

10 September 2013

## The Dispersion of the Rab'aa Sit-in and its Aftermath

### Introduction

On 14 August 2013, police forces, protected by the army, started to disperse the sit-in in Rab'aa Al-Adaweya in the district of Nasr City, and the sit-in in Nahda Square in Giza. The Rab'aa sit-in started on 28 June 2013 in support of former President, Mohammed Morsi, as demonstrations against Morsi and his policies started on the same day in Tahrir square. The sit-in in Nahda started on 2 July to protest the removal of Morsi by the Minister of Defense, General Abdel-Fatah El-Sisi. The sit-in in Rab'aa lasted for 46 days and the sit-in in Nahda lasted for 43 days before security forces raided the two sit-ins on 14 August.

This report aims at understanding how security forces dealt with protestors in Rab'aa and Nahda, and investigating whether female protestors were violently targeted. This is to be done by studying the number of women who died during the dispersion of these two sit-ins, as well as reasons and timing of their deaths. This aims at ascertaining whether the statements of Minister of Interior, Mohammed Ibrahim, were precise. The minister said that the sit-inners were warned and asked to clear the locations of their gathering, and that safe exits were provided.<sup>1</sup> According to Mohamed Ibrahim, the original plan was not to evacuate the areas but to besiege the sit-ins and resort to dispersion only if violence was used against police forces, which he claimed happened. According to Ibrahim, police forces were gradual in the dispersion process as they started with calling sit-inners to leave using microphones, then water was used, followed by tear gas. However, the Minister said, police forces faced heavy use of fire leading to the death of a number of police officers, which led them to besiege the sit-in so that special forces could break in. Mohamed Ibrahim said in the press conference that the two sit-ins were dispersed without any losses, stating that the number of victims among sit-inners is so small and is not proportionate at all to the number of deaths among police officers, asserting that the number of deaths among protestors could be considered a success if compared to other cases in the world. The Minister stated that the agreed upon percentage of deaths in the dispersion of sit-ins is 10% according to international standards for dispersion of non-peaceful sit-ins. Prime Minister, Hazem El-Beblawi, stated in an interview that it was clear that dispersing these sit-ins would be costly because the protestors are not peaceful.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Ministry of Health, the dispersion of Rab'aa sit-in resulted in 202 deaths, while in Nahda 87 were killed.<sup>3</sup> The figures declared by the Ministry of Health are different from the number of deaths documented by Human Rights organizations which were gathered by WikiThawra which confirmed that 904 deaths occurred in the dispersion of Rab'aa sit-in, and 87 in Nahda.

Testimonies of the female sit-inners, in addition to paramedics who were carrying the injured and dead bodies in Rab'aa show that the use of live bullets started from 6:30-7 am and that most

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<sup>1</sup> Press Conference for the Minister of Interior, Mohamed Ibrahim, concerning the dispersal of the sit-ins in Rab'aa and Nahda, 14 August 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nySjd82JxyY>

<sup>2</sup> Al-Beblawi in the TV talk-show "Gomla Mofeida": "Clearing the sit-ins in Rab'aa and Nahda without shedding any blood was impossible," 27 August 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faCPQciibGY>

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Health: Deaths increase to 525 and injuries to 3717 <http://www.ahram.org.eg/NewsQ/226789.aspx>, Al-Ahram, 16 August 2013.

deaths were the result of the use of live ammunition in the upper part of the body (head – neck - chest). According to the press conference held by the Minister of Interior following the dispersion, 10 machine guns were found, as well as 29 shotguns, 9622 live bullets, six hand grenades, five shotgun loaders, 55 bottles of shotgun pellets, and "quantities" of protective jackets, wireless sets, and a "huge amount" of edged weapons,<sup>4</sup> and that seven police officers were killed by the protestors, which does not confirm the claims that all sit-inners were armed or that the sit-in was full of large amounts of guns.

### **Methodology**

We relied in this report on the enumeration done by the Women Human Rights Defenders Program concerning the deaths among female sit-inners, as well as the lists published by other NGOs, which were collected in the list compiled by WikiThawra, a statistical database launched to document the deaths, injuries, and arrests of the Egyptian revolution<sup>5</sup>. The Women Human Rights Defenders Program team went to governmental entities, including the Forensic Medicine Administration and the Ministry of Health, as well as hospitals to which bodies of sit-inners were transferred to ascertain the cause of death. This report focuses on the victims of the dispersion operations in Rab'aa rather than Nahda as we could only find one case of a female sit-inner killed in Nahda. The two researchers of Nazra could not communicate with female sit-inners who were present during the raid on Nahda sit-in because of severe lack of confidence in human rights organizations on the part of these sit-inners.

Nazra researchers also spoke with nine sit-inners who were present when the Rab'aa sit-in was dispersed to make sure if the protestors were warned or allowed safe exit, as the Minister of Interior claimed. Nazra researchers also spoke with two paramedics who were present in ambulances to carry the dead and injured to hospitals and Zenhoum Morgue, with two women who were in Zenhoum Morgue, and to a female doctor in the Health Insurance Hospital to understand how hospitals and the Morgue dealt with the events. Nazra researchers also spoke to two women who were arrested during the clashes at Al-Fath Mosque on 16 August.

### **Number of Deaths among Female Sit-inners and Types of Injuries**

Nazra researchers were able to confirm 19 deaths among women during the dispersal of the Rab'aasit-in, as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Injury</b>	<b>Location of the Body</b>
1 – Heba Mohamed Fekry		Zenhoum Morgue
2 - Mariam Mohamed Abdel-Aal		Zenhoum Morgue
3 – Seiham Abdullah Mohammed Metwalli		Zenhoum
4 – Heba Ahmed Abdel-Aziz		Zenhoum Morgue
5 – Hayam Abdou Ibrahim		Zenhoum Morgue

<sup>4</sup> Supra note 1.

<sup>5</sup> "Deaths of the Dispersal of the sit-ins of Rab'aa and Nahda and their Repercussions", WikiThawra, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0ApHKfHFs3JYxdFBfWVUySk4ySUJLQkEzV3VsdnIzT2c#gid=0>

6 – Asmaa Mohamed El-Beltagie	Live Bullet in the Chest <sup>6</sup>	Zenhoun Morgue
7 –Inji Mohammed Tag El-Deen		Health Insurance Hospital
8 – HodaFarrag El-Sayed Abdullah	Live Bullet in the Back	Health Insurance Hospital
9 –Hoda Ahmed Sa'eed	Live Bullet in the Back	Health Insurance Hospital
10 – Habiba Abdul-Aziz	Live Bullet in the Chest <sup>7</sup>	
11 –Noha Ahmed Abdel-Mo'tie		Al-Iman Mosque
12 – So'aad Hassan Ramzi		Al-Iman Mosque
13 –AsmaaSaqr	Live Bullet in the Head <sup>8</sup>	Al-Iman Mosque
14 –Rozan Mohammed Ali	Live Bullet in the Head	Al-Iman Mosque
15 –SawsanSa'ad Hassan		Health Insurance Hospital
16 – HendHesham Kamal		
17 –Unknown	Live bullet in the head	Health Insurance Hospital
18 – Unknown		Zenhoun Morgue
19 – Unknown		Zenhoun Morgue

Nazra researchers found that there are nine female bodies, including two unknowns, in Zenhoun Morgue, as well as five bodies, including one unknown, in the Health Insurance Hospital in Nasr City. Nazra researchers could not ascertain the place of the other five bodies, two of which were in Al-Iman Mosque in Nasr city. The fact that their names were not registered in the lists of Zenhoun Morgue may be due to the fact that not all the bodies in Al-Iman Mosque were transferred to the Morgue. According to the testimony of A.S., who was present in Al-Iman Mosque on 15 August (the day following the dispersion of the sit-in), families were hesitant about sending the bodies of their relatives to hospitals or to Zenhoun Morgue because of the wide spread knowledge concerning the dire conditions of the Morgue.

A.S.<sup>9</sup> heard from the women present at the Mosque that there was a delegation of doctors who directly issued burial permissions, and this was confirmed by N. who was present when the sit-in at Rab'aa was dispersed and during the attempts of the family of AsmaaSaqr (who was killed during the dispersal of the Rab'aasit-in) to bury her body.. The family of AsmaaSaqr, according to N., took her body to Zenhoun Morgue and they were asked to sign on to a medical report, according to which the cause of death is suicide, a condition that was refused by her family. The family took the body to Al-Hussein Educational Hospital in which they were told that there are no empty places in their mortuary refrigerator, driving her family to take Asmaa's body home and try to preserve it as best as possible by turning on the air conditioners and fans at their home. Asmaa's family took her body to Al-Iman Mosque on Thursday, 15 August, and they managed to get a burial permission issued by the Health inspector present there. According to Menna Al-Masry, who was present at Al-Iman Mosque on 14 August, the day of the dispersal of the sit-in, at 5:30 pm, she saw people

<sup>6</sup> According to N. (Name is withheld upon her request), who was present during the dispersal of Rab'aa sit-in, Asmaa Al-Beltagie died of a gunshot wound at 11 AM.

<sup>7</sup> According to N. who was present during the dispersal of the Rab'aa sit-in, Habiba Abdul-Aziz died of a gunshot wound at 8 AM.

<sup>8</sup> According to N., who was present during the dispersal of the Rab'aa sit-in, AsmaaSaqr died of a gunshot wound at 8:30 am.

<sup>9</sup> The name was withheld pursuant to her request.

taking the bodies of their relatives to be buried without being examined at the Morgue because they managed to obtain burial permissions. However, Menna was not aware of the process through which families were able to obtain burial permits at the mosque. According to Dr. Magda Helal Al-Karadawy, The Chief Forensic Medical Examiner and President of the Forensic Medicine Administration, stated that some bodies were not taken to Zenhoum Morgue, and that some families managed to get burial permissions issued via their personal contacts with Health Inspectors, unaware that Health Inspectors were present at the mosque, which indicates that the Ministry of Health (to which Health Inspectors are affiliated) did not coordinate with the Ministry of Justice, to which the Forensic Medicine Administration belongs, on how to deal with the bodies of the sit-inners.

Nazra researchers could not find out the exact location of the gunshot wounds for all the cases taken to Zenhoum Morgue as the forensic reports, have not yet been issued by Zenhoum, , until the date of the publication of this report. The delay, according to Dr. Hesham Abdel-Hamid, General Manager of Zenhoum Morgue to be due to the heavy pressure on Zenhoum Morgue which had to issue reports on 1500 cases during the past two months. . Although Nazra researchers could not find the exact information concerning the places where bullets penetrated the bodies of these female sit-inners, testimonies indicate that bullets were directed to the upper part of the body and that live ammunition was used against sit-inners. According to Dr. Magda El-Karadawy, 85% of fatal injuries were due to the use of live ammunition and 15% were due to the use of shotguns. According to the testimony of a female doctor at the Health Insurance Hospital,<sup>10</sup> located in the vicinity of Rab'aa and who was on call in the hospital during the dispersal of the sit-in, 99% of the injuries admitted to the hospitals were the result of the use of live ammunition aimed at the head, chest, or abdomen areas.

According to D.,<sup>11</sup> who was present during the dispersal of the Rab'aa sit-in and volunteered in one of the field hospitals built by the sit-inners behind the Rab'aa stage, the first four cases to arrive to the hospital came at 6:30 AM and they were injuries resulting from shotgun wounds in the chest and abdomen areas. The hospital started receiving cases of live bullets directly after the initial four cases. During the first hour of the dispersal operation, the field hospital received more than 20 bodies, driving the field hospital to resort to the use of a nearby tent as an extension to the field hospital. . The injuries, according to D., were sustained in the upper part of the body and all the cases of deaths and injuries she saw were the result of live bullet-wounds in the head, eye, or abdomen. According to Z.,<sup>12</sup> she started hearing gun shots at 6:30 AM in Anwar Al-Moftie Street, behind Tiba Mall which is located in the vicinity of Rab'aa. She headed to the field hospital established in one of the halls in Rab'aa Mosque and was surprised to find bodies there, sustaining gunshot wounds in the head and abdomen areas.

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<sup>10</sup> The doctor's name was withheld pursuant to her request.

<sup>11</sup> Name was withheld pursuant to her request.

<sup>12</sup> Name was withheld pursuant to her request.

## ***Events of the Dispersal of the Rab'aa Sit-in***

### **Use of Live Bullets and Availability of Safe Exits**

According to D.,<sup>13</sup> who was present during the dispersal of the Rab'aa sit-in, she started hearing gunshots at 6:30 AM on Wednesday, 14 August. At that time, she was in the toilets next to the Medical Center of Rab'aa Al-Adaweya when she heard sit-inners scream with religious calls and bang the fences to warn the rest of the dangers. D. went to the tent of the field hospital which was located behind the stage built by sit-inners and said that reaching the field hospital was very difficult as the sit-inners were scrambling to find a shelter from the bullets. D. did not hear any instructions by the police officers with regards to safe exits. W.,<sup>14</sup> who was present during the operation, says that the firing started at 6:30 AM in Anwar Al-Moftiestreet, located in the vicinity of the Rab'aa sit-in. W. went to the stage to warn the sit-inners, and from there, she saw police forces besieging the sit-in from Tayaran Street, Al-Batrawie Street (specifically near Geneina Mall which is close to the sit-in), and Al-Nasr Road close to the 6 October Memorial. W. wanted to announce the safe passages that sit-inners, especially children, could use to exit the sit-in but she was not able to locate any. According to S., she heard, via megaphones, warnings for the sit-inners that the dispersion of the sit-in will start at 6:30 am. The testimony of S., however, indicates that the call of warning to sit-inners that the dispersion will begin was made at the same time with the firing. This may explain the reason behind the fact that all the sit-inners interviewed by Nazra researchers ascertained that they did not hear the warning, as the sound of bullets might have drowned the sound of warnings via megaphones.

Z., who was present during the dispersal of the Rab'aa sit-in, says that she did not hear any warnings or instructions for safe exits, knowledge of the latter acquired only through telephone calls with individuals outside the sit-in who provided information regarding safe exits, or via individuals who attempted to enter the sit-in but failed and were able to provide information regarding the location of security forces. Z. knew of a safe exit from one of the women she was hiding with in an office in the vicinity of Rab'aa, the former acquiring information with regards to a safe exit after a telephone conversation with a relative outside the sit-in. Z. tried to leave the office she had been hiding in at 6 PM. People hiding in the office organized so that each woman could take a man with her on her way out. According to Z., only charred remains of the sit-in remained when she exited her hiding place at 6 PM, and it was the only time she heard warnings, via megaphones, instructing those inside Rab'aa Mosque to leave and that "no bullets will be shot." Z. says that policemen present near Rab'aa Mosque called them "sheep" and insulted her and other women with "obscene" words she refused to repeat.

According to a paramedic who was in an ambulance heading to Rab'aa from one of the governorates<sup>15</sup>, the ambulance arrived to the stage in Al-Nasr Road at 8:30 AM and was instructed by army forces stationed there to go to Al-Sa'a Square, in the vicinity of the Rab'aa sit-in. The paramedic does not remember noticing any of the details of the dispersal, as he was too busy due to the large number of casualties. He says that all of the cases he transferred to hospitals were hit

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<sup>13</sup> Name was withheld pursuant to her request.

<sup>14</sup> Name was withheld pursuant to her request.

<sup>15</sup> The paramedic's name and the governorate he is based in were withheld pursuant to his request.

in the head, chest or abdomen area with live bullets. Due to the continuous firing, ambulances were not able to enter the location of the sit-in; sit-inners had to carry the dead and injured to the ambulances, the only avenue available through Al-Sa'a Square. The ambulance paramedic was in worked on transferring the sit-inners to hospitals until 1 PM, and he said that the firing did not stop throughout the hours he was carrying the injured from Al- Sa'a Square to the different hospitals.

According to Mohammed Abdel-Salam, the General Inspector of the Egyptian Ambulance Organization, the operation room of the Organization was notified that the two sit-ins at Rab'aa and Nahdawill be dispersed at 6:30 AM. The ambulance he was in arrived to the building of the Organization and Administration Agency, in the vicinity of Rab'aa at 7:30 AM. When he arrived, Abdel-Salam saw that ambulances had already started to carry the injured to the Health Insurance Hospital. According to Abdel-Salam, live ammunition was used randomly, explaining that he felt as if it were "raining bullets" making it impossible for ambulances to enter the location of the sit-in. At 11:30 AM, Abdel-Salam learned of the death of Ibrahim Mustapha Al-Azab, Assistant Paramedic Specialist, by a bullet in the head, which he sustained when he trying to carry one of the injured in front of the building of Organization and Administration in Al-Nasr Road to an ambulance.

Mohammed Abdel-Salam was present in an ambulance near "Ali & Ali" Pharmacy, in the vicinity of Rab'aa, and, from there, he tried to enter Rab'aa Square. He retreated, however, after bullets were fired around the ambulance, followed by a tear-gas bomb that dropped in front of the ambulance, forcing him to leave the area in the ambulance car he was in.

In addition to the difficulties ambulances faced in entering the scene of the Rab'aa sit-in, the paramedic explains that there was a general sense of mistrust of ambulances. According to the paramedic, the sit-inners carrying the injured to the ambulances asked paramedics to fully open the doors of the ambulance convinced that ambulances carried weapons used by the police to kill the sit-inners. Abdel-Salam says that paramedics managed to enter the location of the sit-in at 9:30 PM, after the firing stopped at 8 PM, at which point they started to record the number of dead bodies at the scene of the sit-in. In completing the task of transferring the bodies to morgues and hospitals, ambulances present in Rab'aa requested that the Crisis Management Unit of the Egyptian Ambulance Organization to send additional ambulances to Rab'aa. Consequently, the number of ambulance cars increased from 80 to 150,, the process of transferring the bodies from Rab'aa ending at 2 AM. After the bodies present at the scene of the Rab'aa sit-in were transferred, ambulances headed to a building close to the Rab'aa Medical Center, to transfer the bodies present there. Mohammed Abdel-Salam said that some individuals obstructed the way of the ambulances and refused to allow them to carry the bodies to the Zenhoum morgue and hospitals, insisting, instead, on transferring the bodies to the nearby Al-Iman Mosque, asking ambulances to help by transferring the bodies to the mosque. According to Abdel-Salam, ambulances refused to help, as it is illegal to carry dead bodies anywhere apart from hospitals or Zenhoum Morgue. Abdel-Salam does not understand the reason behind the refusal to allow ambulances to carry the bodies located near the Rab'aa Medical Center, stating that the refusal might be attributed to a general lack of trust in ambulances .

According to the testimony of a female doctor in the Health Insurance Hospital, the time periods during which the highest number of casualties and deaths were transferred to the hospital were

between 8-10 Am and between 2 PM-10PM, which she explains to be due to the change in the actors responsible for the dispersal of the sit-in. According to the doctor, the police was responsible for the operation in the morning and the armed forces took over starting at 2 PM, information that was relayed to her from the hospital staff, and her own observations. The doctor says that she was sure that the army started to take control of the dispersal when they started to prevent some of the injured from reaching the hospital, which was not the case in the morning, and started to become noticeable when she heard that the army took control of the dispersion operation. The doctor says she received a phone call from a friend who was trying to carry a body to the Health Insurance Hospital when he was prevented by army officers near Al-Azhar Conference Hall, in the vicinity of Rab'aa, which led a third doctor to go to the female doctor's friend on foot with a trolley to take the body to the Health Insurance Hospital. According to the doctor, the army refused to allow the injured enter the hospital because the reception and emergency entrance is located in Youssef Abbas Street, which the army forces decided would serve as a safe exit without any coordination with the hospital, obstructing attempts to transfer the injured to the hospital.

The testimony of D. is consistent with that of the doctor with regard to the escalation of violence at 2 PM. The former says that the use of tear gas remarkably intensified at 2 PM to the extent that D. and a female doctor at the hospital lost consciousness. The use of live bullets around the field hospital was very intense at that time as well. According to H.,<sup>16</sup> a volunteer at the field hospital in Rab'aa, the sound of bullets was coming from the buildings surrounding Rab'aa, and she saw snipers stationed on the roof-tops of the buildings around the field hospital when she peer outside the field hospital tent to confirm her auditory perception that the bullets are being fired from a near-by, elevated, location. D. headed to Rab'aa Al-Adaweya Mosque to rest after being exposed to heavy tear gas, and on her way back to the field hospital, she saw one of the sit-inners being shot in the head a few meters away from her.

D. returned to the field hospital at 2:30PM, and she said that the situation at the hospital had gravely deteriorated, as the sound of bullets and shotguns became very close to the tent of the field hospital. After two doctors were hit with shotguns, the volunteers at the field hospital decided to provide medical assistance to the injured while crawling, in an attempt to evade the bullets. Sara Mohammed Ali's testimony is consistent with that of D. concerning the targeting of the tents of the sit-inners. Sara was not present in the sit-in but when she knew that her father was killed at 2 PM, she asked her brother to search for their father's body, as she was far from Rab'aa while her brother was there. Sara's brother could not reach the tents in which the bodies were gathered as bullets were heavily fired around the tents.

At 4 PM, supplies at the field hospital were almost depleted and D., accompanied by a volunteer at the field hospital, headed to the Rab'aa Medical Center to search for supplies. She says that the Center was "like a morgue", as bodies were everywhere starting from the external stairs of the Center to the internal stairs and the elevator. D. could not ascend to the second floor because of the huge number of bodies on the stairs, so she went back to the field hospital.

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<sup>16</sup> Name was withheld pursuant to her request.

Z. also went to Rab'aa Medical Center at 4 PM after she heard from one of the people present at the field hospital that one of her acquaintances was killed. Z. said that the bullets were heavily fired at 4 PM and there was a huge crowd at the entrance of the Rab'aa Medical Center, as sit-inners were trying to hide from the bullets. According to Z., some sit-inners were trying to organize the entry process, letting women and children enter first. Z. managed to enter the center but she immediately decided to leave, believing that the injured "deserve" the space more than she does. According to Z., the firing was heavy and indiscriminate, directed at the stairs leading to the entrance of the Medical Center and she saw two men hit with bullets in their heads, and she got a splinter of one of these bullets in her side.

At 5:30 PM, D. and the volunteers at the field hospital tent had to leave the place as police forces were approaching, to avoid the prospect of arrest if the hospital is stormed by security forces. Sara Mohammed's brother tried to reach the tents at the time the police were approaching the field hospital, at 5:30 PM to search for his father's body. However, he was hit with a shotgun in his leg by a police officer present around the tents, one of them telling him that "there are no bodies".

According to D., Rab'aa El-Adaweya Mosque was full of women and children throughout the period of the sit-in, which was part of the emergency plan prepared by the Organizing Committee, primarily responsible for organizing the entries of the sit-in, and periodically notified the sit-inners of the emergency plan. Z. said that the Organizing Committee also instructed women to move to the center of the sit-in and stay away from the borders, believing that clashes will primarily take place at the fringes of Rab'aa.

Z. testifies that stories about using women as human shields are inaccurate. After leaving the Rab'aa Medical Center, Z. headed to a nearby private office near the Center with four women and a number of men to hide from the bullets. The door was closed, and one of the men knocked on it and threatened to break it if it is not opened. The door was opened, and the men who were with Z. and the other four women left them in the office. Z. has no information on what happened to those men, or even their names, until now.

Figures prove that the claims of using women as human shields are not correct. The number of women killed during the dispersal of the Rab'aa sit-in is 17 out of 904, and one woman out of 87 deaths in dispersal of the Nahda sit-in. The percentage of female deaths is, thus, 1.9% and 1.1% in Rab'aa and Nahda respectively, indicating that the women were not pushed into the clashes or used to protection of any buildings.

### ***Violations of the Right to Health: The Condition of Hospitals and Zenhoum Morgue***

Mohammed Abdel-Salam, the General Inspector of the Egyptian Ambulance Organization, says that the situation in Zenhoum Morgue was devastating "disaster". According to Abdel-Salam, ambulances waited for 12-24 hours for their turn to hand over the bodies they carried to the morgue. According to Menna Al-Masry, who was present at Zenhoum Morgue at 12 noon on the day the sit-ins were dispersed, entry to Zenhoum Morgue was not possible because of the overcrowdedness in the streets leading to the Morgue. Menna asked the people present at Zenhoum Morgue with the bodies of their relatives about the period they spent waiting outside the Morgue for the autopsy, and the shortest period relayed to her was eight hours. According to Menna, the

smell was horrible as the weather was hot and bodies started to decompose. Residents of the buildings near Zenhoum Morgue voluntarily provided ice, incense, and air sprays to the families of the dead, in an attempt to delay the decomposition of the bodies and cover the smell arising due to the decomposition and she states that she saw a woman walking around the Morgue asking the families if they need more ice. Menna left the Morgue at 5 PM and the number of dead bodies was almost the same as the time of her arrival at noon.

A week after the dispersal of the sit-ins, Menna went to the Health Insurance Hospital and Fatema Al-Zahraa Hospital trying to know the number of injured sit-inners and found seven in the Health Insurance Hospital. Menna followed the case of a child, R.,<sup>17</sup> who was sustained injuries from a splinter, after the explosion of a nail bomb, causing an injury so severe that it warranted the possible amputation of his leg. Mennasays that the level of health care provided at the Health Insurance Hospital was appalling, as doctors applied a cast incorrectly on R.'s leg and necessary painkillers were not provided. Moreover, the hospital was lacking air conditioners. The medical report issued for R.'s case stated that he sustained a gunshot wound, despite the fact that his x-ray clearly indicated that there are nails lodged in his leg. According to Menna, the doctors responsible for R.'s care mocked his Upper Egyptian accent when he asked for painkillers, driving some volunteers to transfer him to another hospital.

The testimony of Sara Mohammed Ali portrays a similar experience in the several hospitals she visited during her search for her father's body, who was killed by a bullet in the head during the dispersal of the Rab'aa sit-in. The day following the dispersal, 15 August, Sara headed to the various hospitals that she learned, from Facebook, that the bodies of sit-inners were transferred to. She arrived at Al-Moneira Hospital at 7 AM and was received by three employees at the entrance of the hospital who refused to let her in when they learned the reason of her visit, asked her to wait for the hospital's manager to arrive. She described her father's features to the employees and the wound he sustained and one of the employees confirmed that her father's body is indeed in the hospital. Sara could not enter the hospital, however, until she fought with the employees and was not allowed to enter to the hospital's mortuary refrigerator until she threatened the officials there that she was going to "cause a scandal". Sara was told that there are only two bodies in the mortuary refrigerator but she found ten and her father's was not among them. According to Sara, the hospital staff told Sara, in a rude manner that is inconsiderate of her difficult situation to go to Kasr El-Aini hospital, one of them telling her to "get out of here", while another employee told Sara that she is visiting the hospital at an "inappropriate" time, as the employees were busy having breakfast. A third employee was asking his colleague to buy him a pack of cigarettes while she was describing her father's features to him. The man in charge of the mortuary refrigerator at Kasr El-Aini refused to let Sara in when she refused to answer if she was searching for someone who died at Rab'aa, claiming that all of the bodies in Kasr El-Aini have already been identified and their families are already present. After Sara objected, as she did not see families present that correspond to the number of bodies the employee claimed are at Kasr El-Aini, the latter explained that it is "improper" that Sara see the bodies in the mortuary refrigerator, which violates the sanctity of death, according to the employee. The situation was resolved after a family member present at the mortuary interfered and asked the employee to allow Sara in to avoid the risk of families receiving the wrong body.

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<sup>17</sup> His name is withheld.

Sara did not find her father's at Kasr El-Aini, after which she headed to Zenhoum Morgue, arriving at 8:30 AM. Sara said that the smell outside Zenhoum Morgue was "unbearable" and she could not enter because of the extreme crowdedness outside the Morgue. Sara left to Al-Iman Mosque in Nasr City, after she learned, via Facebook, that there are 60 unidentified bodies there. According to Sara, of the 60 bodies in Al-Iman, 35-40 were completely charred. Sara headed back to Zenhoum Morgue after failing to find her father's body at Al-Iman, reaching the Morgue at 12:30 PM, and finding almost the same number of masses outside Zenhoum. It was difficult for Sara to enter Zenhoum, as some people were refusing the entry of women claiming that they break down once they enter Zenhoum, causing an additional burden. Sara insisted to enter, however, and a man refused to let her in, saying "show me how you will manage to do that [enter Zenhoum]". Sara managed to push him away and struggled to penetrate the crowds, finally entering Zenhoum. Sara describes the situation inside as "catastrophic". She saw three bodies laid on top of each other inside the single compartments of the mortuary's refrigerators because of the lack of "enough room" for all the bodies present. The floor was also full of bodies and people walked around them, a situation that, according to Sara, inevitably lead to accidental bumping into the bodies. The situation in the Morgue was exacerbated further due to the blood covering the floor, on which she almost slipped more than once.

Sara left the morgue after failing to find her father's body there and later got a phone call from a person present at Zenhoum who had read her father's name on Facebook. He told her that her father's body was at Zenhoum and that several bodies were "thrown" by an unidentified car in a street in the vicinity of Zenhoumat 8 PM. Sara arrived at Zenhoum at 10:30 PM, a difficult trip due to the curfew which had been imposed by then and which commenced at 7 PM. Sara was able to reach Zenhoum, however, through the use of her Journalist ID card, as journalists were exempted from adhering to the curfew. When she arrived to Zenhoum, Sara saw that the residents of the neighborhood had formed human chains around the bodies to protect them and ensure that the bodies are discharged only to family members. There were seven bodies in the street near Zenhoum Morgue and the people who surrounded them had put some ice blocks on the bodies to delay the decomposition process. After checking Sara's ID, she used a wooden block (provided by a nearby wood shop, which provided wooden bars to the families of the sit-inners free of charge) to lift her father's body and place him in a queue of bodies awaiting autopsy in Zenhoum. Sara said that a vehicle for transporting frozen food arrived at 6AM after the neighborhood's residents contacted a company to send the vehicle in order to place the bodies inside them to delay their decomposition. Sara placed her father's body inside the vehicle after a 7-and-a half hour wait in the queue; the residents resorted to numbering the bodies in order to facilitate the process of handing them to their families when it is their turn to undergo the autopsy.

Sara, her brother, and a friend of her father's attended the autopsy process. According to Sara, her father was hit with two bullets, one in the neck and the other in his ear, the latter penetrating his cheek, resulting in the complete laceration of one side of his face. The autopsy had accelerated by 6 AM, when additional doctors were sent to Zenhoum to allow families to bury their dead before the Friday prayers (at noon). It became possible for four bodies to enter Zenhoum for an autopsy after additional doctors were sent, instead of one at a time, which was the situation earlier in the day. Sara said that the autopsies were conducted in one room. Thus, families wanting to attend the process for their dead relative witnessed the process of other bodies being autopsied as well.

According to Sara, Zenhoum's employees dealt with the families in a manner that was completely inconsiderate of the difficult situation they were in. The employee responsible for issuing medical reports, for example, told a family member who was inquiring about the location of the body of his relative, "Where do you think it is for God's sake? We did not eat it!" Sara asked the latter employee to respect the sanctity of death, to which the latter responded, "You [Sara] are just taken aback by the morgue and the sight of dead bodies but this is normal for me". The autopsy of Sara's father was completed at 7 AM, after which she found that the employee responsible for issuing burial permissions due to "exhaustion", and no employees replaced him. Sara, her brother, and her father's friend were forced to wait until 10 AM and to resort to using the frozen food vehicle again. The employee responsible for burial permissions returned at 10 AM and ridiculed the families awaiting him saying: "Why the hurry? The Graves are not going anywhere."

Mahy Hassan went to Nozha Hospital on the dawn of 15 August when she learned of the presence of a woman there that was injured at Rab'aa and who was not receiving proper health care. The Hospital, according to Mahy, confirmed that there are no empty beds in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Mahy found H.<sup>18</sup> in the emergency room without a medical team or the administration of Intravenous Therapy (IVs), although H. was hit with a bullet in the head and was bleeding heavily. Mahy asked the supervising doctor to conduct CT scan on H., which he refused as the device was not working. Mahy called a number of hospitals to ask if they had a functioning CT scan and if there are empty beds in the ICU. However, she did not find a hospital in which the two conditions were met; the closest hospital in which a CT scan could be conducted was Egypt Air Hospital in Almaza, and the nearest hospital with empty beds in the ICU was Al-Mostakbal Hospital in Triumph Square in Heliopolis. Mahy tried to call an ambulance to transfer H. but no one answered, the supervising doctor telling her that ambulances were busy elsewhere and that she has to "figure something out" in order to transfer H. from Nozha Hospital. Mahy took H., in her private car, to Egypt Air Hospital in order to perform the CT scan, then to Al-Mostakbal Hospital for H. to be admitted to the ICU. According to Mahy, Al-Mostakbal Hospital did not take H.'s critical condition into consideration, refusing to admit her to the hospital unless 5000 Egyptian Pounds (725 dollars), the cost of admission, are paid, the amount which was paid by a volunteer. Mahy was informed that H. was suffering from a double fracture in the skull and a cerebral contusion and required urgent surgery. However, the hospital refused to conduct the surgery until 13,000 Egyptian Pounds (2,000 dollars) were paid, which were also paid for by a volunteer.

In addition to poor medical care and the inconsiderate treatment of the families of victims, there was an additional difficulty of receiving medical reports that correctly stated the reason of death or injury of the sit-inners. The latter was a difficulty that Z. encountered when she went to Al-Hussein Educational Hospital after she learned that one of her friends had been killed during the dispersal of Rab'aa sit-in. According to Z., the medical report issued by the hospital indicated that her friend had committed suicide, and not due to a gunshot wound, which was the case. His family refused to receive the report and struggled with the hospital's administration until a different report, indicating that the reason of death was a gunshot wound, was issued, a struggle the family was engaged in from 7 AM to 1 PM. According to Z., the hospital's employees treated her and her family's friend as if they were "killers", refusing to allow the family to enter the hospital's mortuary refrigerator to identify the body, employees telling them that "It is bad enough that you are

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<sup>18</sup> Her name is withheld.

coming from Rab'aa!" Sara Mohammed Ali also witnessed the attempts of Zenhoum Morgue's employees to falsify the reason of death in several cases. Sara saw fights between the families of the dead and the staff responsible for issuing burial permissions, who issued reports stating that the reason of death is either due to suicide or involvement in a fight. Sara also witnessed instances when Zenhoum Morgue's employees refused to record the cases of some of the deaths in the Rab'aa and Nahda records kept by Zenhoum. The employees responsible for issuing burial permissions explained to the families that they have no control over the reasons of death, that they are merely following the reasons recorded by the doctor who performs the autopsy. The latter revelation drove families to insist on attending the autopsies of their relatives in large numbers, around 20 persons insisting to accompany bodies to the autopsy area, a situation that resulted in significantly, more crowdedness in front of, and inside, Zenhoum.

### ***The Aftermath of the Dispersal Operation***

A total of 52 women were arrested during the raids on Rab'aa and Nahda and during clashes that followed the dispersals. Of these, 24 were reported to be arrested by their families but the location of their custody is unknown until the date of the release of this report. The latter 24 include 4 women who were arrested with the former Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohammed Badie, but the location in which they are being held is unknown. . One woman was arrested during the dispersal of the Nahda sit-in who has been released; and 2 women were arrested during the dispersal of the Rab'aa sit-in and they are still in custody. In addition, 11 women were arrested from different locations including Al-Fath Mosque in Ramsis and Abou Bakr El-Seddeik Mosque in Ghamra. Thus, the total number of women who are currently under arrest, in the context of the dispersal of the sit-ins and the clashes that followed them, is 13 women, while 21 arrested women have been released in the context of clashes, including those that took place at Al-Fath and in Ramsis, of which 2 were women arrested during the Ramsis clashes.

According to Mona,<sup>19</sup> who participated in a demonstration on Friday, 16 August, in support of Mohammed Morsi, she was not able to arrive to Al-Fath Mosque because of the clashes taking place there so she headed to Al-Tawheed Mosque close to Al-Nour Mosque. While she was at Al-Tawheed Mosque, Mona learned that the field hospital needed volunteers as the injured and dead from clashes at Al-Fath Mosque were taken there. Mona saw a man who was killed due to a gunshot wound in the head. Sit-inners at Al-Tawheed Mosque started to leave at 7:30PM after the Imam (the man who leads prayers) of the mosque warned them that they must leave after clashes had intensified. The people hiding in Al-Tawheed Mosque moved in a food truck; women got inside while men sat on its top. The car was stopped by a popular committee<sup>20</sup> which believed that the car is used for transporting weapons. The men riding on the car's top clarified that there are women inside the car, but the popular committee members opened the car's door and ordered the women to get off. Residents of the neighborhood helped the women and men hide in Abo Bakr Al-Seddeik Mosque, in which they until 2:30 AM.

The mosque was raided at 2:30 AM by the Special Forces Unit, an army regiment. Mona saw one of the men who were guarding the mosque's door getting killed. Mona was hit by the butt of a

<sup>19</sup> A pseudo name is used pursuant to her request.

<sup>20</sup> Popular Committees sprang during the January 25 2011 revolution, when the retreat of police forces drove individuals to form committees in charge of filling the security gaps in their neighborhoods.

machine gun in the head and kicked in the back and abdomen, while other women were being stepped on "as if they are a carpet on the floor". Women were sexually assaulted by the Special Forces Unit, who grabbed their breasts and told them that they are "whores who came here to be fucked."

Women were taken to Al-Dhaher police station and left in the police van from 7-9 AM, a suffocating situation that, according to Mona, caused two women to lose consciousness. The women, 15 in total, were later taken to Al-Salam Central Security Forces Camp, an unofficial place of detention, for four days, and then transferred to Al-Qanater prison on 21 August, where a vaginal inspection was conducted by female prison guards. The inspection was conducted in the case of all the women arrested, except for 4 women, after one of them objected to the inspection, saying that she is a virgin. The objection of that prisoner evolved into a quarrel that led to the interference of the deputy sheriff who ordered that only married women be subjected to the inspection.

N.,<sup>21</sup> was arrested with other four female protestors on 16 August at 9 PM near Triumph Mosque in Heliopolis on their way back from Al-Fath Mosque. Army officers instructed ONTV channel cameras, stationed near the army checkpoint, to record the arrest of the 5 women, while closing up on their faces, as women who were breaking the curfew. N. and the other 4 women were taken to Tora prison and were left in the police van for 3-4 hours, a situation that resulted in extremely labored breathing, according to N. They were then transferred from Tora prison and told that they will be taken to Waili Police Station. However, N. was surprised to find that they were being interrogated in a building, at a location she was not informed of, for the duration of, from 4 PM to 3 AM. The women were then transferred back to Waili Police Station, where the officer in charge told the women detained in the same cell, to "take care" of N. and the 4 women arrested with her. One female prisoner threatened N. that she will be raped in her sleep. N. and the 4 women were released after 17 days.

### **Recommendations to the Egyptian Authorities**

Mostafa Hegazy, Presidential Advisor for Strategic Affairs, asserted that transitional justice is highly important in this period of Egyptian History, asserting that if there are violations committed by state institutions, there will be reaction and remedies.<sup>22</sup> Egyptian authorities should abide by the following recommendations in order to genuinely work towards achieving justice:

- 1- An urgent investigation should be opened in the events of the dispersals of the Rab'aa and Nahda sit-ins and to hold those responsible accountable for the shocking number of deaths, 991 cases, that took place during the dispersal of the sit-ins. There are no indications that the Egyptian authorities are willing to bring those responsible for the gross human rights violations that took place during the dispersal of the sit-ins accountable. On 31 August, the Minister of the Interior issued a reward to the policemen involved in the dispersal of the sit-ins in the amount of 245 million Egyptian Pounds (\$35.5 Million).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Name is withheld pursuant to her request.

<sup>22</sup> Mostafa Hegazy: "The committees of the Transitional Justice Institute will be announced soon and will have a premise of their own," *Aswat Masriya*, <http://www.aswatmasriya.com/news/view.aspx?id=ee9aba3c-1bcf-4a71-ae89-6f8583c4db13>, 24 July 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Interior rewards its members with 245 million pounds for the dispersion of Rab'aa and Nahda, <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/2077636>, Al-Masry Al-Youm, 31 August 2013.

- 2- Serious steps should be taken to reform the police, which must include:
  - a. Training police forces on the international human rights standards pertaining to the use of force. Among these standards is the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, according to which the use of lethal force is constricted to cases of self-defense for oneself or others against the threat of impending death or serious injury.<sup>24</sup>It has not been proven that the use of lethal force during the dispersal of the sit-ins abided by the latter standard.
  - b. Hold those responsible for the sexual violations committed during or after arrest of women accountable. Training courses must be organized to raise the awareness of law enforcement officials of the rights of the women who are targeted with sexual violence and their rights to peaceful assembly, regardless of the women's political views.
- 3- Investigate the use of bulldozers during the dispersal of the sit-ins, as they constituted a great danger to the lives of sit-inners and resulted in the deformation of a number of bodies that the bulldozers ran over. An urgent investigation should also be conducted in the circumstances that lead to the complete charring of some bodies during the dispersal of the Rab'a sit-in.
- 4- The Egyptian authorities should explain why security forces hurried to clean the surroundings of the Rab'aa Mosque before the arrival of the Public Prosecutor to examine the scene, and investigate the claim filed by the National Community for Human Rights and Law in this regard to the Chief Prosecutor of Nasr City<sup>25</sup>.
- 5- Investigate the claim filed by the Front to Defend Egypt Protesters concerning the prevention of lawyers from attending interrogations with detainees arrested during the dispersal of the Rab'aa and Nahda sit-ins and the clashes that followed them.<sup>26</sup>
- 6- Egyptian authorities should detain individuals only in Officially recognized place of detention and inform their families, lawyers, or others they trust of the location of their detention, including the process of their transportation, pursuant to the provisions of article 10 of the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance 1992.<sup>27</sup> The latter rights were violated in the case of N. and the 4 women arrested with her, as they were interrogated in a residential building without the notification of their relatives or lawyers.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 27 August to 7 September 1990.

<sup>25</sup> *The National Community files a report concerning the dead bodies at Al-Iman Mosque and manipulation of evidences at Rab'aa*, 15 August 2013, <http://www.nchr.org/ar/node/107>

<sup>26</sup> Claim to the Attorney General Regarding the Prevention of Lawyers from Attending Interrogations with Detainees in Unrecognized Places of Detention, 19 August 2013, <http://fdep-egypt.org/?p=2120> (in Arabic).

<sup>27</sup> The declaration was approved and published pursuant to the General Assembly of the United Nation in its resolution 47/133 on the 18 December 1992.

<sup>28</sup> Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1989/65, on 24 May 1989, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instrtree/i7pepi.htm>.

- 7- An urgent investigation should be conducted concerning the detention of women for long in police vans during their transfer to prisons as a form of hours as a form of punishment. The latter practice might be an indication that the suffocation of 37 persons in a prison van, who were being transferred to Abu Zaabalprison,<sup>29</sup> is a routine practice of the police forces to punish political prisoners.
- 8- Immediately halt the practice of filming arrested women by TV channels, at the orders of the police or army forces. The filming of the women violates their right to privacy and breaches the legal principle of the innocence of the defendant until proven guilty by a final court decision, a principle that is enshrined in the second paragraph of article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, according to which "Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law." The right to the presumption of innocence entails that defendants should be treated as innocent individuals, whether they are being detained or released on bail.
- 9- Immediately halt the practice of conducting vaginal inspections in the case of female prisoners. Vaginal inspections constitute a grave violation of personal integrity and constitute a form of torture and sexual violence.
- 10- Immediate steps should be taken to reform the health system that take into account a gender perspective. The level of healthcare services must be improved to be able to deal with emergency situations and situations of instability without discrimination on any basis, including financial capabilities. Egyptian authorities must recognize the public's right to know the details of the dispersal of the sit-ins. Nazra's researchers faced great difficulties when they attempted to gain access of the information concerning the events of the dispersal of the two sit-ins from the Egyptian authorities. Until the date of the publication of this report, Nazra for Feminist Studies is still awaiting the official response from the Ministry of Health concerning the number of women who were killed during the dispersal of the sit-ins in the registry of the Ministry of Health. An official request was submitted on 3 September, after a failed attempt to submit a request on 29 August, when an employee at the office of the Ministry of Health assured Nazra's researchers that the request will be denied, as the Ministry does not have the official figure of deaths that resulted from the dispersal of the sit-ins.
- 11- The new Egyptian Constitution must enshrine the right to know and the right to access to information, to be applicable on the executive, legislative, and judicial authorities so that the right to access official documents is clearly enshrined and considered a basic right. Exceptions to the right to access to information must be clearly specified by a law regulating the right to access to information.

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<sup>29</sup> Teargas killed last week's 37 prisoners - forensics report, 27 August 2013, AswatMasriya, <http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/view.aspx?id=9ff0dbfc-fd00-4bc3-bbb8-b67974331beb>