

**UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL
00.01 GMT 23RD MARCH 2018**

***Western states contributing to military control in Egypt
Opaque and wealth driven military failing to provide security***

23rd March 2017 - Western states and arms companies have contributed to the Egyptian military's consolidation of political power by providing aid and security assistance with few strings attached, according to a new report *"The Officers' Republic"* by Transparency International Defence & Security.

This report comes as Egyptians prepare to take to the polls in a widely discredited election, in which the military General, President el-Sisi, is expected to secure another four years of power. Meanwhile the intensity of state violence and human rights abuses continues to soar.

Whilst the Egyptian military has, since the protests that brought down Hosni Mubarak in 2011, cemented its political power and expanded its economic ambitions, it has remained a largely opaque and unaccountable institution. Its pursuit of economic and political interests have meanwhile left it struggling to confront the security challenges faced by the country, with a detrimental effect on both local and regional stability.

Details of Egypt's defence budget, an estimated \$4.4 billion per year, are treated as a state secret. Egypt's institutions provide little scrutiny of the military's finances. Meanwhile the US provides approximately \$1.3 billion a year to the government in foreign military assistance.

At the same time western defence companies – with approval from their governments – have continued to do business as usual with a military force riddled with corruption risk and lacking in any form of meaningful transparency. Egypt was the third largest arms importer in the world over the last five years. In March 2015 the US reinstated delivery of major weapons systems to Egypt, having halted them after the 2013 coup, despite little evidence of reform progress.

James Lynch, Deputy Director Transparency International Defence & Security, said:

"The Egyptian people have a military that does everything but keep the country secure. Its concern with building its economic and political power has hugely frustrated its efforts to deal with the security challenges it faces in the Sinai and other places. This is a military that may very well be the architect of its own security crisis."

"Egypt's armed forces have under President el-Sisi expanded their privileged position in the country's economy, have grabbed full control over the political system and yet they are not under any meaningful scrutiny. Western states, who could do much to influence this situation, are meanwhile failing to demand serious reform and instead carrying on with business as usual, while mistakenly still considering Egypt a trusted partner for security in stability in the region."

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“As Egyptians take to the polls the outcome is highly unlikely to bring about any result other than the continued dominance of the military. The international community must understand that not only is it doing a major disservice to the people of Egypt by providing support to the armed forces with few strings attached, it is also contributing to the security crisis the country and region is facing.”

Transparency International Defence & Security recommends that the international community:

- Promote better domestic oversight of the armed forces by asking harder questions on the military’s economic activity and accountability mechanisms
- Make financial and security assistance dependent on achieving at least basic levels of transparency and accountability
- Amplify domestic voices championing accountability and a better governed defence sector

*****ENDS*****

Transparency International Defence & Security works towards a world in which governments, the armed forces, and arms transfers are transparent, accountable, and free from corruption.

Notes:

- Arabic speakers are available for interview on request
- Embargoed copies of the report are available on request