

Adham James Haddara
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Dr. Kim Fox
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Transcript

In order to avoid confusion I will be using the first letter of my last name, "H" whenever I speak and the last letter of Mr. Adham Mandour's name, "M" whenever he speaks.

H: Uhh ok, well sitting out here AUC, comfortable environment umm as we know (scoffs). Uhh (pause) well first let me thank you for joining me. Uhh your name of course is Adham Mandour.

M: Adham Khaled Mohamed Mandour.

H: Ok and uhh your relationship to me is?

M: Friendly.

H: A friend, yeah. And umm your area of residence?

M: Zala El Maadi Hasf El Helwan.

H: Ok. And uhh your age?

M: Twenty-three.

H: Alright. Well, ok looking back on all that's taking place and still continuing to take place uhh..I'm referring to the revolution umm all the, all the influences really; I mean uhh looking for the direct influences or the indirect influences that came about instigating this revolution, particularly in Egypt umm I think has a great deal to do with the Tunisian revolution that started in December of..December seventeenth, two-thousand and ten. Which as we may know led to the ousting of twenty-three uhh twenty-third year ol' uhh. Twenty-three year rule of President

Both H and M: Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

H: Yeah. And uhh would you say that the Tunisian revolution had more of a dominant role in instigating the Egyptian revolution? Or were social medias like “Facebook” and “Twitter,” uhh did they have a bigger role than uhh Tunisia?

M: No, uhh Facebook and Twitter has always, I mean have always been around. Umm the Tunisian revolution definitely gave, gave people the uhh..uhh what do you call it? Impedus?

(Laughter)

H: Impedus? Huh?

M: The Tunisian revolution sparked the Egyptian revolution. But Facebook helped guide and shape the revolution as it went along after the twenty-fifth.

H: Ok so you would say that the.. you would say that Facebook had more of a coordinating purpose then?

M: Absolutely. The Tunisian revolution was just an event. It gave people hope. And it absolutely helped people turn out in large numbers, larger than expected. Larger than anyone would have expected.

H: Alright well uhhh in..in regards to that, do you think that also the uhh the self-immolation of uhhTunisian Mohamed Bouaziz and uhh the death suffered by the hands of uhh Egyptian police, uhh Khaled Saeed also played a tremendous role in the, in the uprisings? Or in the development of the uprisings?

M: Khaled Saeed unfortunately not. I can't even compare Khaled Saeed to Bouaziz. Bouaziz burned himself following these events, four other Egyptians burned themselves also over a period of five to six days. No one even remembers that event. No one even remembers the four

who burned themselves. So Bouazi, Bouaziz himself played a very minor role in sparking the Egyptian revolution, but had played a major role in the Tunisian revolution.

H: Ok, but you don't think that uhh other Egyptians looking in on the events that transpired in Tunisia took it upon themselves to uhh sort of emulate what uhh Bouazizi did or?

M: Absolutely, absolutely. And uhh some even took it uhh a step further and burned themselves like I said. But everyone looks for a symbol. But Bouazizi was not the Egyptian revolution symbol. He was the Tunisian revolution symbol.

H: Ok. Uhh well apart from that uhh other factors contributing to the revolution of course uhh we can draw certain similarities with Tunisia like uhh high unemployment and umm food inflation, corruption, uhh lack of freedom, whether it be political or media or just any form of expression really and uhh and an incumbent regime; uhhm were those mainly the same factors that Egypt was facing? Or were there a little, were there certain, certain criteria that weren't uhh...

M: It seems like it. It seems like some of the patterns fit. And you can definitely draw similarities between Tunisia and Egypt. But as far as Egypt and the Egyptian population is concerned, I don't think many are even aware of where Tunisia lies on a map, let alone what goes on in Tunisia. At what we have been told through the media which umm gave us the tools to draw similarities and the rest was filled with our own situation, with our own context.

H: Hmm alright well umm..what about your, your take on the emergency law and police corruption within? Do you think by that uhh by those two notions, that we, Egypt sort of superceded Tunisia in terms of its uhh in terms of its inability to fight corruption because it was so heavily enforced by the police. And by the Minister, former Minister of Interior Habib Al Adly

and uhh we saw various tactics used by that uhh that regime during the demonstration all throughout January twenty-fifth to the uhh eventual resignation of Hosni Mubarak.

M: Absolutely. The average Egyptian citizen is terrified, is actually terrified of reporting a crime. Reporting simply going to the police station and reporting what he had seen.

H: And why would that be?

M: Because the police are known to be either apathetic or extremely brutal and sadistic towards the people. It doesn't matter if your innocent or guilty it doesn't matter if your just... if you go in to report a crime there is a chance that you will be taken in instead and I know it doesn't make sense, its not very logical, but that's, that's umm..that's the general theme of it I guess.

H: Alright well how, how would you say then a reaction really would be how, how vital or how critical it was that protestors did manage to drive police forces back if you know they find themselves so highly above the people on any given day. Uhh how do you think that their uhhmm assembly drove them, drove the police force back?

M: What do you mean?

H: What I mean is uhhm is basically the overwhelming numbers of the people certainly surprised the police. And uhh them being you know having a reputation for their corruption and their uhh uhh their torturous tactics when dealing with the public, umm how did that backfire in that given point in time to drive them back rather than to resort to even more extreme violent measures?

M: I don't know what went on uhh between Hosni Mubarak and his so-called advisors. But umm I think the people themselves were surprised that they turn, that they turned out in large numbers I don't think, I think the people themselves who participated in the revolution and driving back

the police, they were even surprised themselves that so many so many other people were with them at the same moment at a given time. Umm they definitely umm at that stage they broke the system's back in a way; because Hosni Mubarak and his regime uhh they use uhh the police force as their muscle.

H: Alright well if we can s..alright since uhh you brought up that point of using the police force as a muscle do you, do you get uhh, did you..either way were you ever in a sense of security whenever you knew that the police was uhh enforcing its its rule?

M: No.

H: No?

M: No, never saw a policeman in the street. Only saw them at a few checkpoints and they were only there to collect uhh tuhh charge tickets umm speeders and..and umm pedestrians, but they weren't really there to uhh for security.

H: Ok. Well when uhh, when the police were taken off the streets or retreated really uhmm, where where then did you find security? I mean amidst the chaos and the madness ensuing and really you didn't have any, apart from the military, but they didn't get themselves involved, where did you find security?

M: In whatever weapons I could find lying around the house.

H: Alright did you uhh, did you get a sense of uhh a sense of security through community?

M: Yes, absolutely I got a sense of security through the community. El Legan El Shaabaya, that went on patrols twenty-four hours straight. Patrolling our streets and pushing back the thugs.

H: Yeah.

M: That definitely made me feel a bit safer, but not by much.

H: But just enough to get you through until uhh things made a little bit more sense?

M: Uhuh.

H: Alright. Umm well what I'd like to come to in this point is uhh the, the tactics used as we're talking about security and none other (scoffs) than the Defense Minister himself, Habib Al Adly. Uhh his alleged attacks on the protestors; uhh especially on February second, Wednesday when uhh pro-Mubarak protestors attacked anti-government protestors in Tahrir Square. I mean was it all, did it all seem too coincidental? Did it all seem too fabricated then that you have this mass group all in favor of Mubarak just come in and..

M: Absolutely, absolutely. The pro-Mubarak uhh supporters if they really are pro-Mubarak supporters they mobilized themselves and they planned on going on to Tahrir Square. Moving into Tahrir Square and kicking out the anti-Mubarak protestors. That, that that that that's definitely not a coincidence. They were heading there to force them out. You can't force someone out with words. They were obviously intent on using violence and that's exactly what they did.

H: Well do you think that there were any really perhaps a little more humane manner of appeasing the crowd? Or was there just no, there was just (scoffs) really an a a regime that so relied on violence and torture to enclose its people in this dystopian society as long as it has. Uhh you think that they were, they might have done something a little more humane to appease the protestors or was there just..

M: Absolutely, they might've uhh proceeded the protestors' demands. The protestors started out with a few demands. Uhhh lifting the emergency state, amending the laws, amending a few laws in the constitution and uhh finally dissolving parliament. Those three demands on January twenty-fifth when the police used violence, when the government used violence against the protestors the list of demands went higher. As..it also happened in Tunisia, it happened in Bahrain, happened in Algeria, it seems to be the common pattern.

H: Yes.

M: Once you use violence the list of demands goes up.

H: Definitely. Uhh and now so more than ever I mean as you've mentioned the other countries that are responding very much like Tunisia and Egypt has uhhmm what are you..what are some of your outlooks on uhh the other countries as well? Libya, Algeria, Yemen, Bahrain, all these other countries that are sort of finding their way, or finding their voice through these, through these times of revolt.

M: Well given that what happened in Tunisia happened in exactly the same way as it did in Egypt. I'm guessing that umm Bahrain could face similar situation. Yemen also. They might be able to remove the king, although it's practically impossible..

H: King of, king of Bahrain?

M: King of Bahrain.

H: Ok.

M: As for the President of Yemen I'm sure he's, he's he's already on his way. Libya is a completely different situation. Umm its umm Libya has erupted in a civil war. A war between a

government and its people. A true war in every meaning of the word. So I can't really speak for Libya. I have no idea, I can't predict what will happen in Libya and no one can. No one can.

H: Alright well even though we may not immediately uhh predict what is going to happen in Libya I'd like to thank you for your time and your uhh thoughts and comments on the past revolution; and ongoing I should add revolution in Egypt so..

M: Ok, thank you.

H: Thank you.

M: Thank you.