that any conflict concerning the continent shall directly affect Egypt whether it wanted or not" .

After the revolution of June 30, 2013, the Egyptian foreign policy worked on reflecting the will of the Egyptian people within the most accurate stage in Egypt's modern history. In this respect, it was keen to convey the true image of what happened in Egypt to the outside world. It, also, worked on enabling Egypt to regain its leading position in the region, whether on the Mediterranean or African or Arab level, and confirming its Arab affiliation besides its African roots and Islamic identity. Furthermore, it activated its international role, and dealt with urgent issues related to the Egyptian national security.

By tracking the Egyptian foreign policy on all levels (diplomatic - political - cultural - economic - educa-

tional), after the Revolution of June 30 and after President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi assumed power, we can say that the African circle occupied a top priority on the agenda of the Egyptian decision making with respect to the following indicators :

- President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi - since taking office in June 2014, has participated in the African Union summits in Equatorial Guinea and Addis Ababa.
- former prime Minister Ibrahim Mahlab made a number of African tours to many countries of the continent, such as Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Tanzania and Ethiopia.
- Presidential envoys were sent to a number of important African countries in order to clarify the reality of the situation in Egypt in June 2013 after the revolution.
- Cairo received frequent visits of the Commission of the African Union headed by Alpha Oumar Konaré, former President of Mali.
- Many Egyptian diplomatic delegations visited many countries of the continent, including: Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Kenya, Chad, Nigeria, Gabon, Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso- Cameroon- Seychelles- Equatorial Guinea.
- Many presidents of African countries made official visits to

Egypt such as: the President of Sudan, South Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Central African Republic and Eritrea.

- Several ministers and officials of African countries made official visits to Egypt.
- A memorandum of understanding was signed with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to establish a trilateral cooperation between Egypt and the Organization in Africa covering the fields of agriculture and food security, especially in the Nile Basin countries and the Horn of Africa.
- Egypt gave due attention to the issues and conflicts taking place in central and west of the continent, particularly in Central African Republic, Mali, and Cote d'Ivoire, in addition to combating epidemics and diseases in Africa, particularly the epidemic of Ebola especially in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry as well as fighting terrorism and maintaining security of the coast especially in Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

Egypt participated in the following:

- The Arab-African Summit, which was held in Kuwait on 19-20 November, 2013.
- The COMESA summit held in Kinshasa in February 2014.
- The Ministerial meetings of the Community of Sahel-Saharan

States (CEN-SAD) Summit, which was held in Khartoum in March 2014.

- The 4th EU-Africa Summit that took place in Brussels on 2-3 April 2014.
- The US-Africa Summit, which was held in Washington in August 2014.
- The COMESA
- The Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- The East African Community (EAC) in Burundi in October 2014.

In addition, Egypt hosted the three African Economic Blocs Summit in Sharm El Sheikh in June 2015, which witnessed the launching of the free trade area.

- The Cairo Regional Centre for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa witnessed a quantum leap in terms of both the diversity of the training fields and the number of activities which the center organized, where it reached 24 training course in 2014, in which 578 trainees from 30 African countries participated, and thus recording an increase of about 120 trainees compared to 2013.
- Egypt is one of largest troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations, as it currently contributes 2585 police officers to the UN missions.

- The Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development began its work on July 1st, 2014 under the Council of Ministers Resolution No.959 of the year 2013, where the Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with Africa and the Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with the Commonwealth were merged into one entity.
- The establishment of the unit of Africa within the the Council of Ministers as an institutional framework to coordinate between the Egyptian state institutions concerned with the African continent.

The State Information Service (SIS), is trying through this special issue of "The African Perspectives Periodical" entitled "the future of the Egyptian foreign policy in Africa after June 30, 2013" to present a forward-looking vision of this policy highlighting its various points of focus and the perspectives of its diverse relations through three main axes:

The first axis: discusses the foundations and the pillars of the Egyptian foreign policy in Africa (strategically, politically and economically).

The second axis: displays the perspectives of the cultural and media relations between Egypt and the African continent.

The third axis: reviews examples of the Egyptian-African interrelations with respect to countries such as Ethiopia, Senegal, Mali, Nigeria and Guinea.

It's worth mentioning that the "African Perspectives " Periodical is keen to include within this special issue the vision of the African experts and researchers concerning the future of inter-relations with Egypt by asking writers and experts from: Sudan, Ethiopia, Senegal, Mali, Nigeria and Guinea to write in order to give a comprehensive scientific vision for the future of the Egyptian - African relations. This will, certainly, benefit the African continent issues at the regional and global levels.