

FACT-FINDING MISSION
IN
EGYPT AND TUNISIA

22 NOVEMBER 2011 – 29 NOVEMBER 2011

UJN DELEGATION:

MASSOUD SHADJAREH AND MOHIDEEN
ABDUL KADER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Labour Party	3
Tahrir Square	5
Doctors' Syndicate.....	6
Mr. Kamal Helbawy.....	9
April 6 Youth Movement.....	10
Dr. Abdullah Omar Abdulrahman	11
Ennahda Youth Movement	14
Mr. Moadh Kheriji.....	15

INTRODUCTION

Between 22nd and 29th November 2011, the London secretariat of the Universal Justice Network (UJN) sent a delegation to Egypt and Tunisia on a fact-finding mission during the post-revolution period. The delegation included IHRC chair and representative of the London secretariat of UJN Massoud Shadjareh, and representative of the Malaysian secretariat of the UJN Mohideen Abdulkader.

The purpose of this mission was to assess the ways in which support may be provided to the countries' civil societies in light of the 'Islamic Awakening' and post-revolution period. This is to ensure the formation of a direct relationship between Egypt, Tunisia and UJN. By doing so, the skills and knowledge needed to establish an Islamic model of justice and human rights can take root throughout society.

The following report highlights their findings based on interviews with political representatives, civil society groups, movements and individuals they came across. It offers insight to the different perspectives of Egypt and Tunisia's citizens in the building of their countries in this new period in history.

EGYPT REPORT

LABOUR PARTY

The Universal Justice Network (UJN) delegation met with Mr. Magdy Hussein, head of the Egyptian Labour Party to discuss the current situation in Egypt and Syria with respect to offering support to the countries' civil societies.

With the imminent threat of civil war in Syria, both the UJN delegates and Mr. Magdy Hussein agreed that a seminar was needed to bring together different groups on neutral ground to come up with a viable solution to the Syrian uprisings. The outcome will address all issues so that change does not damage the balance of the region nor promotes the interest of those against the cause. In any case, the overlying shared concern is the implication of this uprising on the Palestinian struggle and the direction of Syria as a country. Both UJN and Mr. Hussein agreed that it was time to stop being silent.

The progress of Egypt's civil society was also discussed with the head of the Labour Party, who gave the UJN delegates his own version of the events unfolding in Tahrir Square at the time. He believes the military wants control of the upcoming regime and has tried to change the constitution before the election in order to ensure this control. The people however are fed up of the military as its actions have resulted in the killing of over 40 people and thousands have been injured. Furthermore, they have been using a

potent nerve gas that has caused protestors to succumb to convulsions and even death. These protests in Tahrir will develop into nothing, Mr. Hussein said, and are only taking the attention away from the elections. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which the Labour party has extensively cooperated with, has not officially supported the protests although many of its members, including the youth, are in the square. Strangely, some individuals are even being turned away such as Mr. Ayman Nour, Mr. Bitalji and Mr. Jamal Zahra.

The Labour Party's demands amidst the protests are twofold. They want the assurance that the elections will take place because that is the only way real change can occur. They are also asking the military to hand over power to the Supreme Court of Judges for the interim period of two months. The judges, the Labour party believes, are apolitical and the president, Mr. Bashar Husam Al-Ghurami, was always against Mubarak. In regards to the three phase elections that will begin on 28 November 2011, Mr. Hussein believes 65% of the vote will go towards the Islamic parties including the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis. The remaining votes will fall among the parties of Hizb al Watan (who are remnants of the old leadership based on tribal loyalties), Al Wafd and the remaining secular individuals. Christian representatives are found within all of these parties including the Muslim Brotherhood.



PROTESTORS IN TAHRIR SQUARE

To best support Egyptians in regards to human rights, UJN believes the key is to setup a link with the civil society. This is in order to promote Islamic justice and human rights as an alternative to what Western, liberal and secular organisations such as Amnesty International are offering. The vice president of the Labour Party, Mr. Barakat, agreed with this. He believed that the West trains human rights activists in various countries but not for the people's own benefit but for the West to maintain control in the area. This was exemplified in the uprisings of the Eastern bloc whereby Western countries have claimed to be behind the outcomes. Rather, if populations follow an Islamic human rights model, they will not do it for anyone's self-interest but for Allah. Mr. Magdy Hussein therefore requested that UJN send him a proposal of a project as to how the network envisions supporting the available organisations in Egypt.

Mr. Massoud Shadjareh also expressed hopes of the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) beginning an annual book publication about Islam and human rights focusing on different intellectuals' contributions. This will take a theoretical approach to the concepts of Islamic human rights in order to propagate arguments which are not readily available in English. The network therefore reached out to Mr. Hussein to ask if he wanted to propose any individual he believes will make a positive contribution to such publications. The delegates were assured of a continued relationship in the future between Egypt's Labour Party and UJN.

TAHRIR SQUARE

The UJN delegation dedicated several hours to meeting with individuals who were protesting and supporting the events in Tahrir Square. Notably, the crowd in the square was very diverse. Amidst what one could only describe as 'organised chaos', families as well as young, old, female and male individuals roamed the square. Not everyone felt compelled to push towards Mohammad Mahmoud Street to join in the clashes with the military but they knew it was important that the numbers in the square spoke for themselves. Small ripples of chanting would periodically seize the participants as a whole and then subside. Groups of chanting protestors would move through the crowds attracting attention for a time before they'd be distracted by another occurrence. Intermittently, people were immersed in heated discussions over coffee and tea or were listening to the speeches put on by those who had found canisters of illegal tear gas.

Many of those who UJN spoke to were youth who felt strongly about the direction and future of their country. In general, they expressed discontent with the way in which the military was handling the power they were given during this interim period. They were concerned for the well-being of their fellow protestors and were adamant in their continued efforts to see change. This change they believed would come in the form of the national elections, but in the meantime their presence in the square was a necessary stance in order to voice their grievances. Several of the youth UJN spoke to showed strong support for the Muslim Brotherhood despite no official position from the party regarding these protests. Nevertheless, the atmosphere in the square was very nationalistic which drew together individuals from all factions and walks of life hoping for real change in the future of their country.



UJN DELEGATES FIND CANNISTERS, MADE IN USA, IN TAHRIR SQUARE USED TO FIRE TEAR GAS

DOCTORS' SYNDICATE

Since the last meeting with the Universal Justice Network in March 2011, Dr. Abdelfatah Rizk has become the head of the Doctors' Syndicate in Egypt. The syndicate have since sent groups of doctors into Libya to treat the wounded and still maintain a strong relationship with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. He provided us with his own version of the current situation in Egypt and the way in which UJN can support Egyptian civil society.

The source of these protests and who is supporting them, in comparison to the first revolution, is hard to pinpoint. Some believe it is those who want the chaos of the first revolution to return such as the old regime or it may be those who missed out the first time and would now like to play a heroic role. The Muslim Brotherhood, for example, is not supporting these protests in an official capacity but many of their members are in Tahrir Square, both protesting and providing medical aid. Oddly enough, one the members who played a key role in the first revolution, Dr. Mohammad Beltagy, tried to enter the square to protest on his own accord but was turned away. This makes the Brotherhood wonder who is turning him away and why. Regardless, in Dr. Rizk's opinion, the election results will find that the Muslim Brotherhood will take 35% and other Islamic parties will take 10%. Christians and secularists will gain 10% of the votes and those with tribal loyalties will take 15%. The remaining 30% will be gained by socialists, leftists and the remnants of the old regime.

One of the main aspects of the current uprising has been the military. According to Dr. Rizk, there are two main branches of the army. The first is the military council which is actually comprised of apolitical individuals under the control of leftist groups. These leftists, he says, are trying to hinder the elections from occurring because they fear the Muslim Brotherhood will take power. Furthermore, the council members themselves are unaware of the veto power the military is trying to achieve which makes it clear these individuals are not truly in control. The second branch is that of the intelligence forces, who are controlled by America and want to take power and be led by Omar Suleiman. They are against the Muslim Brotherhood taking the majority of the vote. In any case, despite all the conflicting ideologies, Dr. Rizk is still unsure who is behind the atrocities in the square as the soldiers are allegedly carrying empty guns.

Foreign intervention has also begun in Egypt, Dr. Rizk described. The last American ambassador to Egypt, Margaret Scobey, was allegedly handing out \$50,000 - \$150,000 cheques to different Egyptian organisations depending on their willingness to cooperate with a Western agenda. She was asked to resign soon after for publicising this fact. Several youth have also been approached by American institutions. One doctor was offered to be trained in Public health in the U.S., all expenses covered plus pocket money. Western intervention and control has already started to take control. UJN wanted to further discuss ways to expose such happenings via either a report or documentary.

Dr. Rizk stated that infringements and violations of human rights have decreased but what the youth need is training in local council management and administration. Since the last local election was in 1992, there is little experience among the Muslim Brotherhood in this branch of government as they are more experienced in parliamentary work. The Universal Justice Network therefore proposed sending small groups of youth to either the London or Malaysia to be trained with local councillors before the upcoming elections in a year. Additionally, an Egyptian unit of three doctors will be the link between UJN and the Doctors' Syndicate for up to date information on the work carried out by the doctors in regards to their humanitarian responsibilities.



UJN DELEGATES MEET WITH DR. ABDEL FATAH RIZK (CENTER) AND OTHERS FROM EGYPT'S DOCTORS' SYNDICATE



DOCTORS TEND TO AN INJUURED PROTESTOR IN TAHRIR SQUARE

MR. KAMAL HELBAWY

Dr. Kamal Helbawy is a member of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and has helped create Muslim organisations in Britain such as the Muslim Council of Britain and the Muslim Association of Britain. He has currently settled back in Egypt and met with the UJN delegation to discuss the current political climate in both Egypt and Syria.

Dr. Helbawy pointed out that the uprisings in Syria and Egypt are not analogous and therefore cannot be approached in the same manner. Both UJN and Dr. Helbawy agreed that an effective solution must be found.

The current situation in Egypt was also discussed. Dr. Helbawy proposed that the root of the current uprising was due to the deputy prime minister presenting a document stating the military will have veto power above the constitution. This was a foolish decision and has caused the uprisings in Tahrir Square prior to the elections. Concurrently, Dr. Helbawy also told UJN that the West has been actively giving money to NGOs and the media to create a liberal society in Egypt. It was therefore proposed that UJN aid in training the youth in Muslim countries to provide them with an alternative. He furthered proposed a meeting with the UJN delegates and the Sheikh of Al-Azhar in regards to bolstering efforts towards the unity between Shia and Sunni Muslims. The Sheikh did stipulate a condition that if this was to progressively move forward there would need to be a stop to the daawah (invitation to the religion) efforts of the Shia community towards non-Shias. Although this meeting did not take place due the Sheikh's busy schedule during the elections, it was still a possibility for the future.



AMBULANCES SHUTTLE BACK AND FORTH TRANSPORTING THE INJURED FROM TAHRIR SQUARE

APRIL 6 YOUTH MOVEMENT

The April 6th Youth Movement was established by Mr. Ahmad Maher and others in 2008 after a strike took place in an industrial Egyptian city. Since then, the strike is 'commemorated' each year on April 6th but the movement has grown into a political movement voicing the youth's concerns towards the government. The movement comprises of a diverse group of individuals who are primarily university students. The Universal Justice Network delegates met with the youth in Tahrir Square where they had setup a tent to support the protests and would not leave until their demands were met. UJN also conducted an interview with the movement's spokesperson, Mr. Waleed Rashed which can be found online.

The demands of the April 6th Youth Movement in light of the protests are twofold. The first is the transition of power from the military to a small interim council comprising of five prominent individuals. These figures represent various factions of Egyptian society and are Dr. Abed al Minim Abu Al-Fatooh, Dr. Muhammad ElBaradei, Imam Hazem Salah Abu Ismail, advisor Zachariah Abdel Azziz, and a representative from the armed forces. This is in order for the military to resume its responsibilities of maintaining the security of the country. The second demand is the formation of national authorised administrations to oversee the upcoming legislative elections by this suggested council. The overlying principle of both these demands is to ensure the military does not abuse its power and control is kept in the hands of those who can administer the country smoothly.

Several representatives of the group spoke with the UJN delegates concerning their observations in Tahrir Square. Their greatest concern has been the fatalities and injuries to those protesting; the source of which is the nerve gas used by the military. This gas, an injured doctor explained, has no antidote and the injured have been treated only with valium. The military has not only used it against protestors in the square but has fired the gas in a nearby metro station and hospital. Ambulances have been leaving Tahrir almost every minute and many of the individuals carried to the hospital are often dead. There have been stories of their National ID cards being allegedly stolen in the hospital so the bodies are unidentifiable. The doctor explained further that this was the reason she had written her ID number on her arm, so she may be identified in the event that she died. The protestors have also avoided sending the injured to the hospital as many are often arrested there. Such happenings were common in the first revolution as well. The protestors had tried to come to a truce with the military but they were continuously hit with tear gas and injured directly. The delegates were told that three protestors had been directly killed by the military rolling over them with their tanks. Such atrocities have maintained the Youth Movement's momentum in remaining in the square to protest until their demands are met and the military backs down.



UJN DELEGATE MASSOUD SHADJAREH MEETING WITH YOUTH IN TAHRIR SQUARE



UJN DELEGATES MEET WITH APRIL 6TH YOUTH MOVEMENT'S SPOKESMAN, WALEED RASHED

DR. ABDULLAH OMAR ABDULRAHMAN

In March 2011, Dr. Abdullah Omar Abdulrahman met with the Universal Justice Network delegation to discuss the incarceration of his father, Sheikh Omar Abdulrahman. His father has been imprisoned in the United States since 1995 on charges widely seen as being politically motivated. When he met with the UJN delegation in November 2011, he had been conducting a sit-in near the American embassy in Cairo since the 19 August

2011 along with friends and family to campaign and continue to raise awareness for his father. Since, they have been receiving great support from the Egyptian people. The lack of support has arisen from the discord within society; those above 35 who thought he was radical and extreme and called to violence, and those under 35 who had never heard of him. The campaign has corrected many misunderstandings and now the case is clear for the Egyptian people that the Sheikh is not a terrorist as the United States claims. They have seen a tremendous awakening in Egypt now regarding Sheikh Abdulrahman as many groups including secular parties, the Nasserite party and even the National party associated to Hosni Mubarak have all highlighted the plight of the Sheikh. This gives the family hope that when the Sheikh is released he will be greeted as a national hero. Dr. Abdulrahman is reminded of the story of the Prophet Yusuf who suffered oppression and long years in prison when his community thought he had swayed from the righteous path with a woman. He was however only released when the case was clear to the people and she made it clear that she had enticed him

As part of this campaign, the family has organised a conference entitled “9/11: No to Killing Civilians”. It outlined the Sheikh’s views in the 1993 World Trade Centre attack. The Sheikh was quoted about his involvement and had said “I was deeply shaken by what happened in the World Trade Centre. It is against Islamic law. Those welcomed peacefully in America should be committed to peaceful behaviour. Allah said in the Quran: You should honour your promises/contracts. I came to USA to stand on firm ground not shaky ground. I came to live in peace not war. How can I call for violence and in a country that welcomed me?” Therefore, if he was vehemently against the attack of one floor than how would he realistically support an attack on an entire building. In this regard, many groups have tried to speak on behalf of the Sheikh but they do not represent him. Dr. Abdulrahman even expressed discontent with his father’s lawyer, Ramsey Clarke. The family wants to clarify the story for these people but they cannot always be in control of everyone. Generally, they hope to manage the overall campaign and make it clear that you must adhere to the message of peace of the Sheikh or you are not welcome to help. Dr. Abdulrahman also made it clear that despite all America has done, Egyptians cannot treat them the same. The Egyptian government does not allow them to do this. It would have been quite easy to kidnap American nationals, for example, or cause them harm. But this is not their intention.

The family of the Sheikh would therefore like UJN and IHRC to speak on their behalf outside of Egypt. This way, the campaign can extend outside of Egypt. U.S. activists have even contacted Dr. Abdulrahman saying they have heard of the sit-in. Therefore, IHRC’s role will be one of publicising. Countries like England, Turkey, Malaysia and Indonesia could potentially all organise a protest at the same time. The Sheikh has continuously asked for updates from IHRC in regards to his campaign and has expressed his desire to join IHRC as a member upon his release from jail. Mr. Massoud Shadjerah responded that that would not be a problem as the Sheikh is already part of IHRC!



UJN DELEGATES MEET WITH DR. ABDULLAH OMAR ABDULRAHMAN



UJN DELEGATES SPEAK WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF SHEIKH OMAR ABDULRAHMAN AT SIT-IN

TUNISIA REPORT

ENNAHDA YOUTH MOVEMENT

The Universal Justice Network met with the head of Tunisia's Ennahda Youth Movement, Mr. Riadh Mastouri. He was eager to discuss ways in which UJN could help foster the engagement of Tunisian youth in regards to human rights and other issues of injustice.

The general landscape of organisations in Tunisia before the revolution was that of either political organisations or small human rights organisations. Any of such participation in the public sphere however primarily consisted of leftist ideologies. Islamic groups struggled over time and had to operate underground. These underground movements were generally based on other causes besides human rights. After the revolution, organisations and movements burgeoned throughout civil society, along the political spectrum, including those such as the Group for Tunisian Women.

Today, there are four Muslim youth organisations in Tunisia. The two official groups are called Freedom and Justice, and Rights for Political Prisoners. As the leader of the Youth Movement, Riadh Mastouri hopes to continue to raise political consciousness among Tunisian youth in order to actively engage them in civil society. As a party, Ennahdha aim to emulate Britain's Labour Party as an umbrella party consisting of an amalgamation of organisations such as trade unions and youth groups. The party is currently highly centralised and Mastouri believes the youth simply need convincing and training to realise they can form their own organisations while maintaining an affiliation to the party. Opportunities for training however are minimal as most of the qualified individuals with such experience left in the 1990's. Riadh believes that Islamically-dedicated youth are readily available in Tunisia. One example of their work is Al-Binaa movement, a name whose dual meaning refers to both the construction and the sons of the country. The organisation was setup to raise funds for UNESCO after the United States cut its funding over the membership of Palestine. Nevertheless, there is still a silence when it comes to speaking up against those in leadership and criticising taboo topics. The biggest barrier therefore is the fear and shyness the youth have inherently become accustomed to.

UJN proposed various ways in which help can be provided to promote Tunisian civil society's youth. As a network whose priority is that of the Ummah, there is a need to not only bolster the confidence of the youth but to inform them of the tenets Islamic justice. It is necessary to train them in how to feel comfortable holding their governments accountable. This can be achieved by evolving the culture of the relationship between society and government into one that is more open and constructively critical. Riadh said this could therefore occur more efficiently with the help and training of UJN and the expertise it offers.

Firstly, a small unit of individuals must be set up within the Youth Movement in order to communicate more effectively with UJN. This will create a direct relationship for the exchange of news and updates. Conferences and lectures for the youth and led by UJN will also be arranged in Tunis. Speakers will include leadership figures from within UJN as well as individuals such as ex-Guantanamo Bay prisoners and Jews who are against Zionism. This will provide the youth with an exposure to the international struggle for justice and the ways in which they can rise up and take on the issues themselves. Over time, UJN will facilitate the addition of certain Tunisian organisations to the network in order to instigate a ripple effect of propagating knowledge and skills throughout Tunisian civil society.

MR. MOADH KHERIJI

The Tunisian Islamic movement, Ennahda, recently won 42.4% of the vote in Tunisia's elections led by Mr. Rashid al-Ghannouchi. Mr. Moadh Kheriji, Ennahda's Chairman Office Manager and Mr. Ghannouchi's son, sat down with the UJN delegates to discuss the current climate of civil society.

The Universal Justice Network delegates began the meeting by highlighting the imminent need to develop civil societies throughout the Muslim world especially at such a period in history as the Arab Spring. Mr. Kheriji strongly agreed and began with a brief overview of the commitment of the Tunisian people to activism. Tunisia, he said, boasted the first Arab human rights movements, trade unions and endowment organisations throughout French colonialism. Over the past 200 years, however, a new type of civil society emerged; one in which all branches were controlled by the government in order to diminish the capacity of society to function independently. This impediment invoked upon civil society came to a climax over the past ten years until the regime was finally removed by the Tunisian revolution.

As an Islamic party, Ennahda has currently prioritised the maintenance and promotion of their civil society as well as the determination of a Tunisian identity. Their work however has come in conflict with existing leftist ideologies which make up almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the existing organisations and movements. They represent a powerful minority who control the media and view themselves as Mediterranean as opposed to Arab or Muslim. Their influence lies among groups such as Democratic Women that have vehemently campaigned against Ennahda and won 2.5% of the votes in the election. For now, Ennahda believes in implementing a down-up approach in which gradual change occurs and is not imposed. This will require the empowerment of Tunisia's civil society, which is also in line with the hopes of UJN as well.

Certain civil society organisations have close relationships with Ennahda and it was proposed that UJN facilitate the training of these groups. This is to ensure the independent nature of civil society in order for organisations to be able to campaign and criticise the government. By doing so, the state will not only experience external and institutional pressures, but the new pressure of their own people's demands. Establishing

an Islamic model of governance and human rights can provide an alternative during this historical period of change. The culture of society must therefore change to allow them to act and not abrogate their responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

The delegation's follow-up trip to Egypt in November 2011 has shown that a new and further awakening is underway in the country. The concrete and substantial changes expected after ousting President Mubarak and his regime have yet to materialise and the masses have become restless. There has been an ongoing manipulation by the old establishment to maintain the status quo. They have ensured the disappointment and frustration of the people by promoting the veto power of the military towards government institutions. This has resulted in a division among the people as to whether change should be a long and tedious process to be endured or whether there should be more assertiveness in curtailing the military's power to speed up the process.

In both Egypt and Tunisia, it was clearly noted throughout that the media and international NGOs are being financed by external sources which are trying to undermine Islamic and revolutionary change which the masses have risen for. This makes the job of the Universal Justice Network and associates more essential in creating infrastructural support for the civil societies. There should be an urgency in creating projects to support Islamic movements and the civil societies involved because they are continuously evolving. Opportunities that were available in March 2011 are not available in the same way today and what is possible now may not be in the future.



UJN DELEGATE MOHIDEEN ABDUL KADER WALKS WITH THE PROTESTORS IN TAHRIR SQUARE