

## **Military Resistance 10F7**

Mr. Obama Personally Oversees the Terrorists "Kill List"



**“A Growing Number Of Young Syrians Who Are Dodging The Draft Out Of Fear That Military Service Will Force Them To Kill Their Countrymen”**

**“Now The Army Is Killing Its Own People, So You Have To Refuse To Go”**

# **“How Can An Army That Was Built To Fight Israel And Liberate The Golan Heights Be The Same One That Is Now Killing Its Own People?”**

## **“I Couldn’t Go Because The Army Is Supposed To Protect People, But All This Army Does Is Protect Assad”**

6.6.12 Associated Press [Excerpts]

TRIPOLI, Lebanon – Approaching his 18th birthday, Hamza, a merchant sailor from Syria, resigned himself to the fate awaiting him when he reached adulthood: A year and a half of mandatory military service.

Then last year, the uprising against Syrian President Bashar Assad erupted with demonstrations calling for change. Troops dispatched by Syria’s autocratic regime shot protesters and shelled opposition towns, killing thousands of civilians.

That altered the plan for Hamza, and for a growing number of young Syrians who are dodging the draft out of fear that military service will force them to kill their countrymen — or get killed themselves.

**“I couldn’t go because the army is supposed to protect people, but all this army does is protect Assad,” said Hamza, now a wispy-bearded 19-year-old with thick biceps from his work at sea. He fled Syria this year to Tripoli, a city on Lebanon’s Mediterranean coast. Unable to work, he lives in hiding in a small apartment here with six other draft-dodgers.**

Young Syrians have long avoided the draft by traveling abroad, cooking up medical excuses or using connections and bribes to get their names off the rolls. But anti-regime activists in and outside Syria say the number has shot up during the 15-month conflict that the U.N. says has killed more than 9,000 people.

Some hide out in opposition areas in Syria, avoiding checkpoints where they could be jailed or conscripted. Others flee the country, opting, at least for now, for an impoverished existence far from their families.

The extent of all this is hard to gauge since the Syrian government does not comment on its military.

**But in a hint that the army is under strain, Assad issued an amnesty this month: He gave draft-dodgers inside the country 90 days to report for duty without punishment, and 120 days to those abroad.**

The government has not said how many have accepted the offer.

So far, the drop in conscripts has not noticeably lessened the state's advantage over the opposition Free Syrian Army, largely because draftees are less committed than professional soldiers.

**“The guys they call up now are not the guys who are going to stick by them,” said Joseph Holliday, an analyst at the Institute for the Study of War who is studying the Syrian army.**

“Anyone they can get to fight for them loyally is already taking part.”

The slaughter of more than 100 people two weeks ago in the Sunni area of Houla raised the specter of sectarian massacres, with local activists accusing Alawite thugs of killing villagers at close range after heavy government shelling.

Draft-dodgers particularly hope to avoid getting caught up in this type of violence.

“Even if you support the government, you know the army is killing people, so given the choice to go or not, you won't go,” said Rami Jarrah, who has four draft-dodgers in his office at the Activists News Association in Cairo.

Standard military service is 18 months for a man over 18 who is not an only son. Only sons don't serve. University and technical school students can delay their service and do slightly less time.

**Syrians born abroad can pay \$500 not to serve, and those with residency in other countries can pay \$4,000 to \$5,000, depending on their location.**

But healthy, Syrian-born men living at home have no way out.

Such was the fate of one of Jarrah's colleagues, a 24-year-old from Baniyas, who graduated from university just before the uprising began. He bribed the draft office for another short-term student exemption but was told last October that he had to serve.

“They said there was no way out of it because of what is going on, so I left the country,” he said, declining to give his name to protect his family in Syria. Others, like Hamza, agreed to have only their first names published.

Like many draft-dodgers, he said his older relatives had served and that he would have too in normal times.

“But now the army is killing its own people, so you have to refuse to go,” he said.

Most draft-dodger exiles say they won't return to Syria until the regime falls, and many won't renew expired passports, fearing their embassies will confiscate them until they report for duty.

This leaves them stranded abroad, sometimes at risk of arrest and deportation.

Maher, a roommate of Hamza, dragged his four-year university program out to eight years to avoid the military, but was told last year when he tried to renew his passport that he had to enlist.

Weeks later, he fled to Lebanon, afraid the military would make him kill other Syrians.

“How can an army that was built to fight Israel and liberate the Golan Heights be the same one that is now killing its own people?” said Maher, 27.

Lebanon has close ties to Syria, and many Syrian dissidents fear harassment or arrest. The U.S. Embassy in Lebanon said recently it was “deeply troubled by reports of disappearances, arrests and intimidation of Syrians in Lebanon undertaken by the Syrian regime and its supporters.”

“Refugees, dissenters, and deserters who renounce violence should be protected,” it said.

Even some Syrians who can legally avoid the draft now refuse to.

**Maher’s friend Abdel-Rahman Qassem, 21, lived for years in the United Arab Emirates and planned to establish residency there and buy his way out.**

**“That was before the revolution,” he said. “But when it started, I stopped trying because I knew the money would go to the regime, so I wouldn’t pay.”**

Not all draft dodgers are active in the anti-Assad struggle, but many said they now spend most of their time trying to help the opposition in Syria.

**“If I had a way to do it, I would join the Free Syrian Army,” Qassem said.**

**“At least that way I’d feel I’m serving my country.”**

## **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN MILITARY SERVICE?**

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**Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars and economic injustice, inside the armed services and at home.**

**Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550**

## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

# Insurgents Shoot Down Helicopter in Ghazni: Two U.S. “Pilots” Dead

06/06/2012 Reuters

A helicopter crashed in eastern Afghanistan killing U.S. two soldiers.

**The cause of the crash was being investigated but the governor of the southeastern province of Ghazni, Musa Akbarzada, said Taliban insurgents shot down a helicopter.**

**Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid also said they had downed the chopper.**

A senior U.S. defense official at the Pentagon said two American pilots were killed in the crash in Ghazni province.

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## Death Of Son Tears At Salinas Family

May. 30, 2012 Written by Sunita Vijayan, Thecalifornian.com

It was the morning of his wedding day in March when U.S. Army Spc. Vilmar Galarza Hernandez found out for sure he was heading to Afghanistan, his sister recalled on Wednesday.

Being the thoughtful and caring person he was, Rubi Galarza said, Hernandez, 21, soothed his family's fears.

“He just told everyone not to worry, that he would come back,” Galarza said.

“This was supposed to be the last one (deployment). He was going to go back to school and into pharmacy.”

Instead, she said, her family received the heart-wrenching news Saturday night when two U.S. Army representatives knocked on the door of their east Salinas apartment.

According to the Department of Defense, Hernandez died Saturday from wounds received in Zharay, Kandahar province, Afghanistan, when enemy forces attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device.

A Defense Department spokesman said Hernandez and an undetermined number of other U.S. soldiers were patrolling when they were attacked.

Hernandez was assigned to the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

On Wednesday, his family was busy making burial arrangements.

Galarza said her family was present for a transfer ceremony when the casket containing her brother's remains arrived Sunday at Dover Air Force Base, Del. The family is awaiting Hernandez's remains to arrive in Monterey County. Until then, funeral services are on hold.

Hernandez was married March 28. His widow lives in Michigan.

Galarza, 20, said her brother, a 2008 graduate of Everett Alvarez High School, joined the Army in 2009 to serve his country and provide a better life for his family.

"He wanted to help our family move away from this neighborhood," she said.

"He wanted to buy my mom a house."

Galarza said Hernandez left in early April for his second deployment. Hernandez was first deployed to Afghanistan in early 2010 for six months. The family relied on him a lot, Galarza said, and life without him will never be the same.

"It's going to be hard on us," she said.

Decorating the windows of their east Salinas home are signs that say: "Proud parent of a soldier" and "My son is in the U.S. Army."

Galarza described her brother as a person who always had a smile on his face, a hard-working man who did a lot for his family. She said Hernandez was the best role model for her and their 11-year-old brother.

Hernandez is the reason why she's enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley, studying to be a doctor, Galarza said.

She looked up to her brother, she said, making sure she did well in school like he did and joining the soccer team because he did.

"He was just a perfect role model," Galarza said.

"He always took care of us. He always thought about us. He tried to help out in whatever way he could and we were always very proud of him."

The U.S. war effort in Afghanistan is named Operation Enduring Freedom.

**Hernandez is the eighth Salinas-area soldier killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.**

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT  
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE  
WAR**

## **U.S. Airbase Parking Area In Kandahar Attacked: Twenty-Two Dead**

06/06/2012 Reuters & By DION NISSENBAUM and HABIB KHAN TOTAKHIL, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

**Two bombers detonated their explosives in a parking area for drivers carrying supplies for U.S. and other foreign troops based in Afghanistan outside the sprawling U.S. base in Kandahar, which has been repeatedly attacked.**

**The drivers also deliver to a U.S. base in southern Afghanistan, further down the road.**

In Kandahar, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the bombings that appeared to target Afghan drivers waiting to bring their trucks into the Kandahar Air Field coalition base.

Four provincial governors from the south were at a meeting at the base when the attacks took place, General Abdul Hameed, Afghan army commander for the southern region, told Reuters.

A bomber on a motorcycle blew himself up in an area near the base packed with truck drivers and other civilians waiting to get into the facility.

A few minutes later, as people gathered at the site of the blast, another bomber on foot walked into the crowd and detonated his explosives, said Ahmad Faisal, a spokesman for the provincial governor.

A bomber on a motorcycle drove into a crowd at the rest stop, officials said. As people rushed to help the wounded, a second bomber blew himself up. At least 22 people were killed and 50 were injured, Afghan officials said.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE  
END THE OCCUPATION**

# **Great Moments In U.S. Military History**

## **18 People, “Most Of Them Women And Children” Slaughtered By U.S. Air Strike;**

### **Villagers “Gathered For A Wedding” “They Were Not Taliban, They Haven’t Fought With Anyone, They Haven’t Attacked Anyone”**

### **“Demonstrators Marched On The District Governor’s Compound Carrying White Taliban Flags And Chanting ‘Death To America’”**

06/06/2012 Reuters & By DION NISSENBAUM and HABIB KHAN TOTAKHIL, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

Afghan officials and villagers said 18 people, including women and children, were killed in a U.S. air strike in the southeast on Wednesday.

Tahir Khan Sabri, the governor of Logar province, which lies south of Kabul, said 18 villagers, most of them women and children gathered for a wedding.

“They were all civilians,” he said, adding that President Hamid Karzai had ordered an investigation into the deaths.

The compound was filled with family members preparing to celebrate the marriage of one of the suspected Taliban commander’s daughters, Afghan officials said.

After the strike, demonstrators marched on the district governor’s compound carrying white Taliban flags and chanting “Death to America.”

Video footage shot by Afghanistan’s Pajhwok news agency, showed the bodies of infants and young children wrapped in blankets and white sheets as they awaited burial.



Afghans drove the bodies to the district capital to show that the attack had killed civilians, according to local officials. Villagers and relatives denounced President Hamid Karzai for allowing such strikes to continue after he signed an agreement that gave the Afghan military the lead in most night raids.

“Karzai is a puppet,” one man said as he wept over the children’s bodies in the back of a car. “His words are empty on night raids.

“They martyred civilians and they say they killed al Qaeda and Taliban. Look at these dead? Are they Taliban? Are they commanders?”

The footage also showed men with shovels digging through the rubble searching for more victims.

Angry villagers said no Taliban were in the two houses that were destroyed in the air strike.

“In these houses nobody has been left alive. All are martyred whether they were male, female or children. They were not Taliban, they haven’t fought with anyone, they haven’t attacked anyone,” Sayed Ahmad said.

A video taken by a local photographer showed gruesome images of bodies of children and women killed in the attack in the back of a van. Villagers said the families were preparing for a wedding two days later.

“If the government cannot step the Americans from killing civilians, it should order them out of the country,” said Habibulrhman, another villager.

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## **MILITARY NEWS**

# **11,000 More Soldiers Off To Obama’s Imperial Slaughterhouse**

Jun 7, 2012 The Associated Press

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. — The Defense Department has announced four units, including two from Fort Campbell, that will deploy to Afghanistan this year.

The scheduled rotation announced Thursday includes more than 11,000 soldiers from the four units who will start deploying between spring and winter.

More than 3,000 soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division based at Fort Riley, Kan., will deploy in the spring.

More than 2,950 soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team and more than 2,580 soldiers from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, both from the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, will deploy in the fall.

And about 2,500 soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division Combat Aviation Brigade based at Fort Stewart, Ga., are scheduled to deploy in the winter

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## **THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THEM HOME: ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**

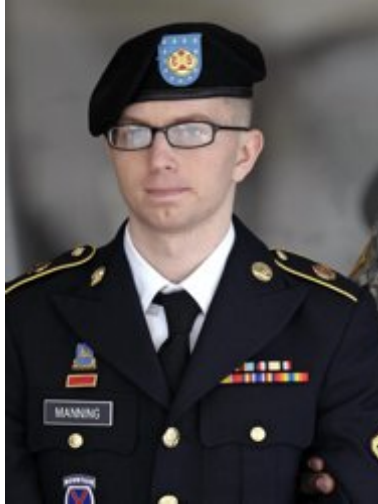


The remains of Army Pfc. Dustin D. Gross of Jeffersonville, Kentucky, at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, May 9, 2012. (U.S. Air Force photo/Adrian R. Rowan)

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**Judge In Manning Trial Slaps  
Down Army Prosecutor:  
“She Questioned Fein Sternly About  
How He Would Handle Any Defense-  
Friendly Information In Some  
Defense Intelligence Agency Records  
Prosecutors Are Reviewing”**

# **“Defense Attorneys Have Been Battling For Months For Access To Hundreds Of Thousands Of Pages Of Evidence That They Say Could Help Manning’s Side”**



Army Pfc. Bradley Manning. AP

**Defense attorneys have been battling for months for access to hundreds of thousands of pages of evidence that they say could help Manning’s side.**

**They say the documents they have been given by prosecutors are sometimes heavily redacted and virtually useless.**

Jun 6, 2012 By David Dishneau - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

FORT MEADE, Md. — An exhaustive search for government records assessing the impact of the WikiLeaks disclosures could delay the court-martial of the Army private charged with causing the biggest intelligence leak in U.S. history, a military judge said Wednesday.

With the defense accusing prosecutors of sitting on evidence potentially favorable to Pfc. Bradley Manning, the judge indicated she would consider his lawyers’ request for a stay of proceedings. The trial is set to begin Sept. 21.

“The court is certainly willing to entertain any good-cause motions for continuance,” Col. Denise Lind said from the bench during a pretrial hearing at Fort Meade that is scheduled to continue through Friday.

Lind didn’t say when she would rule on the defense motion.

Manning, a 24-year-old Crescent, Okla., native, is charged with knowingly aiding al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula by allegedly causing hundreds of thousands of classified

war logs, video clips and diplomatic cables to be published on the secret-sharing website WikiLeaks.

Wednesday's debate focused in part on an FBI "impact assessment" that prosecutors first mentioned in a May 31 court filing.

Lead Prosecutor Maj. Ashden Fein said prosecutors have already given the defense nearly 9,000 pages of FBI investigative records and a draft State Department assessment of the effects of the WikiLeaks disclosures on U.S. foreign relations.

Lind grilled lead prosecutor Maj. Ashden Fein most of the afternoon about whether his team is meeting its obligation to disclose any evidence it uncovers that could aid in the preparation of Manning's defense.

**Defense attorneys have been battling for months for access to hundreds of thousands of pages of evidence that they say could help Manning's side.**

**They say the documents they have been given by prosecutors are sometimes heavily redacted and virtually useless.**

**Lind didn't buy Fein's argument that with nearly 450,000 pages of such records already in their possession, Manning's lawyers are trying to delay the trial by making overly broad requests for documents. She questioned Fein sternly about how he would handle any defense-friendly information in some Defense Intelligence Agency records prosecutors are reviewing.**

**"Is the government going to look at this with an eye to the defense counsel?" she asked.**

**"We absolutely will, your honor," Fein replied.**

**"Are you going to hold onto it until they request it?"**

**"No, your honor, we will not," Fein said.**

The defense is also seeking records from the CIA, the Justice Department, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and several other civilian and military agencies. Lead defense attorney David Coombs maintains that the classified damage assessments probably concluded the leaks attributed to Manning did little damage to national security or U.S. interests.

None of damage assessments has been publicly released.

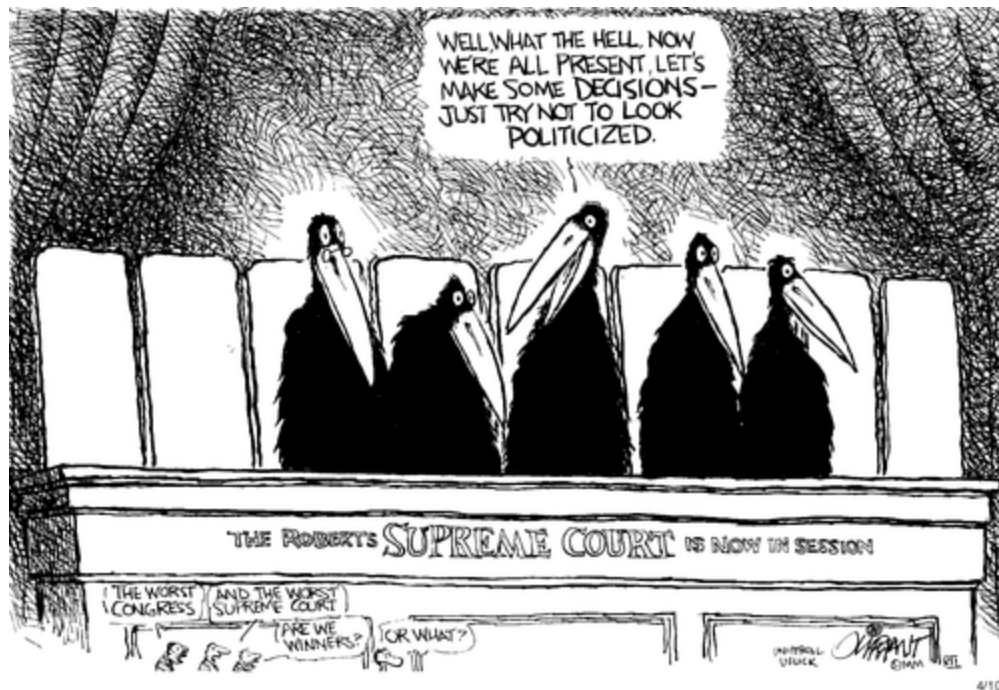
The material Manning is suspected of leaking includes hundreds of thousands of sensitive reports on foreign governments and leaders, Iraq and Afghanistan war logs and a 2007 video clip of a U.S. helicopter crew gunning down 11 men later found to include a Reuters news photographer and his driver.

As for the video clip, the Pentagon concluded the troops acted appropriately, having mistaken the camera equipment for weapons.

The U.S. government claimed the disclosures endangered lives and security. Manning supporters say the leaks exposed war crimes and triggered pro-democracy uprisings in the Middle East.

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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## **Racism Alive And Well In New York City: Black And Latino Cops Getting Stopped And Frisked; “You’d Be Surprised How Many Of Us Get Stopped By Cops”**

Jun 6 2012 By Sam Levin, Village Voice [Excerpts]

Lying on the ground in Harlem with handcuffs around his wrists, Eric Josey, 45, made sure not to scream.

A cop had just thrown him down, but he remained silent.

He had been driving his car on 130th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard when three plainclothes officers pulled him over, asked him to step out of the vehicle, discovered a legally owned gun on him, shoved him to the ground, and handcuffed him.

“I was outraged,” Josey, who is black and lives in Harlem, tells the Voice while he recounts the confrontation, which happened last summer. “It was a potentially deadly incident.”

For many men of color living in New York City, Josey’s account will sound all too familiar as the city continues to pursue its stop-and-frisk program to astounding levels.

But in another way, Josey’s story is quite unique.

For 18 years, he was an NYPD officer.

And though he might not be the typical victim of stop-and-frisk, Josey, who co-founded an organization called 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, is not alone.

Black and Latino off-duty cops are part of an overlooked group that is not immune to the police practice that some argue is illegal racial profiling.

Last year, the NYPD stopped and interrogated people 685,724 times — nine out of 10 ultimately weren’t arrested or ticketed, and about 87 percent of those stopped in 2011 were black or Latino, according to a recent report from the New York Civil Liberties Union.

The Voice interviewed current and former law-enforcement officials who say that Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly’s data-driven promotion of stop-and-frisk has made these kinds of police encounters common for most black and Latino men in the city—including off-duty officers or even undercover cops.

“You could be on duty in plainclothes working detail outside of your command, and you become the victim of stop-and-frisk,” one black NYPD officer tells the Voice. “It . . . leads to an ugly situation.”

Take Anthony Miranda, a retired NYPD sergeant who spent more than two decades on the job. The 51-year-old estimates that when he was an officer, he would sometimes face as many as 10 stops of some kind a year.

“It gives you a sense of what the community suffers when it happens to you off-duty,” says Miranda, who is the executive chairman of the National Latino Officers Association.

One black NYPD officer, who grew up in Brooklyn and has been on the job for eight years, tells the Voice that when he was in his late twenties, two plainclothes cops stopped and harassed him in a Bronx subway station on his way to class.

“I got offended and upset,” he says. “They never identified themselves as police officers.”

“It’s very frustrating and humiliating,” says Noel Leader, also a founder of 100 Blacks and a retired NYPD sergeant. “You’d be surprised how many of us get stopped by cops. . . . When officers are wasting time stopping me, they are not fighting crime.”

Leader, 53, says he has been stopped more than a dozen times over the past decade and guesses that a majority of black and Latino male cops face some kind of police stop during their careers.

“If you have men of color that are police officers, they are likely to get stopped as well,” says State Senator Gustavo Rivera, in the Bronx, who has worked with 100 Blacks on questioning stop-and-frisk. “It tells you again how the policy is not effective.”

For Charles Billups, a former correction officer who was once stopped and questioned while driving his car with a police officer friend, it’s just demoralizing.

That situation wasn’t resolved until Billups, chairman of a group called the Grand Council of Guardians, got the attention of an NYPD chief he knew.

“It’s a common experience,” says Billups, 53. “We really feel violated.”

### **Troops Invited:**

**Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.**

## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**

**“Tens Of Thousands Of Demonstrators Converged On Downtown Cairo Tuesday Night In A United Expression Of Outrage”**

# **“Tahrir Square Attracted An Exceptionally Large Crowd For A Weekday Summer Evening”**

## **“Some Protesters Brandished Nooses While Groups Of Soccer Fans, Known As Ultras, Chanted In Unison ‘Shame On Shafiq! The Revolution Continues!’”**

June 6, 2012 By MATT BRADLEY, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

CAIRO—Tens of thousands of demonstrators converged on downtown Cairo Tuesday night in a united expression of outrage over two concerns: the presidential candidacy of a former regime loyalist, and a weekend court verdict that exonerated top security officials accused of playing prominent roles in the killing of hundreds of protesters last year.

Tuesday’s protests extended a sit-in that began Saturday, shortly after a three-judge panel sentenced former President Hosni Mubarak and his interior minister to life in prison on charges of accessory to murder but acquitted six top security personnel. Mr. Mubarak’s two sons also were acquitted on corruption charges.

Tahrir Square — the focal point of protests that forced Mr. Mubarak from office in February 2011 — attracted an exceptionally large crowd for a weekday summer evening.

The gathered throngs offered a glimpse of the collective indignation that awaits Ahmed Shafiq, a former air force general and Mr. Mubarak’s last prime minister, should he win in runoff presidential elections that begin on June 16.

Mr. Shafiq’s candidacy and Saturday’s verdict have merged in Egypt’s public consciousness, revealing what appears to many to be the reconstitution of Egypt’s ousted regime. Some protesters brandished nooses while groups of soccer fans, known as Ultras, chanted in unison “Shame on Shafiq! The revolution continues!”

Fear of a return to the old order has crafted a rare moment of political unity, recalling the uprising last winter that brought together Islamists, leftists and liberals in Tahrir Square.

“This is about reunion,” said Ali Badr, 22, who went to the square with a group of friends. “During the elections, we were divided among the different candidates. This was bad for the revolution.”



Mr. Badr was among the 17% of Egyptian voters who cast their ballots for Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, a former reformist leader in Egypt's powerful Muslim Brotherhood who finished fourth in the first round.

Meanwhile, lawmaker Mustafa Bakri outlined the ultimatum for the constitutional assembly after representatives of 18 parties and independent lawmakers met with the head of the council, Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, the AP reported.

Back in the Tahrir Square rally, Mr. Aboul Fotouh mixed with the crowd alongside Hamdeen Sabahi, a leftist candidate whose close third-place finish excluded him from the runoff. Both men have loudly denounced the May 23 and 24 first-round vote as fraudulent, accusing elements within the former regime of backing Mr. Shafiq's candidacy.

A growing movement of activists have pledged not to participate in the runoff, and many protesters Tuesday wore stickers with the word "boycott."

While the spurned presidential hopefuls have yet to formally endorse Mr. Morsi, all three candidates rallied demonstrators behind calls to enforce an "isolation law" that the Brotherhood-dominated Parliament passed in April. The law would see top officials in the ousted regime—namely Mr. Shafiq—excluded from the presidential contest. Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court, which is stocked with Mubarak appointees, has delayed a decision on the law's constitutionality.

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**“Syrian Universities Have Largely  
Joined The Revolution And The  
Voices Of Damascus University  
Students Can Be Sometimes  
Heard At The Presidential Palace  
Only Hundreds Of Metres Away”  
“Scientific Institutions And  
Universities Have Today Started  
Generating Bands Of Revolutionaries  
Who Have Sworn That They Will Not**

# **Continue Their Education Before They Complete Their Revolution” “No Education Without Freedom’ Declared A Banner At One Demonstration”**

By Bassel Oudat in Damascus, Al-Ahram Weekly, 31 May - 6 June 2012

The Syrian revolution was criticised by several secularists because it was launched only from mosques. But as events developed and evolved universities and students became the heart of the revolution, writes Bassel Oudat in Damascus

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Since the first weeks of the Syrian revolution, anti-regime protests started mainly in the country's cities and were launched exclusively from mosques. Demonstrators gathered inside and outside mosques and began their marches demanding change and reform.

Security forces confronted these protests with excessive force and killed hundreds of civilians. As violence acts perpetrated by the regime escalated, the goals of the protests evolved into a sweeping revolution demanding the ouster of the regime and all its symbols.

The Syrian political leadership capitalised on the fact that demonstrations launched from mosques alone and accused protesters of being Salafis and religious extremists.

It claimed that the protests were disturbances did not reflect the will of the Syrian people at large, but a religious movement of a singular ideology in substance and essence.

Official media accused demonstrators of following fanatic and extremist religious leaders.

Some secularists believed this supposition in the beginning, and resented and doubted the nature of the revolution and its ideology. They criticised the fact that demonstrations always started at mosques, studied the phenomenon and tried to dissect it.

This, however, is not a feature that is exclusive to the Syrian revolution and many academics have already illustrated clearly the role mosques have played in the revolutions that took place in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen.

Nevertheless, the Syrian regime criticised the Syrian revolution especially because it started at mosques not universities, schools or workers' unions, political institutions or parties, like any all-out national revolution would.

Since French occupation and until the end of the last century, Syrian student movements sponsored extraordinary activities against occupiers and tyrannical regimes.

This role evolved in the first half of the 20th Century until the Baath Party came to power and the student movement was crushed.

In fact, it was this student movement which triggered the revolt against military rule in 1954 before the Syrian army announced a coup against the regime from Aleppo. The movement also played a key role in confronting the Baghdad Alliance in the 1950s and demanded unification between Syria and Egypt.

**The student movement fell silent, however, once the Baath Party came to power because students were banned from joining political parties -- including ones in alliance with the regime.**

It ignored immunity of university campus which meant security agencies could arrest students inside lecture halls - it irreversibly compromised the intellectual, moral and educational role of universities by converting these institutions of higher learning into security institutions which the totalitarian regime used as a tool to stifle freedoms and indoctrinate Syria's youth through a curriculum that praised the values of tyranny and its symbols.

This strategy was typified by the Syrian leadership's granting the National Union of Syrian Students (NUSS), an organisation affiliated to the ruling Baath Party, absolute powers over universities, making it more powerful than the Ministry of Higher Education.

It is for these reasons, perhaps, that university students were late in joining the revolution.

Neither were mosques far from the reach of the regime.

Security agencies dominated all activities there: appointing scholars and mosque leaders, granting them privileges and bonuses, monitoring their sermons and lessons, but still these remained the only venues where people could gather.

**The authorities over the past decades arrested political opponents and civil society activists, and banned gatherings in any public place (according to law no more than four people can gather at a public site without permission).**

**Mosques became the only place where Syrians could gather without security agencies blocking them, as the regime could not ban the congregation from going to prayer.**

For the first eight months of the revolution, university students did not participate in the revolution while Damascus University pioneered opposition to the regime. There were some timid strikes in the first weeks of the revolution but they were suppressed and security forces raided the university campus en masse.

Students reported that security forces and their militias would jump out of the doors and windows of buses to suppress the students who chanted for freedom, using truncheons,

electric batons and chains to separate protesters. Armed men climbed on to the roofs of colleges to arrest protesting students.

**As the regime's use of violence escalated further, using heavy artillery to shell cities, the majority of university students broke their silence and became the heart of the revolution.**

Students at the universities of Homs, Damascus and Deraa, as well as several colleges in other governorates, burst into protest against the regime.

Every night, students came out from university dormitories to demonstrate against the regime and security forces, while militias used force to disperse them. Just as in the past, there was no respect or protection for the university campus.

**In May, Aleppo University was the scene of the most violent confrontations.**

**Five students were killed in university dormitories, with one of their number thrown from his dormitory window on the fourth floor.**

Under directions from security powers, the university decided to shut down the university and its housing complex, only allowing exams and graduating projects to be held on campus.

**Since then, near daily protests have swept Aleppo -- the governorate which the regime believed, along with the capital Damascus, was the most loyal to the government and unlikely to join the revolution.**

Movements at universities have drawn up a series of targets until their goal of overthrowing the regime is accomplished, namely "liberating Syrian universities from thugs" which refers to the militias of the security agencies, regime and Baath Party.

Students formed the Free Syrian Students Union (FSSU) to counter NUSS which is supervised by the Baath Party and is dominated by security agencies. The unofficial FSSU formed branches at various Syrian universities that coordinate strikes and sit-ins.

Private universities owned by partners of the regime and key businessmen and attended by the children of the wealthy -- Yarmouk Private University and Kalamoon University -- are also revolting against the regime.

Students at these universities organised many protests on campus demanding freedom and in solidarity with cities in revolt. University corridors are plastered with slogans and flyers demanding the overthrow of the regime, and these students were also subjected to a crackdown by security forces and in some instances were forced to lie on the ground and chant in praises of the president.

The FSSU condemned the positions of university presidents who did not issue any official statements protesting or denouncing trespassing by security forces on campus, and demanded that an investigation should be launched to find out who had carried out beatings on campus.

They also demanded the dismantling of NUSS, saying: "it has become a tool of suppression and organised regime terrorism of students".

They further urged private and public university faculty to resign their posts in protest of injustice and tyranny against the Syrian people.

**It was not expected that students who each pay more than \$7,000 in fees would join the revolution which some describe as the revolution of the disenfranchised and poor.**

In several statements, these students asserted that they are "part of the student body of private universities that were established by the corrupt Syrian regime" where they are treated "as clients, not students".

**They add that they "were forced to enroll in these universities after admission rates were raised at public universities", and that they pay "astronomical fees while all the administration and university owners care about is hosting extravagant graduation parties, and taking money from students every which way."**

**They assert that their revolution is "for the sake of their future".**

Syrian universities have largely joined the revolution and the voices of Damascus University students can be sometimes heard at the presidential palace only hundreds of metres away.

Aleppo University suspended classes out of fear of the youth revolution, while bullets have outnumbered books at Homs University.

Meanwhile, not one week passes without students at Deraa and Deir Al-Zur universities going out in protest.

The Syrian opposition insists that the revolution is not a religious one, orchestrated by the country's mosques, but one that is undertaken and planned by the youth -- at the forefront of which are university students.

They believe that the participation of educational, religious and political institutions in the journey in search of freedom and dignity is a good sign.

They add that scientific institutions and universities have today started generating bands of revolutionaries who have sworn that they will not continue their education before they complete their revolution.

"No education without freedom" declared a banner at one demonstration.

**MORE:**

**"This Is Halab. Here We Are!"**

**“After Months Of Being Pressured Into Silence, Threatened By Security Forces, Facing Mass Arrests And Kidnappings, And Ridiculed By The Rest Of The Country, The People Of Aleppo Have Emerged”**

**“The Business Elite, Religious Leaders And Tribes Who Gambled On The Side Of Loyalty To The Regime Have Come To Realise They Are Neither Immune To Assad’s Brutality Nor The Opposition’s Wrath”**

Jun 2, 2012 By Amal Hanano, The National [Excerpts]

Amal Hanano is the pseudonym of a Syrian-American writer. She is a graduate of University of Aleppo. Follow her on Twitter: @amalhanano. Activist names have been changed in this story to protect their identity.

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**It is March 28, 2012. A group of young men are crouching behind parked cars on a wide street lined with stone buildings.**

**The YouTube video on which they appear is as choppy as the filmmaker’s breath. You can hear the adrenaline, the defiance and the fear.**

**You can also hear the sound of gunfire. A bullet hits one of the group and a man’s body is now in the frame, blood pooling on the asphalt behind his head. The sounds are chaotic.**

**A few seconds ago, they were just a group of students chanting behind cars.**

**Now, one of them is dead.**

The dead man’s name was Anas Samo. He was, according to his friends, a “polite and kind-hearted” 21-year-old.

He was also the first of the many University of Aleppo students who would soon meet their death.

What the viewer can't see in these powerful frames are the long, ugly residential blocks that form the dormitory complex in what is known as al-Madineh al-Jam'iyeh, or the University City. In a city famed for its ornate buildings clad with limestone, these poorly-designed government structures have always been architectural eyesores.

The dormitories were built in the late 1960s to house students from all over Syria, notably those of modest means who could not afford to rent an apartment. For a few dollars a month, any student from any town or village could have access to the same education as the offspring of the most affluent local families.

The concept was a Baathist dream: Syrian universities as classless utopias, cutting across social and economic divisions, where young Syrian citizens were supposed to be equal. Of course, unspoken strings - including unconditional loyalty to the regime - are attached to every tenancy agreement. As the students have watched their hometowns burn as the uprisings in Syria have turned increasingly violent, this unquestionable obedience began to shatter.

In April 2011, during the regime's siege of Daraa, Aleppo's students began to stage peaceful protests. They held nightly indoor demonstrations, chanting anti-government messages from the windows of their dormitories. The government responded by expelling 300 students. This year's students would not be as lucky.

Of all Syria's cities, Aleppo has the most complex and changing relationship with the revolution.

Lawlessness envelops the city. Kidnappings are common. Car bombs and explosions are everyday occurrences.

Refugees crowd its streets, while the local economy creaks towards a standstill. Businesses and factories dependent on easy access routes to Turkey face closed roads, dangerous checkpoints and highway robberies.

The business elite, religious leaders and tribes who gambled on the side of loyalty to the regime have come to realise they are neither immune to Assad's brutality nor the opposition's wrath.

George, an Aleppian activist, told me that "everyday life in Aleppo is different from other cities ... Life is carrying on, but at a very slow pace, because people are afraid."

He also says that while there are still many regime loyalists - especially within the so-called "silent" minority and elite communities - they claim to be "against the killing and against the destruction of the country".

It's a familiar sentiment, one that expresses the desire to keep the revolution outside the city's walls.

Indeed, when Aleppo suffered its first loss on May 29, 2011, the city brushed it off as if nothing had happened.

### **“Assad Killed Him”**

**Dr Sakher Hallak, a well-known physician, was found dead on the side of the road, 20km from Aleppo. His mutilated body was barely recognisable.**

**His head was riddled with holes that his family learnt later were the marks of a power drill. His eyes had been gouged, his bones were broken, and yet his leather shoes were still shining.**

**Two nights before he was found, he had been taken from his clinic for interrogation by the mukhabarat (secret police).**

**When he was released a few hours later, he paid his bills and wrote his will. They came back for him the next night.**

Hallak's family have never discovered the reason for his murder.

**They were told by security officials to blame “Israel or the opposition” and they were told his case was criminal not political.**

But in Syria, the boundary between the political and the criminal was slowly dissolving.

Perhaps the most painful epilogue to Hallak's story is how this once-loved doctor's reputation was tarnished by the city's society itself. His death was explained away with fabricated stories of a revenge killing or a crime committed by the “armed gangs”.

Every description was used except the obvious: the one that explained the marks of torture that many Syrians have known to have existed for decades.

Clear evidence was now exposed like a map on his mutilated body. His death was an early warning - an example to Aleppo of the price one paid for dissent or even the suggestion of opposition.

Dr Hazem Hallak, Sakher's older brother, is a softly spoken, eloquent man. He is the picture of “quiet suffering”. Hallak has taken an unpaid sabbatical from his medical practice in the US to fight for justice for his brother. Today he travels from city to city raising money for humanitarian causes in Syria.

His life had been far from politics, far even from Syria, but he became a strong voice of the opposition.

As the first anniversary of his brother's death approached, he attached pictures of a smiling Sakher to his Twitter feed, together with the cutting words “Assad killed him”. He says that every time he speaks publicly against the regime, his brother's tombstone is vandalised.

In Syria, even after death, the brutality does not end for the dead or their families.



## **“The Video Of A Wounded Child Who Was Shot That Day Moved The Country As The Young Boy Uttered ‘Forgive Me, Father’ As He Bled In His Father’s Arms”**

For Aleppian activists, the regime is not the only force they resist: the city’s short bursts of protests are usually followed by weeks of silence. There is a sense of humiliation for merely being from the “silent city.”

This pattern has become the subject of revolutionary ridicule, its residents described as out of touch and cowardly, greedy, too attached to their food and their money to care about the rest of the country.

In a way, the struggle in Aleppo is also a revolution within the revolution, a largely organic and uncoordinated one. A fight to be heard in the greater national chorus of dissent.

In the spectrum of revolutionary imagery, Aleppo’s activist videos stand out, and not in a good way. They are dark, shaky, unfocused and taken from an unclear vantage point. They are either too short or too long. There are no static overhead views of masses in perfect rows, arm-in-arm, like in other cities. They are an expression of the city’s conflicted relationship with the revolution.

Last month, I sat and watched almost every video coming out of the countryside that surrounds Aleppo. Each one told a story of suffering that mirrored the tragedies that continue to occur nationally: charred bodies, burnt homes, tanks shelling residential neighbourhoods and extraordinary protests being held in spite of the staggering losses.

These videos are filmed with the same difficulty and risk as in the rest of the country, but they receive significantly fewer views online. Why? Because most Syrians think Aleppo must pay for its initial and treacherous silence or, as a prominent activist from Damascus tells me, “there was always going to be a city that rises last. That city would face the harshest judgement from the people and the regime.”

Both loyalists and opposition groups often use the example of the University City protests as evidence that the revolution is still not widely supported in Aleppo, but this is simply not true.

Several areas outside the university, such as Bustan Al Qasr, Seif Al Dawleh, and Salah Al Din, have become “hot spots” for nightly peaceful protests.

Last month, Abd Al Wahed Hindawi was shot in the shoulder at one of these demonstrations. He bled to death.

His funeral sparked a violent protest in the Iza’a neighbourhood that turned violent. When security forces opened fire on the unarmed protesters they left 11 dead - Aleppo’s highest number of casualties in a single day. The video of a wounded child who was shot that day moved the country as the young boy uttered “Forgive me, father.” as he bled in his father’s arms.

This clip and others like it expose a side of the revolution where admission of guilt runs parallel to courageous defiance. Even their chants are forceful, as if they know they need to convince the street, the people, and even themselves that they exist, “This is Halab (Aleppo), here we are.”

### **“The Officers Entered The Room Of Majed Abul Hadi. They Picked Him Up And Threw Him Out Of His Fifth-Floor Window”**

The early hours of May 3 had begun like any other, although the sound of gunfire would fill the courtyards between the University City’s long blocks just before daybreak.

At midnight, the leading students in a few specific buildings (units 10, 11, 13 and 17, known as the “revolutionary units”) had whistled to commence the collective chants from the windows.

Usually, the security forces fired rounds into the air and threw stones at the buildings to discourage the protesters. Unusually that night, there was a conflict between security forces, some were turning a blind eye to the noise, while others were pressing for more aggression. Encouraged by this discord the students began to shout louder. Some young men even ventured outside the dorms and gathered in the courtyards below. The security forces left the grounds and took their places at the gates.

At 4am, reinforcements arrived in the shape of trucks and buses carrying dozens of armed forces from both security and military intelligence agencies. As Basel, an eyewitness described, “There were enough to occupy an entire village.”

They began shooting at the windows to force the students back inside their rooms. The students retreated and barricaded the main doors to the dorms with furniture. Soon after, two of their number were killed.

Security forces broke into the buildings, beating any students they could find before dragging them back to the buses. Many were barefoot and in their pyjamas. What few clothes they had on were torn off.

Basel watched the thugs beat the students “on their heads, on their stomachs, anywhere they could reach on their bodies”. Three guards forced a student onto his knees: one was riding him, another held him from the neck and the third was kicking him and shouting, “Run, run.”

The officers entered the room of Majed Abul Hadi, from Al Raqqa, who was regarded as a ringleader of the protests. He was chanting when they broke down his door and still was when they picked him up and threw him out of his fifth-floor window.

When the sun rose over Aleppo that day, Majed Abul Hadi, Ahmad Khalaf, Yezen Abboud, Mohammed al-Hawi, Samer Qawwas were dead. Hundreds had been detained, eight of whom were girls. The rest of the students were given two hours to evacuate the dormitories.

By mid-morning, thousands of students were on the streets of Aleppo, their suitcases and plastic bags scattered around them on the pavement. Those who could returned home, but many had nowhere to go. The local activists mobilised to help house those who were stranded. Basel placed dozens of students even though it is a crime to shelter them.

The vacant University City was locked up that morning and the University of Aleppo was completely shut down.

### **“This Was Not The Syrian Youth That Hafez Al Assad Had Dreamed Of Inspiring. This Youth Had Led The Country’s Most Stubborn City Into The Revolution”**

This was not the Syrian youth that Hafez Al Assad had dreamed of inspiring. This was not the loyal youth he had once imagined leading in his Syria. Instead, this youth had led the country’s most stubborn city into the revolution.

An activist in Hama told me that night: “The students are the fuel of the revolution.” They had come to Aleppo to fulfil their dreams and they were kicked out because they dreamt of freedom.

By dawn, five protests had erupted across Aleppo in solidarity with the students. More protests spread during the day. Local students marched in the main university circle. Still more were detained, dragged away between honking taxis and cars.

In Salah Al Din, protesters were also trying to reach the neighbourhood circle, which they had dubbed “Freedom Square”. They had tried to occupy it for weeks, but each time they were met with intimidating armed officials.

Abd Al Ghani Kaakeh, 17, was determined to reach the circle and kept marching forward.

Ten metres away from his intended destination, an officer told him: “Turn around or I’m going to shoot.” He carried on and replied simply: “The Syrian army is a traitor.” Six metres from his goal, he was shot dead.

Last year, while Abd Al Ghani prepared for his baccalaureate exams, he was detained by military intelligence for protesting a week before his finals. He studied again this year for his high school diploma. But like the “Freedom Square” of Salah Al Din, he was stopped short of reaching his goal.

On Thursday, May 17, several UN monitors finally arrived on campus. They were greeted by thousands of chanting students who swarmed the cars and covered them with colourful slogans. Government thugs waited on the sidelines for the officials to leave.

A video taken later showed a few students in a UN vehicle transporting a wounded student as clouds of tear gas filled the square to disburse the crowds. A girl asks the monitors, her voice full of panic, “Look, look, don’t you see? Don’t you see?” as she

points out of the window at groups of uniformed security forces attacking students with batons.

Mercifully, the protest ended with only minor injuries.

**That evening, while I chatted with several Aleppian students, their words seemed to jump with excitement and pride.**

**Each one separately expressed the same sentiment, “Today was the best day of my life!”**

Anas Urfali had attended the university protest and returned home, overjoyed. Drenched with sweat, he took a shower, changed his clothes, kissed his mother goodbye and left for the evening protest in Salah Al Din.

He was shot and died.

The next day, after Urfali’s funeral, his friends swarmed around his house, chanting, “Mother of the martyr, we are all your children.” But his mother was still dialling her son’s mobile phone number in vain, hoping there had been a mistake, hoping he would answer.

Posthumously, Urfali’s Facebook timeline is a record of the struggle students of the University of Aleppo. His final days are a mix jubilation and sorrow.

On May 12, five days before his death, he wrote, “How beautiful it is to protest as you observe the moment of betrayal, and you flutter your wings; for you have become a martyr.”

The word shahadeh in Arabic means “to bear witness”. It also means “martyrdom”. And it means “diploma”. The university events inspired a new set of slogans for banners, Facebook statuses and tweets.

“Only in Syria, you receive al shahadeh before graduating,” and, “We will get our shahadeh whether in the university or in the freedom squares.”

### **“This Is Halab. Here We Are!”**

To the rest of Syria, the majestic city of the north is no longer viewed as a detached annexe.

Despite the despair, the city of quiet suffering is growing louder as each day passes. Almost while no one was watching, Aleppo joined the revolution.

AnonymousSyria, a prominent Aleppian activist, believes the city has become even more divided as the business community and religious leaders continue to support the regime while the impoverished neighbourhoods face the same fate as the hardest-hit areas of Homs and Hama.

He says: "The Aleppian is a tradesmen by nature, even if he is poor. He calculates carefully, if there is a loss, he will not take to the streets." George has another view:

**"Aleppo is the most important heavyweight that can open the way to the final destination of the revolution - the heart of Damascus."**

**After months of being pressured into silence, threatened by security forces, facing mass arrests and kidnappings, living in fear of the daily explosions, and ridiculed by the rest of the country, the people of Aleppo have emerged.**

**They shelter refugees, send aid to victims in other cities, and they chant.**

**After months of shouting their support for the rest of Syria, they now chant for their own city as well.**

**The city chants for itself, for its fallen sons and its vanished citizens, as pride takes its rightful place in Aleppo's distinct chant: "This is Halab. Here we are!"**

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**RECEIVED:**

**NO SOCIAL JUSTICE WITHOUT ENDING THE  
OCCUPATION!**

**Demonstration  
To Mark  
45 Years Of Occupation**

**Saturday June 9, 2012  
Gathering at 20:00 in Rabin Square  
[Tel Aviv]  
Ending the march at 20:30  
Rally in Gan Meir Park at 21:00**

Transportation:

Jerusalem - Parking lot, Liberty Bell Park (Gan Ha'paamon) at 18:15

Registration: Eithan 052-5357456

Haifa - Migdal Hanevi'im at 17:45

Registration: Yoav 050-7859475

Be'er Sheba - Merkaz Morim 17:45

Registration: Michal 050-9391299 or Muna 054-3406761

Details of transportation from further places will follow

**45 years, and the occupation in the 1967 borders still continues:**

**45 years of denial of the Palestinians' right to freedom**

**About four million Palestinians live under an occupation regime in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem  
The policy of Apartheid, expulsion, settlement and land theft continue**

**600 checkpoints, thousands of political prisoners and over 300 Administrative Detainees without trial**

**The defense and settlement expansion budgets become ever more bloated, year by year**

**The Summer of 2011 had seen a momentous development in Israel: Hundreds of thousands of protesters joined millions, in the Middle East and throughout the world, demanding social justice, democracy and liberation from the shackles of oppression.**

**But the economic and social situation in Israel is not and cannot be detached from the political situation, from the continuing occupation and oppression of the Palestinians.**

**While the regional dictators are trampled one by one under the wheels of history, the government of Israel continues its policy of denial. But the peoples of our region have already shown that a no regime can maintain itself without limit by brute force.**

**It's time to choose between oppression, theft and settlement – or life in peace**

**How can we be good neighbors with people who seek freedom and democracy, while Israel continues to deny the Palestinian people the right to independence, to freedom of movement, work, health and education?**

**The separation policy must stop. An end must come to the injustice which contravenes morality and humanity, to the policy of ongoing expulsion. This summer we cry out: There is not and cannot be social justice without ending the occupation! An occupation which leads Israel into a confrontation with the Arab World and an international isolation like Apartheid South Africa? No way!**

**Anyone who wants to see peace and a decent society must go out into the streets and say loud and clear to the young Arabs and Palestinians – We stand with you!**

**Anyone who seeks peace and demands social justice must go out into the streets and say loud and clear to the government of Israel - dismantle the settlements! Your war is not our war; your occupation is the destruction of social justice and human rights.**

**We will gather on Saturday, June 9, at 20:00 in Rabin Square, and will march towards the Gan Meir Park, where a rally will take place at 21:00**

The demonstration is being organized by a coalition of organizations and parties including: Alternative Information Center, Balad, Coalition of Women for Peace, Combatants for Peace, Da'am Workers' Party, Gush Shalom, Hadash, Hithabrut – Tarabut, Social TV, Socialist Struggle, Solidarity, Musawa Center, Women in Black, Yesh Gvul

Contact: Maayan Dak 050-8575729,  
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