

# IDS

## EVIDENCE REPORT

No 14

Empowerment of Women and Girls

### Database of Collective Actors Involving Men Tackling Gender-Based Violence in Public Space in Post-Mubarak Egypt

Mariz Tadros

July 2013

The IDS programme on Strengthening Evidence-based Policy works across seven key themes. Each theme works with partner institutions to co-construct policy-relevant knowledge and engage in policy-influencing processes. This material has been developed under the Empowerment of Women and Girls theme.

The development of this material has been led by IDS who holds the copyright.

Input was provided by the Social Research Center at the American University in Cairo.

The material has been funded by UK aid from the UK Government, however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK Government's official policies.

**AG Level 2 Output ID: 100**

## **DATABASE OF COLLECTIVE ACTORS INVOLVING MEN TACKLING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC SPACE IN POST-MUBARAK EGYPT**

Mariz Tadros

July 2013

This is an Open Access publication distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are clearly credited.

First published by the Institute of Development Studies in July 2013  
© Institute of Development Studies 2013

IDS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England (No. 877338).

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Background, rationale and objectives	2
1.2	Egypt country context	3
1.3	Methodology and process	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1	Arab women's Uprising (Intifadat al Mar'a al Arabiyya)	10
2.2	Baheya Ya Masr	12
2.3	Bassma ('Imprint')	13
2.4	HarassMap	16
2.5	Fouada Watch	19
2.6	Kat' Eidak ('Off with your hand!' or 'Cut off your hand!')	21
2.7	Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment (OpAntiSH)	23
2.8	Nefssi ('I wish/I would like to/I want')	26
2.9	Shar'ia Wa'i ('An Aware/Alert Street')	28
2.10	Shoft Taharosh (Harassment seen)	30
2.11	Tehmarboota	34
<b>3</b>	<b>Analysis of key findings from database</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1	Factors (agential and structural) shaping the formation of collective actors	37
3.2	Factors influencing the relative success of these initiatives	39
	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>44</b>
	<b>Annex Template for information compilation for database on collective actors working on gender-based violence in Egypt</b>	<b>46</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Tables</b>		
Table 1.1	Summary of main characteristics of youth-led collective initiatives on gender-based violence in public space	7

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background, rationale and objectives

This paper is part of a larger initiative on women and girls, supported by the Accountable Grant, involving a stream of work on effective collective action around gender-based violence (GBV) involving men. There is a growing literature on the importance of engaging men and boys in interventions on gender-based violence, and the benefits that this engagement brings (for example, Barker *et al.* 2007, 2011; Esplen 2006; Ricardo *et al.* 2011).<sup>1</sup> A literature review of interventions involving men, collective action and gender-based violence was conducted by BRIDGE (forthcoming). All the interventions that were deemed successful had important elements of partnership, coalition working, or community mobilisation strategies around changing social norms, though direct correlative relationship between the collective action/men's involvement variables and success were more difficult to establish. The report notes that this may perhaps be due to the methodological challenges of arriving at impact assessment frameworks that are simultaneously sensitive to local contextual variables and allow for cross-country comparisons.

The work on collective action in the face of gender-based violence seeks to understand the extent to which GBV can become a community issue that engages men in challenging and confronting violent and abusive behaviour towards women, and through which notions of masculinity, manhood and identity are broached.

The objectives of the database are to:

1. produce profiles of effective forms of collective action involving men tackling gender-based violence;
2. analyse their characteristics and strategies of engagement; and
3. identify emerging patterns of convergence and divergence among them.

The definitions of collective action and criteria for effectiveness were conceived in sufficiently broad terms to allow for their adaptation to different contexts. Collective action was defined as involving formal as well as informal forms of organising that include social movements, coalitions, networks, and groups. The criteria for effectiveness of the interventions aimed at eliciting changes in social values and norms needed to be context and issue specific and hence the intention was that they were developed with relevant stakeholders. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) definition of GBV, as per Article 1: 'Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.'<sup>2</sup> This is the definition of GBV used in this paper.

It is important to note here that 'engages men' does not only mean the participation of men as 'objects' of awareness-raising interventions or activities led by women. It also means men, alongside women, assuming ownership and leadership of initiatives that challenge the social norms and values in society that endorse or tolerate GBV. Six country case studies were selected for examination in consultation with DFID: these are Egypt, Yemen, Kenya, Uganda, Bangladesh and India. The first of the case studies to be undertaken in 2013 was Egypt.

---

<sup>1</sup> See BRIDGE (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> [www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2009/2009\\_add\\_gen\\_vio.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2009/2009_add_gen_vio.pdf).

## 1.2 Egypt country context

Egypt is undergoing a difficult transition. Mubarak who ruled Egypt for almost thirty years was ousted on 13 February 2011 following a period of over two weeks of sustained protests involving the participation of over a million citizens. After a temporary period of rule by the army under the leadership of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), the Muslim Brotherhood, the region's oldest Islamist movement aspiring for the establishment of an Islamic state, assumed power under the presidency of Mohammed Morsi.<sup>3</sup> The new regime's commitment to democracy has, however, been seriously questioned in the light of a number of measures intended to monopolise legislative, executive and judicial powers in the hands of the president and in the light of the increasing encroachment on civil and political liberties (Tadros 2012a).

Since the political ascendancy of the Islamists to power, women's rights and freedoms have also been seriously jeopardised (Tadros 2012b) though there has been increased citizen activism around gender justice, as will be shown below.

Egypt has a long history of feminist activism, extending back to the nineteenth century. The Egyptian Feminist Union established in 1923 marked the first organisation established to advocate for women's rights. One can examine women's collective action in several phases:

1. 1920s–1940s formation and growth of the birth of a feminist movement;
2. 1950s–1960s co-option and repression of all autonomous civil society initiatives, including the feminist movement;
3. 1970s–1990s the NGOisation of the women's movement through the formation of charitable and developmental women's organisations;
4. 2000–2010 Quangoisation<sup>4</sup> of the women's cause through the formation of national women's machineries;
5. 2011 post-revolutionary activism through a proliferation of actors with diverse agendas and strategies in favour of and against women's rights.<sup>5</sup>

With respect to collective action on gender-based violence, the International Conference on Population and Development staged in Cairo in 1994 encouraged research and policy work on gender-based violence in the private and public sphere, on topics such as domestic violence, female genital mutilation and rape. The Beijing Conference of 1995 served to keep the momentum of work on gender issues. It was also a phase which saw the proliferation of women's NGOs, many of which sought to tackle gender-based violence in their work, though it was often defined quite broadly to include deprivation from education and early marriage as forms of GBV.

In the 2000s, international civil society organisations championed the recognition and prioritisation of GBV globally. This created a ripple effect in Egypt where the national women's machinery adopted the elimination of gender-based violence at home as a key issue, where coalitions were formed to work specifically on the topic and as one of the key issues raised in the CEDAW.

---

<sup>3</sup> Now ousted too, as of 3 July 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Quango is a term coined by Alan Fowler to refer to quasi non-governmental organisation: state-funded institutions and organisations but which are not formally subsumed under government (though in the Egyptian context such independence never existed).

<sup>5</sup> Forthcoming book by author on women's collective action in Egypt, 2014.

Other than a few exceptions (HarassMap and the Coalition on Sexual Violence) most of the non-state efforts focused on domestic violence. Most of the coalitions (with the exception of HarassMap) were comprised of NGOs working together on common campaigns. The leadership was predominantly of an older generational group and by and large emanating from a privileged background (middle and upper class). The majority of interventions on GBV emerged from within the development practice area of work as opposed to political activism or feminist engagement. Moreover, very few men were involved in such initiatives and where they were, it was in their professional capacity as workers or NGO leaders, rarely as volunteer activists.

The Egyptian revolution that was instigated on 25 January 2011 had a profound impact on citizen agency (Tadros 2012c). While people had been participating in protests for some years before the revolution, and their frequency had increased tremendously between 2008–10 (Ali 2011), nevertheless, the participation of citizens in millionnyas (calls for one million person protest) as well as its wide politicisation in the media created a new energy around the expression of voice. The ousting of President Mubarak also removed the fear barrier for many, who dared, for the first time ever, to go out and join in demonstrations, sit-ins and marches.

On the other hand, the Islamist ascension to power also meant that Egyptian society was confronted with one of the worst backlashes against women's rights in its modern history (Tadros 2012b). While the challenges were multi-faceted, one of the most tangible forms of violence that women became exposed to was in the public sphere. Sexual harassment had been on the increase in the last years of Mubarak's rule. However, it increased dramatically after the revolution, both in intensity (more molestation and groping) and in frequency (in particular in urban areas).

It seemed that in 2012, a year after the ousting of President Mubarak the most pressing form of gender-based violence affecting many Egyptian women is their exposure to sexual harassment in public spaces, in particular streets. The selection of this issue emerged out of:

1. Informal interviews with youth activists.
2. Focus groups with women undertaken by the author in May 2011.<sup>6</sup>
3. A review of press and media coverage.

According to a report on sexual harassment<sup>7</sup> released on 1 April 2013, by HarassMap<sup>8</sup> 60 per cent of acts of sexual harassment happen on the street, and half of all incidents take the form of groping. The profile of the harassers tended to be young, with almost half of all incidents being committed by children, almost half by young adults and almost a third of the incidents involved harassment by more than one perpetrator:

Around half of the harassers were young adults, aged between 18 and 29. Almost 40% of them were children under 18 and only 14.5% of harassers were adults 30 years of age or older.... Around 27% of incidents of harassment were mob harassment, with more than one perpetrator. More than half the victims who faced mob harassment faced the incidents alone, not in groups. Most of the perpetrators in mob harassment were men. In 45.8% of the incidents, it was possible to identify the age of the harassers. Around half of them were children and 45.5% were young adults. (HarassMap)

---

<sup>6</sup> Tadros (2011).

<sup>7</sup> Kortam (2013).

<sup>8</sup> For profile of HarassMap, see Section 2.4 of this report.

A study undertaken in 2008 suggested that over 80 per cent of women living in Egypt have suffered sexual harassment and about half experience it on a daily basis (Ali 2012).

The research we undertook on why sexual harassment has intensified so dramatically after the revolution<sup>9</sup> shows that the most influential factor has been security laxity. The police had retreated from the streets at the time of the ousting of President Mubarak and thugs, gangs and criminals had increased their activities dramatically. People's perceptions are that theft under force has risen, so have assaults on women, and break-ins on private property. While most women generally identified the absence of security as the main reason behind increased harassment, social and political factors have also played important contributing roles. From a socioeconomic perspective, according to many actors, there is a disproportionately high percentage of unemployed youth who come from economically marginalised groups and now have taken up harassment as a pastime. From a political perspective, religious leaders and Islamist political parties, including the Freedom and Justice Party in power, have propagated a discourse which lays the blame of harassment squarely on women's presence in public space, attire and behaviour (Tadros 2012d).

### 1.3 Methodology and process

From 2011 there has been extensive collective action around gender-based violence, distinguished by a high level of youth involvement and male participation and leadership. In order to understand youth and male agency in collective efforts to address sexual harassment on the streets of Egypt, IDS partnered with the Social Research Centre at the American University in Cairo. The SRC has an impressive background in undertaking research in Egypt and is not seen to be affiliated to any particular group, party or actor.

In order to determine the scope of research, a number of criteria were applied in the selection of actors that would be included:

1. The collective actors that emerged in the post-Mubarak era. Of the actors which have been covered in this database, three were formed in 2011, six were established in 2012 and one was formed in January 2013 in addition to one actor which was formed one month before the revolution. It excluded, however, coalitions that were established during Mubarak's era.
2. Is an informal collective actor. This is in recognition that much of the collective action that emerged in post-Mubarak Egypt was informal and much of it aspired to become a coalition or movement. This meant that we excluded non-governmental organisations from the research.
3. Was actively contributing to stopping gender-based violence in public spaces. We included informal collective actors whether they focused exclusively on sexual harassment as their *raison d'être* or whether it comprised one of the areas of their work. We included those that adopted street action strategies as well as those that tried to deal with what they perceived to be the structural causes behind the phenomenon (such as lack of protection in the constitution, etc.). We excluded political/religious movements whose approach to gender-based violence was to press women to stay at home or feel responsible for the harassment on account of their attire.

---

<sup>9</sup> This included 16 focus groups undertaken with women living in low-income areas in 2011 for the Swiss development Cooperation in Egypt by the author, informal interviews with activists and secondary data analysis.

4. Has men's involvement, whether as leaders or active participants.
5. Is an ongoing initiative (i.e. it exists/is functional at the time of research). Some of the initiatives that we examined had to be excluded from the database at a later stage because six months later, they had failed to exist in their previous form either because they ceased or had metamorphosed into another initiative.
6. They were effective. The level of effectiveness varied tremendously from one actor to another; however, all actors had one or more of the following criteria of effectiveness:
  - people on the street approach them and tell them the importance of their work, consult them or share their experiences with them;
  - volunteers joining;
  - media coverage of their issues and their work.

These criteria emerged out of the scoping workshop undertaken in November 2012 (see workshop report Tadros 2012a) and individual consultations with activists.

In order to ensure a comprehensive coverage of the existing and emerging collective actors meeting the above criteria:

1. A workshop was held in November in which our local partner the Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA) invited all collective actors working on GBV in public streets.
2. When undertaking interviews, snowballing was used to identify all other actors.
3. The press and media were scanned for any coverage of relevant actors.

The first step taken was to hold an intensive one-day event with local researchers covering: analysis of the landscape, discussion on best possible ways to approach actors, consideration of ethical issues and the translation of the template into Arabic. After receiving the clearance to undertake the research from the American University in Cairo's ethical research review board, the template was tested and adjusted accordingly. The interviews were undertaken in the period from November–January by local researchers Shaza Abd el Lateef and Nafissa Dessouky. In view of the highly dynamic domestic context, many of the actors emerged during the course of the research, and local researchers at the Social Research Centre at AUC immediately sought to establish connections with them. The work was carried out intermittently because local researchers were forced to halt the process of collecting data several times due to the highly volatile political situation, which sometimes made internal transport difficult or when accessing the participants in the database was difficult. The interviews were then transcribed word by word and were translated into English. The author reviewed, synthesised and analysed them and where necessary undertook further interviews in order to complete the templates. It is important to note that the level of detail varies across the templates due to a number of factors; in some instances information was withheld by the participant for security reasons or removed by the author for the protection of the collective actor; in other instances, the collective actor was newly emergent and some of the questions were not applicable.

Table 1.1 below shows a summary of the main actors covered in this database.



**Table 1.1 Summary of main characteristics of youth-led collective initiatives on gender-based violence in public space**

Name of initiative	Establishment/why	Objectives	Distinctive activity	Men's role	Collective action
Arab Women Uprising	October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e-platform for reporting, sharing and discussing women's predicament during the revolution</li> </ul>	Discussion of taboo issues as well as GBV on their Facebook page	Men contribute messages and participate in the debates	Using their Facebook page to raise awareness of other initiatives
Baheya Ya Masr	February 2012 to defend social justice issues, in particular women's citizen rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lobby against the constitution</li> <li>raise awareness within the wider population on women's rights</li> </ul>	Graffiti work and storytelling as awareness-raising strategies	Men serve as volunteers and leaders in graffiti initiatives in particular	They participate in other initiatives intended to raise awareness about gender-based violence
Bassma	July 2012 to work on sexual harassment, street children and other societal issues – in response to one of the founder's own experience of sexual assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>security patrols in metro stations and crowded areas to rescue victims and help them with filling in police complaints addition to awareness-raising work</li> </ul>	Security patrols	Men feature as founders in the movement and play the leading role in the security patrols and across all activities	Synchronisation with other actors working in security patrols
HarassMap	December 2010 to document where harassment is happening and give victims a chance to report on it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of GIS technology to flag where victims are being harassed</li> <li>create safe zones for women to go to for protection against harassment</li> </ul>	Women use social media to let HarassMap know where they are and what they have been exposed to	The head of the outreach team is a man and they have many male volunteers in their community activities	Have worked with other initiatives such as Baheya Ya Masr and Opush through the production of awareness of flyers and banners on sexual harassment
Fouada Watch	June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitor and document the performance of the government <i>vis-à-vis</i></li> </ul>	Thorough documentation and commentary on government policy,	Men are involved in the art work and media engagement, though not as founders	Collaborates with Shoft Taharosh and other actors in documenting

		gender matters	engagement with the media		cases of harassment and publicising them
Kat' Eidak [Cut Off your hands]	January 2013, to prevent sexual harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lobby for an all women cabin in train station</li> <li>catch harassers and shame them</li> <li>raise awareness in community</li> </ul>	Belief in the use of violence to force harassers caught in the acts of harassment to deter future activity	12 out of 20 of the core founding group are men, men are also targeted through the interventions	They are keen to work with other initiatives that provide psychological and legal support to complement their activities, also keen to work with Bassma
OpAntiSh	November 2012 against group-organised sexual harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intervention to rescue women being harassed in demonstration spaces, and deal with their immediate needs</li> </ul>	Belief in women's involvement in male-led rescue operations	Rescue intervention activities are largely dominated by men, also members of core group	They have synchronised with other initiatives such as Bassma, Shoft Taharosh, and others
Nefssi	May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>respond to women's aspirations for a better life, and to address sexual harassment</li> </ul>	The silent human chain in public spaces	Men have been involved in the chains and in the graffiti work	Nefssi participates in many of the awareness-raising campaigns on sexual harassment through banners, flyers and wide dissemination
Shari'a Wa'i	September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issues of equality, including gender matters</li> </ul>	Use of art and drama to support other initiatives	Men are founders, are actively engaged in man-to-man peer education and use of puppets and music for awareness	Is called upon by other initiatives to deliver messages in entertaining ways
Shoft Taharosh	October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>create a coalition of actors to raise awareness on sexual harassment on the streets and save women who are being assaulted</li> </ul>	Combination of awareness-raising with rescue operations	Men are founding members and are particularly active in the rescue operations in Tahrir	The initiative emerged organically out of a campaign involving various partners

Tehmarabout ah	May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sensitise Egyptian society to the need to recognise and include women in all levels of decision-making</li> </ul>	Graffiti and catchy slogans	Men are particularly active in the graffiti component	Supports other initiatives in awareness-raising on sexual harassment
-------------------	----------	--	-----------------------------	---	--

Source: Author's own.

## 2 Data

### 2.1 Arab women's Uprising (Intifadat al Mar'a al Arabiyya)

Information collected based on interview with Sally Zohney.

Contact person(s): Sally Zohney

Telephone: 01227 337768

Email: sallyzohney@yahoo.com

Webpage: They only have a Facebook page,

[www.facebook.com/intifadat.almar2a?ref=ts&fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/intifadat.almar2a?ref=ts&fref=ts)

Address: They do not have a headquarters, only connecting through internet as they are from four different countries.

**How does the actor describe itself?** A social movement? Coalition? Network? Why?

A movement, because their aim is to create a feminist movement in Arab countries.

**Date of inception** (and circumstances around its establishment, i.e. nature of political moment): October 2011, they found that after the revolution in some of Arab countries, it is important to record the history of this period as it is a critical phase for women's history and for the nation.

**Reason for formation:** To circulate news about what is happening that is affecting women in all Arab countries and not to be dependent only on formal resources of information such as newspapers or formal media but to act as a platform for the sharing of women's own experiences, narratives and witness accounts.

**How did the group form?** (previous relations, common agenda, through a liaison person): They came to form the group through pre-existing social relations, as they knew each other as colleagues and friends.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** n/a

**Leadership of the collective actor** (gender, age, educational background, political affiliation, professional background):

A horizontal structure: They are four young women from Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine, highly educated, in their 20s and 30s who are the admins of the page. The four young women are: Sally Zohney, an activist and a UN Women staff member, studied political science in Cairo University. Farah Barqawi, a Palestinian activist, and her mother is also a woman activist. Yarda is a Lebanese activist who lives in France and she is the one behind the idea of 'the uprising of Women in the Arab world', Yarda is the friend of another Lebanese activist, Deyala Hudar, who lives in Lebanon and a member of a movement in Lebanon called 'The move towards secularism'. Sally, Farah, Yarda and Deyala are the founders of this initiative.

**Membership:** The Facebook page now has more than one hundred thousand members.

**Membership profile:** Can only be traced through Facebook.

**Legal status:** Informal network. They are a Facebook page.

**Organisational set up:** Four young women are the administrators of the page.

**Activities:** The idea of the initiative is to cover what is happening regarding women in the Arab region. Sally explains:

We began with Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine because of our backgrounds but we intend to cover all countries in the region. We do not want to work in the framework of victimising women but we want to show the truth of what is actually happening in Arab countries, how every country deals with the same problem in a different way. The idea behind our first campaign was '(I am with the Uprising)'. Our second campaign is, 'Tell your story', because we needed to take the theory of declaration. This campaign took place in November 2012. The campaign contained heart breaking stories on a range of topics, from child abuse to rape to forced/coerced marriages. We faced some problems with this campaign from the Facebook censors so we created our own blog and we are considering having our own website with all these stories. We also tried to go outside the virtual world and go out on the streets, so the first thing we did was a graffiti campaign with our logo with a sentence saying 'I am with the uprising of Women in the Arab world'. What surprised me is that some people who we do not know took the logo and used it in other countries such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

**How do they know they have made a difference?** 'Through the increasing number of members on the page and through the kind of posts and messages we receive from people who actively participate in our campaigns and also through the reaction, posts and contribution of members from different countries such as Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and also Europe', says Sally.

**What distinguishes their work from other collective actors?** Sally believes it is the regional dimension as well as the media perspective on citizens and the attempt to use Facebook as a platform to address taboo issues: 'we are the first initiative that called participants to send in their photos with their own messages on a certain topic to be published on Facebook so we give our participants the opportunity to tell their own problems and stories and being the source of news sometimes. And because the page offer a space to all people from all different background to bring up topics that are seen as taboos.'

**Role of men in the movement:** 'Men's participation is through their posts, they also send their photos and their messages to the Uprising page and this helps in supporting the initiative. It gives more accountability and encourages more men to participate.'

They are unable to determine the exact female/male ratio of members on the Facebook page. However, they have seen endorsements from men in campaigns such as 'I am the Uprising'. Though the campaign's names and issues are conspicuously feminist, Sally interprets the show of support by men to be largely driven by their concern for how mainstream narratives and realities are influencing women they know. For example, some of the men said that they support the uprising because they are rebelling against the Islamist discourse on women. One man wrote to say that 'his mother is not (*a'wra*) عورة' [a term used by Islamists to refer to private parts but also referring to women as lacking/inadequate]. Other men join the campaign because they say that they support women as they want a better future to their daughters and others say that they support the initiative because true manhood is about respecting women.

**What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which they work?** The response to that question was based on the initiative's own experience, which has been negative, due to what Sally perceives to be the highly competitive atmosphere characterising the NGO scene. Sally explained that though they had approached various NGOs to support

their initiative, the response was not positive, one which she attributes to competition: 'we are a different initiative than them [other NGO interventions] and we would not compete with them! They understood the principles of collective work in a wrong way.'

**Local links** (in relation to state and non-state actors) i.e. government machineries, other social movements' coalitions, political parties, civil society organisations) and nature of collaboration: not so far – the four members contribute as individuals to other initiatives working on similar issues. They try to support other campaigns for women's rights by, for example, publishing it on the uprising page such as publicising the work of Baheya Ya Masr and other initiatives.

**Member in any international network/group and its role in their work?** Not so far

## 2.2 Baheya Ya Masr

Information based on interview with Mona Essam 26 years old, graduate of Faculty of Arts, Sociology, works as commercial relation coordinator in an electronic company and one of the founders of 'Baheya Ya Masr'.

Contact person(s): Shaza Abd el Lateef

Telephone: 01120608083

Email: none

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BaheyaYaMasr](http://www.facebook.com/BaheyaYaMasr)

Address: 7 El Bostan Street (offshoot from Talaat Harb Street), downtown Cairo, 5<sup>th</sup> floor.

**How does the actor describe itself?** A movement that works on citizen rights more broadly and women's rights in particular.

**Date of inception** (and circumstances around its establishment): In early February Inas Mekaway and a group of women established 'Baheya Ya Masr' as a movement that works on rights in general and woman rights in particular. The movement started shortly after Inas Mekaway, one of the founders, organised a protest in front of parliament to demonstrate against women's political exclusion from decision-making positions in post-Mubarak Egypt.

**Reason for formation:** We believed that the founding committee of the constitution should contain 50 per cent women representation because women represent half the community. We protested on 8 March, International Women's Day. In 2012, we have revived the anniversary of 'virginity examination' that took place by organising a march in memory of what happened in 2011 on 'International Women's Day' when women were attacked and assaulted. We wanted to attract the attention of the media to focus on the predicament of the girls exposed to virginity examination who were still being denied their rights. We felt that sexual harassment was increasing in Egypt.

**How did the group form?** Through personal relations between the founding members

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives** (only if applicable): n/a

**Leadership of the collective actor** (gender, age, educational background, political affiliation, professional background...):

Inas Mekaway and a group of other women are considered the founders of the movement.

**Membership** (who, numbers, men/women/any other relevant info on profile): They are all volunteers.

**Legal status:** an informal movement though they intend to form an organisation.

**Organisational set up:**

**Activities:** Bayeha Ya Masr has engaged in two kinds of activities: (1) lobbying against the articles in the Egyptian constitution that it believes are detrimental to women's rights (2) trying to raise awareness among women in deprived communities of their rights, such as in Ezbet al Hagana, a low income settlement of Cairo, where they also worked on gender-based violence (3) Telling stories as a way of communicating to the citizenry issues to do with social justice.

**How do they know they have made a difference?** The repeal of Article 36 of the constitution is for them a measure of their success.

**What distinguishes their work from other collective actors?** 'We realise that many movements were formed recently to focus on harassment. I think that my priority is to talk about the constitution. I think that this constitution isn't a good one. I believe that, in this constitution, married women have no rights. The constitution doesn't condemn violence towards women. Accordingly, the change of the constitution is my priority.'

**Role of men in the movement** According to Mona, men play a central role in the development and production of the graffiti that is drawn on the walls in Egypt to raise awareness and which is a core activity of the movement. She also mentions that they have many male volunteers who join in the other activities. She argues that while Bayeha does not have issue with feminist movements, it does not identify itself as such. She insisted that 'Baheya isn't a women movement' but a movement concerned for the citizens. She reflected: 'We wanted to be constantly in the streets, constantly interacting with people and I think that is one of the things that attracts the young men who do graffiti to this movement, because they wanted to reach out to the population with their ideas about whatever oppression they can see, whether it is against women or Christians or others'.

**Local links** i.e. government machineries, other social movements, coalitions, political parties, civil society organisations) and nature of collaboration: Mona believes that it was only through collaboration with political parties and women's movements that their campaign was successful in having of the articles, Article 36, of the draft constitution of Egypt removed. 'We tried to form a front for defending Egyptian women. Baheya reached out to political parties, such as the 'The Free Egyptians' (El Misreyeen El Ahrar), 'the Egyptian Social Democratic Party' and 'The Constitution' (El Destour) and other movements so that we can raise awareness about women and the constitution. I think that the protests organised by Baheya for the sake of the constitution were successful, they had an impact on the media and within the wider population. It should be mentioned that without the networking that took place, Article 36 wouldn't have been cancelled', Mona explained.

**For further resources,** see: <http://en.aswatmasriya.com/analysis/view.aspx?id=86123bfd-dc5c-4a8d-8d9e-7dc02578eccf>

## 2.3 Bassma ('Imprint')

Information is based on interview with Nihal Zaghloul, one of the founders of Bassma/ Imprint.

Contact person(s): Nihal Saad Zaghloul

Telephone:

Email: [nszaghloul@gmail.com](mailto:nszaghloul@gmail.com)

Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/Imprint.Movement.eq](http://www.facebook.com/Imprint.Movement.eq)

Address: no premises

Film on their work: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IzD-2hTfsA&list=UUrAiOV1-D1us3caNlfXN10Q&index=2](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IzD-2hTfsA&list=UUrAiOV1-D1us3caNlfXN10Q&index=2)

**How does the actor describe itself:** A social movement and an initiative.

**Date of inception** (and circumstances around its establishment): the movement started in July, 2012, shortly after Nihal was personally sexually harassed while protesting in Tahrir Square and witnessed the rape of one of her friends.

**Reason for formation:** Bassma's objectives are to tackle issues that it perceives to be neglected in the community such as sexual harassment, street children, literacy and raising awareness on rights.

**How did the group form?** When Nihal was sexually harassed in Tahrir Square (see above), she wrote a blog <http://zaghaleel.wordpress.com/2012/06/04/evil-vs-good/> in which she described her experience of being molested and concluded:

I know that many will not like that I wrote this about Tahrir Square thinking I am trying to vandalise the image of the Egyptian revolution...but this is not my intention, I have participated in almost all the battles and marches since Jan 28 2011 but Sexual Harassment in Egypt is growing and growing and we need to address it. We ignored it for too long and it is becoming a monster that is eating us all...I feel hate towards those men who molested us...I can't smile in the face of anyone that I don't know anymore...hell I can't smile the way I used to....

Many young people, men and women were moved by the blog, wrote back saying they must act collectively to counter this and through this exchange on the internet they agreed to meet. People brought their friends along and through face-to-face meetings a movement came into being.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** n/a

**Leadership of the collective actor** (gender, age, educational background, political affiliation, professional background...) The founding members include both women and men, they are all between 20–30 years of age, all are completing an undergraduate degree or have completed one. The movement prides itself on being non-political in its orientation, namely, it does not take sides with any one political force. It prides itself that it includes members affiliated to the non-Islamist as well as Muslim Brotherhood members.

**Membership** (who, numbers, men/women/any other relevant info on profile): Core members are 30–40. They plan and organise. 'When we go to street to do something, we have a volunteers list of 100 names. We send them emails or call them in order to participate in our events.' explains Nihal.

**Legal status:** Informal

**Organisational set up:** In addition to the board comprised of the three founders and two members who joined later, there is a division of labour in the movement happening through three teams: (1) research and development (2) planning; and (3) media relations.

- (1) Research and development team go to the street, conduct field research and report back on people's perceptions, opinion and reactions to issues such as harassment. This informs the movement's plans for interventions.



- (2) Planning: this team puts into place the action plan and its implementation: to develop an action plan. This team decides the places to be visited in order to raise their awareness and the security patrols (see Activities below).
- (3) Media relations working in informing public opinion on Bassma's work and sexual harassment more broadly.

**Activities:** The principal activity that Bassma became renowned for is the security patrols. Nihal recounted that:

For example, during Eid in November we made patrols similar to those of the police in 'Talat Harb Street'. We went to Talat Harb Street and square observing any harassment cases. We tried to stop such harassment before taking place. If the harassment happened already we try to arrest the person who committed it. Then, we ask the girl; 'Do you want to go the police station to complain'. If she says yes, we go with her to the police station. If she says no, we release the male after the girl leaves the place.' We dealt with four cases; two of them wrote complaints in the police station. The other two refused to go to the station to complain. Sometimes, the one who is harassed feels that she is ashamed of what happened. She doesn't want to cause troubles to her parents and family. Some of those girls are between 14–15 years old. They may be out of home without telling their parents where there have been. On the other hand, the girl may be exposed to harassment by a group of boys. In this case, you can't identify who harassed here. So it is so difficult to identify who commits harassment. The most important thing is that we get the girl out of this gathering without any violence. We just defend ourselves. If we are exposed to hitting, for example, we try to stop him from doing so. It is a sort of self-defence.'

Bassma have also become very active in undertaking security patrols in Metro [subway] stations.

**How do they know they have made a difference?** According to Nihal, they use three criteria:

- The number of volunteers who joined our movement.
- The number of harassment cases that they have stopped [rescued].
- The number of official complaints filed in the police station.

**What distinguishes Bassma's work from other collective actors?** Through their stringent observance of a line of command in how they implement security patrols. Nihal reflects on Bassma's own way of working and says:

Bassma is dictatorial. For example, if we are 50 persons, we don't ask each one about his/ her opinion [on what to do]. It is waste of time. We should have one purpose for the patrol. There should also be a leader. If the leader told any member that s/he should jump, this person should respond without discussion. In such critical times, a girl is at stake, so it is pointless to engage in discussions in this case... I am convinced that this methodology is the secret of Bassma's success. Bassma is still working while the other two groups aren't. The last event that Bassma has done was on Valentine's Day in Talat Harb Street for three days. The turnover was 137. There were more than 40 harassment cases during the first two days. On the third day, Talat Harb Street was empty and there wasn't any harassment.

In terms of strategy of intervention, Nihal suggests that what makes them different as well is that: 'We engage the police before making any security patrol. It should be taken into consideration that most movements don't prefer to work with the police.'

**Role of men in the movement:** Men feature as founders, members and volunteers in the Bassma movement. The movement has taken active steps to recruit men by targeting them in their volunteer recruitment efforts when, for example, visiting universities. Most men are motivated to join, according to Nihal, out of a sense of outrage over what female members of their family and friends are exposed to in sexual harassment. Once recruited, there is a process of discussing and debating the norms and beliefs around sexual harassment. Before the youth (in particular men) go out on awareness-raising initiatives within the wider population, they need to be on the same wavelength as other members of the movement, for example notes Nihal, 'The movement believes that it isn't the girl's fault that she is exposed to harassment no matter what she wears. So we want to make sure that the youth believe in this too'

**What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which they work?** Nihal talks about synchronising activities with other collective actors, such as 'Banat Misr Khat Ahmer' (Egyptian girls are red line) and 'Kama Tadeen Todan':

You will be condemned as you condemn others since both also do security patrols during El Fitr Eid (2012). However, different approaches and styles of working made joint action difficult. Bassma then decided to synchronise the work by each group occupying a different space, so Bassma undertook security patrols in the metro stations, another group was responsible for patrolling Talat Harb Street [downtown Cairo] and the third carried out the patrol in Kasr El Nil. So each group knows the places where the other groups go in order to prevent overlapping.

**Local links** (in relation to state and non-state actors) i.e. government machineries, other social movements, coalitions, political parties, civil society organisations) and nature of collaboration:

Bassma has worked closely with OpAntiSH, Nefssi, Baheya Ya Masr, HarassMap and other interventions.

**Member in any international network/group and its role in their work:** UN Women funded one of Bassma's interventions by supporting the production of flyers and printing of special tee-shirts

**For more information** see: [www.opendemocracy.net/5050/zoe-holman/state-complicity-in-sexual-abuse-of-women-in-cairo](http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/zoe-holman/state-complicity-in-sexual-abuse-of-women-in-cairo)

## 2.4 HarassMap

Information based on interview with 'Captain' Noha Ghobrial: Responsible for the outreach work in the Zamalek area (see below) and information on their website.

Email: [info@harassmap.org](mailto:info@harassmap.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HarassMapEgypt](http://www.facebook.com/HarassMapEgypt)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/harassmap](http://www.twitter.com/harassmap) (@harassmap and #endSH)

Address: 22 Rasheed Street, 3rd Floor, Heliopolis, Cairo, 11341, Egypt

**Date of inception (and circumstances around its establishment):** 'HarassMap was launched in December 2010, concurrently with the release of '678', a landmark feature film about sexual harassment. The starting point was to use the online reporting and mapping technology to support an offline community mobilisation effort to break stereotypes, stop making excuses for perpetrators, and to convince people to speak out and act against harassment.' <http://harassmap.org/en/sample-page/how-and-why-we-began/>

**Reason for formation:** Incidents of sexual harassment had become part and parcel of women's everyday experiences and there was a need to document the hotspots where incidents were most acute and accordingly take measures to flag its occurrence and connect with the person assaulted on the spot.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** The initiative is currently hosted by Nahdet el Mahrousa.

**Leadership of the collective actor:** Leadership information is derived from their website: Rebecca Chiao (Co-founder and project leader) launched HarassMap and today manages the HarassMap team and our work. Rebecca has been working on the issue of sexual harassment in Egypt since 2005. Prior to launching HarassMap, she started the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights' campaign against sexual harassment between 2005 and 2007 – the first such campaign in Egypt. She holds an MA in International Development and International Economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and has been working in NGOs and program development since 1998. Engy Ghozlan (co-founder) helped to start HarassMap. She has worked on sexual harassment since 2006 and is one of the leading experts on the issue in Egypt. In 2007 and 2008 she managed the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights Campaign against Sexual Harassment. She is also a graduate from Cairo University Faculty of Mass Communication and a member of a number of feminist coalitions. Currently she is working at the German Development Cooperation project Promotion of Women's Rights, cooperating with a number of leading women's rights NGOs on issues of family law reform and gender-based violence.

Amel Fahmy (co-founder) is currently the principal investigator for our Research Unit. Amel is an experienced researcher and previously worked as a programme officer for sexual harassment and female genital mutilation (FGM) at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Cairo. She completed her MA in Anthropology at the American University in Cairo and the London School of Economics. Amel also served as head of team for UNICEF in Khartoum and technical officer for the World Health Organisation in Geneva.

Sawsan Gad (co-founder) is a GIS data analyst at the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. At HarassMap, she analyses crowd sourced data on sexual harassment in Egypt and is passionate about promoting safe public space. She received her MA in Demographical Social Analysis from University of California, Irvine in 2008 and her BA in Commerce from Ain Shams University in 2005.

**Membership** (who, numbers, men/women/any other relevant info on profile): According to the HarassMap website, in addition to the members in the core units, they have more than 500 men and women working as volunteers working in different governorates such as Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Qaliubiya, Minya, Port Said, Mansoura, and Assiut. According to Noha, the age of volunteers ranges from 18 to 35 though most tend to be in their 20s. They also have more than 13,500 followers on Facebook.

**Legal status:** informal

**Organisational set up:** In adding to the core team, they have four units: community outreach, research, administrative and marketing and communications unit.

**Activities:** Through their research department, they provide a comprehensive map of where incidents of assault are happening and regularly release new reports about actors, incidents and their geographic occurrence. Through their outreach activities they are able to identify volunteer leaders who would be trained and encouraged to form a group of volunteers who would also be trained in order to know how to talk to people about harassment, identify safe zones and raise awareness. Noha Ghobrial for example was given the title of captain as a

leader responsible for the Zamalek area in Cairo, one of the suburbs identified by the use of GIS technology as a hotspot where incidents of harassment are high. Nahla joined as a volunteer, was trained and given a manual describing all the excuses given to condone harassment, how she should answer back to them, and how to create a group of volunteers. She formed a group of volunteers who then patrol the Zamalek area.

Nahla explained that what they try to do is to create safe zones in areas where harassment is happening by going down to talk to people, finding out from within the community who are the concerned citizens who would like to collaborate with them, and see whether they are willing to play a role in protecting women who are fleeing harassment in the area. Safe zone areas are those in which local residents have agreed to provide refuge for women fleeing harassment. The idea is to have as many safe zones as possible in areas where harassment is happening.

**What distinguishes their work from other collective actors?** HarassMap is one of the earliest initiatives to work on sexual harassment in Egypt. It is the only initiative examined in this database that was established prior to the Egyptian revolution.

Its use of technology to report on sexual harassment and to identify where incidents are occurring and where they are highest is the first of its kind in Egypt.

**Role of men in the movement:** Though none of the founders are men, the outreach unit is led by a man and many of the volunteers are also men. Noha believes that many men have seen women harassed before their very eyes and they were shocked by the experience and this drove some to want to take action against the phenomenon by joining a group since they could not address it on their own as individuals. She believes that in outreach activities, a man is sometimes far more effective in reaching out to other men with messages on the assault because they listen to him as one of them and he can be more convincing in telling them that women don't ask to be harassed, they don't like to be harassed or want it.

**What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which they work?**

Collective action within HarassMap as a movement is made possible through the strength of volunteerism and the elaborate institutional structure in place. However, with respect to collective action with other actors who work on sexual harassment, Noha reflected that one of the impediments is that each collective actor/initiative is determined to become visible and distinguished and stand out in terms of a unique approach towards tackling harassment. It often means that different actors are keen to stress their difference, rather than think about how they can remain distinct while complementing each other in what they do and how they approach the tackling of harassment.

**Local links:** HarassMap has worked with various other harassment-initiatives such as Bassma, OpAntiSH (Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment).

**Member in any international network/group) and its role in their work:** HarassMap has been asked by actors in at least another ten countries to share with them their experience of using GIS to document harassment. HarassMap has also been partly funded by the IDRC.

**For further information, see:**

[www.thestar.com/news/world/2013/02/18/harassmap\\_battles\\_sexual\\_harassment\\_in\\_egypt\\_and\\_beyond.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2013/02/18/harassmap_battles_sexual_harassment_in_egypt_and_beyond.html)

<http://edition.cnn.com/2012/12/21/world/africa/harassmap-egypt-mobile-phones>

[www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/04/01/harassmap-issues-its-annual-report/](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/04/01/harassmap-issues-its-annual-report/)

## 2.5 Fouada Watch

Information based on interview with Fathi Farid.

Contact person(s): Fathi Farid

Telephone: 01150118822

Email: [fouadawatch@yahoo.com](mailto:fouadawatch@yahoo.com)

Address: 22 Shar'ia el Shaheed Youssry Fahmy, Misr el Gadeeda

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/FouadaWatch](http://www.facebook.com/FouadaWatch)

**Date of inception** (and circumstances around its establishment): Fouada Watch was founded on the day that Mohamed Morsi, the candidate of the Freedom and Justice Party affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidency of Egypt and took his oath in front of the constitutional court on Friday 28 June, 2012.<sup>10</sup>

**Reason for formation:** The initiative was formed to act as a watchdog to monitor the performance of state institutions on gender matters that would adopt a two-track approach of working on both the policymaking and citizen awareness levels.

**How did the group form?** The group was formed by four women and three men who had known each other and worked on gender issues previously. The liaison person bringing the group together was Azza Kamel, founder of ACT, a company working on issues of communications and gender.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** n/a

**Leadership of the collective actor:** With the exception of one, all six are in the age range of 20–35. All seven have at least an undergraduate degree if not more, have backgrounds in gender activism and human rights and some are also active in the non-Islamist political parties.

**Membership:** There are about 20 core members who do the street work, majority between 20–30, highly educated, with about one quarter men. Fouada has about 70 volunteers on the waiting list who want to join.

**Legal status:** informal group, supported by ACT, a registered company.

**Organisational set up:** no information available.

**Activities:** Monitoring the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood-led government, releasing reports assessing their performance and sharing it with the presidency and the media. The principal activity has been monitoring policy statements, initiatives and interventions as well as the situation on the ground. For example, in November 2012, Fouada Watch took a stance against the constitution which was championed by the Islamists and took a stance again against President Morsi's initiative on women's rights in March 2013.

At Eid el Fitr (August 2012) Fouada Watch went down to the street with volunteers to hotspots in downtown Cairo where sexual harassment frequently happens. They tried to document incidents and understand the phenomenon better. There were some 53 reports and we engaged with 43 of them.

---

<sup>10</sup> See [www.nytimes.com/2012/06/30/world/middleeast/morsi-promises-to-work-for-release-of-omar-abdel-rahman.html?pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/30/world/middleeast/morsi-promises-to-work-for-release-of-omar-abdel-rahman.html?pagewanted=all).

On 4 October we networked for the 4 October initiative. October 4, known as 'Women of Egypt,' involved a protest and human chains in front of Ittihadiya. Some 33 parties, feminist organisations, and revolutionary groups took part. All the civil parties were there, their leaders too, the men and women – they were all at that event. It was a really special day. Many of them have nothing to do with women's issues in Egypt. So when you take to the street with Kazeboon, the Coalition of Egyptian Revolutionaries, and the Second Revolution of Rage – these are revolutionary entities that go out to fight the Interior Ministry. You're not on their agenda. They don't know about you. They're a political faction, an important faction that has an impact on your movement and your agenda. They believe in the civil state, where my rights and your rights are protected, but they're not involved in this fight. It's not theirs and they don't see it. We made them see it. The new idea was that we made all these people who didn't see, see. This is in addition to the original partners like Bassma and Nefssi and all the feminist organisations. They were original partners with us.

**How do they know they have made a difference?** Fathi acknowledges that in this current context in which the policymaking process is highly opaque and centralised in the hands of the Muslim Brotherhood who are in power, it is difficult to influence policymakers. However, the sheer recognition of members of the ruling party of their presence and acknowledgement of their work is considered in such an environment an indication that their interventions are having some resonance. Fathi also pointed to their visibility/coverage in the media as an indicator of successful engagement with public opinion.

The third indicator is the extent to which the street responds to their initiatives. For example, recounted Fathi:

Fouada worked in the provinces in a tangible, effective way. It took action in eight provinces as a group of volunteers, four from Fouada, two from Shoft Taharosh, and me, from ACT. We raised awareness of the dangers of the draft constitution before the new constitutional declaration was issued. That happened as we were leaving the last province, Kafr al-Sheikh. We went to Upper Egypt and the Delta, passing through eight provinces to get out the word. We went in the South New Valley University and gave lectures on these topics. We went to the Nagaa Hamadi cultural centre [in Qena] and sat with members of prominent families, talking with them and teaching them how to make Fouada stencils and graffiti in the street. We left them 'Your constitution is invalid' stickers. The next day, after President Morsi issued the constitutional declaration, people came out that Friday all over Cairo and the provinces and that sticker was everywhere, the yellow one, because it was the most recent thing that had come out and was in people's hands.

**What distinguishes their work from other collective actors?** The attempt to combine working on the policymaking level with engaging the citizenry through awareness-raising initiatives.

**Role of men in the movement:** Three of the founding members were men who have been active on human rights work, and some of the volunteers who joined were also men (though there is no clear indication of what percentage they account for).

**What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which they work?** The anecdote on what happened on 4 October 2012 recounted by Fathi is illuminating of how different initiatives' standpoints on the kind of strategy to pursue with respect to the ruling regime can affect the possibilities of arriving at a unified stance. The coalition against sexual harassment which included 36 organisations had long proposed a draft law against gender-based violence. One idea was to submit the draft law to the president.

On the one hand, there were those that endorsed an instrumental approach: some of the protestors wanted to present the president with a draft bill on violence against women and hold him to account for it. Fathi endorsed this stance: 'I needed to put that man [the president] in a corner, to give him no options, to tell him, here's the law and you have the powers, and this law will improve conditions for women. He could either approve it or not and then we'll see where he stands. We had a genuine opportunity to call the regime's bluff.' On the other, were those that refused as a matter of principle to engage in any activity that may increase presidential powers: some of the protestors suggested that to ask the president to issue a law would be by default to accept that he resorts to the use of extraordinary powers to issue legislation. They ended up not submitting the proposed bill but submitted a document calling for a recognition and endorsement of women's rights instead.

**Local links:** successfully worked with Bassma and Oppharass on the Eid as well and on other occasions.

## 2.6 Kat' Eidak ('Off with your hand!' or 'Cut off your hand!')

Information based on interview with Ahmed Wagih.

Contact person(s): Ahmed Wagih, co-founder of Kat' Eidak  
Telephone: 01062591591  
Email: unavailable  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/at3.eidak](http://www.facebook.com/at3.eidak)  
Address: no premises

**How does the actor describe itself:** It started off as a Facebook initiative.

**Date of inception** (and circumstances around its establishment): The initiative took off in January 2012 with a view to calling for the cutting off of hands of harassers, in response to the growing problem of sexual harassment on the streets of Egypt.

**Reason for formation:** To work exclusively on preventing sexual harassment: 'The idea is – it's a little violent – but we believe that a person who harasses is insulting his humanity by assaulting the girl. I can't respect him. The punishment is that I cut off his hand. If only one person had his hand cut off, other people will think a thousand times before doing it,' explains Ahmed.

**How did the group form?** Through network of friends and through establishing connections through a Facebook page, followed by meetings in local cafes.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** n/a

**Leadership of the collective actor:** The founder, Ahmed Wagih, 22, is originally from Menoufiya [a Delta governorate]. He holds a BA in Commerce and works as an accountant at an oil company and works as a volunteer to set up the Cut Off your hand initiative. At the time of writing (March 2013), Ahmed identified 20 core members whom he described as of various political persuasions, explaining 'We have people under 20, some in their 20s, and a few in their 30s. We have men and women....there should be more women, but in fact, we have more boys. We have 12 young men and the rest are young women'.

**Membership:** See above. Ahmed is keen to emphasise that the initiative intends not to be associated with any one political orientation or political force: We have Muslim Brothers, Salafis, and liberals, and some people who don't tell us about their political orientation, and people who don't belong to any party [among the ranks of our group]. I've given up on

political parties and I feel that citizens are going to start renouncing all political parties because they feel people only join parties to get a seat in parliament or for their personal interests, not for the country's interest, in my view. We aren't trying to talk about politics, and when we do, it's in our personal capacity'.

He argues that collective action around sexual harassment fails when it becomes politicised: 'What makes collective action fail is when you take a particular political stand. Harassment has nothing to do with politics. This is a social issue, a social problem. Harassers have a social disease.'

**Legal status:** Currently a Facebook page, though they intend to become a foundation.

**Organisational set up:** Currently unclear still

**Activities:** Off with your hand! is at the time of writing (March 2013) still in the inception phase in which they are trying to build a group via their Facebook page. Once they have around 50 people, they will start the planning for implementing activities. Their plans are 'to try to get into schools and go out in the streets and the provinces'. Working in public requires specific strategies, he argues: 'We need to inform the police that we're doing something and get permits. If we're going to be on the Corniche, we need to contact the people who run the boats and the peddlers there. If we're going to Talaat Harb, for example, we should talk to shop owners. If we have good relations with them, they could help us, especially in cases of group harassment. They could support us. So there must be a planning team, a survey or research team. People need to be trained on how to deal with harassers, how to respond to people who say that girls like to be harassed. That's a very common sentiment and I hear it a lot. We need to try to convey to people that it's wrong, to tell them they have a social disease, that society has given them erroneous ideas and we're trying to correct them. We need to say that a girl's clothing cannot be the reason – does your mother like to be harassed? Your sister? So then their outlook can begin to change.'

Previous initiatives undertaken by Ahmed Wagih, the founder includes advocating for a special carriage for women in trains: 'I advocated for a women's carriage on the train, as we have on the metro [subway], and I worked on this idea for a full year. A year later, there are now special cars for women on trains, not all trains. This was my idea. I spoke to the media and I'd go out and distribute brochures, and I sent faxes and emails to the authority.... On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2013 the idea was implemented. It's a pilot program on six trains in Alexandria, Cairo, and al-Qanater. The idea was accepted.....I intend to use this as a model and apply it to all public transportation, like buses.'

**How do they know they have made a difference?** They do not yet seem to have clear benchmarks yet since they are still in the planning phase of which activities they will initiate.

**What distinguishes their work from other collective actors?** The justification of the use of violence against harassers, as is evident from the name of the initiative. Ahmed states 'I'm against violence, but violence with harassers is necessary a little bit, because before he does it again, he'll think long and hard'. He is, for example, in favour of reviving the practice of spraying paint on the harasser: 'This was drawn from the past, when if someone harassed a girl, the boys in town would grab him and shave off part of his hair then when he went home, he'd have to shave it all off. People would then know that he harassed a girl because he had no hair. It's like a stigma, a shame. Some people implemented this idea and went out in groups during the Eid [2012]. When they caught a harasser, they would beat him...'

**Role of men in the movement:** Men comprise 12 of the 20 core group members, with the founder being a man. He argues that though the initiative works on a gender issue that affects women, men are motivated by the need to claim 'the rights of their mothers, sisters,



wives, and daughters – for the sake of more than one person – so boys have more reason [to act] than girls.’

This idea is elaborated further as follows:

Men are afraid for their daughters, wives, mothers, and sisters because, in my opinion, when a woman is harassed, it's not only her who is harassed, but also her father, brother, son, and husband, the people who ignore harassment. These people are essential. If a man takes to the street to defend his mother, sister, wife, and daughter, that's it, it's over. There'd be no harassment.

**What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which they work?** Ahmed Wagih believes that the internal organisational development is integral before they seek to work collectively on the street:

The Cut off Your Hand initiative hasn't done any collective action, it still hasn't taken to the streets. We still haven't introduced ourselves to the streets because in the past lots of people have created a Facebook page and rushed to get on the street and then they disappeared completely because they weren't ready. Some of them are now at home and don't do anything and some have joined other movements or civil society groups. We don't want to just go down to the street and that's it. We'll work in the street when we're prepared. When we start working, we want to continue, so we want to mature a bit.

He argues that collective action will be essential in order for the sexual harassment work to have impact. He intends to rely on partnerships with other initiatives to provide psychological and legal assistance to cases which they will encounter on the streets once they go to work.

**Local links** (in relation to state and non-state actors) i.e. government machineries, other social movements coalitions, political parties, civil society organisations) and nature of collaboration. Cut Off your hand!/Off with your hand! has strong relations with Bassma which they admire for its unified vision and organised way of working.

**Member in any international network/group) and its role in their work:** None

## 2.7 Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment (OpAntiSH)

Information is based on interview with Mai Panaga

Contact person(s): Mai Panaga  
Telephone: 01112290857  
Email: Mai.panaga@gmail.com  
Webpage: [www.facebook.com/opantish](http://www.facebook.com/opantish)  
Address: 6 Dar Al shifaa, garden city, Cairo.

**How does the actor describe itself?** They are an initiative that fights against sexual harassment after the gang sexual assaults and attacks that took place in Tahrir Square in 2012.

**Date of inception** (and circumstances around its establishment, i.e. nature of political moment): Late November 2012, prompted by the emergence of gang forms of sexual attack and the rape of a woman during demonstrations in Tahrir Square. The organisers responded to the increasing absence of safety in Tahrir Square. While the organisers became aware that after 11 February 2011 [the date of the ousting of Mubarak], sexual harassment began

to increase, from mid-2012 and into early 2013, the organisers of OpAntiSH felt sexual harassment took a more organised form involving groups targeting women for sexual assault.

**Reason for formation:** To form a force that can fight against pre-planned forms of gang sexual assault on women during demonstrations and provide protection and support in those protest spaces.

**How did the group form?** Some of the founding members were friends, others got to know each other after attending an event that was publicised via Facebook that called for volunteers for the initiative to come forward in December 2012.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (Director Hossam Bahgat)

**Leadership of the collective actor:** Mai suggests there is no visible leadership. It is a horizontal structure through which different individuals are involved in leading different initiatives at different moments in time. However, core group includes Mai and Leil Zahra and others.<sup>11</sup>

**Membership:** No information available. See Kortam (2013).

**Legal status:** Not registered

**Organisational set up:** OpAntiSH is comprised of three groups:

1. **confrontations group** (اشتباك)  
This group is responsible for rescuing the victim by entering the circle of the harassers through direct confrontation and physical force. They are ten persons approximately in each fight group, with about five groups differently positioned in Tahrir Square
2. **safety group** (أمان)  
This group is responsible of delivering the victim to a safe place such as her home or ambulance or hospital.
3. **the core group** (control room)  
This is the group that manages the control room – which is responsible for coordinating the work between the two other groups, receiving calls regarding where incidents are happening and planning and managing the implementation of activities.

**Activities:** They organise security patrols every time there will be a demonstration. OpAntiSH also have a group that work on giving flyers to people in the square to let them know how to contact them if they witness any sexual abuse incident (the safety group). They regularly meet to assess their work and accordingly develop their strategies:

We always do assessments to evaluate how we are managing, and see whether we need to change strategies and determine where the places are where sexual attacks are most frequent. We now are developing our groups in order to establish new branches and forge new groups out of each of the three groups mentioned above.

---

<sup>11</sup> In the interview with Mai, she was very cautious not to reveal the identity or details of the leadership or membership for security reasons, in the light of the fact that they have already received several threats and do not want to expose others to risks.

### **How do they know they have made a difference?**

Maya reflects:

The measure of success is not concrete: I sometimes tell myself that I have done a great job today we rescued two women from being raped but at other times I feel that it was not enough because I heard about another case that was raped and so I felt that I failed to protect her although it may have happened at another place altogether. Because there are lots of cases, it is difficult to feel that you are successful or not. It depends on the cases you face on that day.

**What distinguishes their work from other collective actors?** Maya feels that what distinguishes this group from others is that it treats women as fighters not victims: OpAntiSH differs from other groups who 'do not like the idea of having girls with them during fight. In the first meeting they looked around and saw many girls in the room then they asked 'what are the girls doing here?' They believe that it is difficult for them to have the responsibility of protecting girls who are with them in the group while trying to rescue the victim. So, they prefer not to have girls with them and this is actually the approach of many other initiatives than OpAntiSH.'

**Role of men in the movement** While men represent about half the membership, they tend to be focused in the first group, the one that intervenes to save women from assault.

**What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which they work?** Internal organisational management of the initiative and the different approaches to intervention that exist between the groups 'because some groups object to the presence of women in the group during the fight while the OpAntiSH works with the ideology that women do not need protection from men, they refuse the victimisation of women approach', explained Mai.

Mai added: that:

our role is not one of awareness-raising but other groups are working on everything, there are groups who work mainly on awareness and others who do patrolling in the metro in addition to awareness, and actually you can find the same person participating in more than one initiative so you can find him working with this group on awareness and with us on interventions. I am fed up with the awareness approach so that is why I'm only in the Operation anti-sexual group, but my friends are in many groups because we are usually the same active people you can find us in any initiative about sexual harassment.

**Local links:** OpAntiSH has collaborated with other groups that run security patrols like Bassma and Shoft Taharosh by having a joint 'operation room' that co-ordinates efforts to maximise outreach.

**Member in any international network/group) and its role in their work:** No

**Interesting views or reflections to be shared from the interview:** On the passive role of the police: 'it is very difficult for police to prevent or to interfere in incidents of gang sexual attacks because they happen when there are demonstrations and there are clashes between police and protestors. Also, police is a part of this society that accepts sexual harassment. The police also sometimes see the women protestors who are victims of the sexual abuse as their enemies. It is only one time that an officer tried to rescue a girl by shoot into the air to scare the gang but he is one and they are hundreds.'

## 2.8 Nefssi ('I wish/I would like to/I want')

Interview based on interview with Dina Hussein, one of the founders.

Contact person(s): Dina Hussein  
Telephone: 01008580091  
Email: [dinahussien1@gmail.com](mailto:dinahussien1@gmail.com)  
Facebook: <http://alturl.com/8fsk8>  
Address: they do not have premises

**How does the actor describe itself?** An initiative.

**Date of inception** (and circumstances around its establishment): The initiative started in May 2012 in response to the increasing incidence of sexual harassment.

**Reason for formation:** The initiative evolved out of a meeting in which a group of young men and women sat down to write their wishes, they started by writing Nefssi which means 'I would like to/I want to/I wish ...' The word also has nuances of rights denied. Dina recalled: 'Every one of us in this meeting wanted to express their wishes. So, young men would write: 'Nefssi' (I would like) not to be obliged to escort my sister wherever she goes [to protect her from being harassed]. A young woman wrote: 'I want to take the bus without anyone touching me', another wrote 'I want to walk safely in street', and another 'I want to ride a bike without anyone annoying me'.

**How did the group form?** They all formed in connection with their previous work on gender equality.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** n/a

**Leadership of the collective actor:** The core group is composed of ten people. They are all women, young (20–35), white collar professionals, highly educated.

**Membership:** When they organise events, they have about roughly 300 members participating, a third of which are men. On Facebook, they have 3,600 members.

**Legal status:** Informal

**Organisational set up:** Ten core members who are joined by volunteers, many unknown to them, when they go down to the street to set up silent human chains.

**Activities:** Dina explains:

While sexual harassment has been widely prevalent, and many organisations have worked on it, the phenomenon has intensified dramatically after the January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution, 2011. I consider this phenomenon political, it is intentional, it is systematically using violence against women to scare them. Nefssi wanted to tackle sexual harassment in a different way. The first human chain was organised in 'Gamat El Dowal' street (in Cairo) in May 2012. The number of those who participated was surprising. We were afraid that nobody shows up. They ended up being 50 persons.

The second human chain was in Abbas El Akad Street. This decision was taken because in every meeting you find that your aspiration increases. So, we decided to go to streets where sexual harassment took place. First, we selected Gamat El Dowal and then Abbas El Akad where group harassment took place. Then, we wanted to go to slum areas but there was the accident of Eman Mostafa, Assuit martyr. We

decided to go with a movement called 'Bassma' in Metro. In this time we believed that there was a president. We wanted to focus on this issue so the president; executive and legislative authorities may do something towards it. We asked the president to activate security and to issue a law for harassment. Then we stood in front of El Etehadia, one of the presidential palaces. We stood and made banners about Eman who was killed because she defended herself [when she was sexually harassed]. She did not want to be touched. At the stand, we mentioned that such behaviours touch dignity. We wanted to deliver a message to the president that she was killed because she refused that someone touches her while she was riding a donkey in Assuit. What's next? This was our message in the last human chain we made. As I have mentioned before, we don't belong to any political party. Our target was to make those three human chains in 2012.

Dina also says that they recognise that women become the targets of sexual assault in demonstrations and Nefssi makes a point of joining these gatherings because they are bent on not allowing those who want to terrorise women to go out to protests, to get away with them and force them to go back home.

**How do they know they have made a difference?** The indicator of success of any initiative is the street. Dina suggested two criteria:

One of the indicators of success was the number of those who join the initiative. We don't depend on same persons every time. In addition, we don't go to the same area where you have supporters. No, we go to new places that we have never been before. This means that one depends on the percentage of people who support this initiative, opinion, target and issue. When we have been to Abbas El Akad, was something that we never saw before.

Also, another indicator of success is the different types of people who participate. For example, in one of our human chains a worker joined us. He never uses the internet. He joined us for two hours just because he has read the messages and banners we left. Another type of persons was a man with his family. He parked his car. He decided to join us with his wife and daughter. He carried his daughter on his shoulders for about 2 hours. Thus, you know that you have succeeded. Thus, you could know that your message was delivered. We don't go to certain places and people. No, we address the whole community.

**What distinguishes their work from other collective actors?** While they believe that legal reform is needed, so is research. Their intervention is premised on raising awareness within the population in a non-conventional way: by forming human chains of women and men who stand silently in places which are notorious for sexual harassment while holding A4 pieces of paper with messages on it. Their human chains are silent ones.

**Role of men in the movement** Men are key partners in organising for the initiatives as well as joining the human chains when they are done. They represent roughly a third of those who participate in the initiatives.

Reflecting on men's involvement, Dina says:

People may believe in the issue of woman in general. They may feel that women are violated. Some may be affected by what takes place with their sisters or what is seen in streets. It is not necessary that I hear such stories from my fiancé, sister or female friend. May be I walk in street and see something. I, as a male, may feel that if I were in her shoes, I would have used a knife and then I will be released. I don't know how do you cope with this issue. In one of our meetings a young man asked, how many

times a day do you expose to sexual harassment? This person wanted to express that he couldn't bear the fact that what he has seen is something to which girls are exposed daily. He asked how she could bear it. For this reason, this young man joined the initiative. He felt that this initiative is doing something good and he wants to take part in it. He thinks that our initiative has people who believe in changing this community and the prevailing culture. Such men want to join so that they can change the culture in the community.

**What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which they work?** Internal organisation and unity of vision are the two top challenges that Dina identified. She also adds: 'There is another type of group work that is useless because they are just groups created to attract a media show. You never see any fruits of this type of group work in reality. For example, I may go to street and make something. People in streets aren't convinced with what I am doing so they look at me and say: 'what do you want?'

**Local links** (in relation to state and non-state actors) i.e. government machineries, other social movements, coalitions, political parties, civil society organisations) and nature of collaboration: Dina mentions that they have worked successfully with 'Bassma' [Imprint] (see Section 2.3) and intend to continue working with them in 2013.

**Member in any international network/group) and its role in their work:** None though links were forged with UN Women on account of one of the founders working there

**Interesting views or reflections to be shared from the interview:**

We can't deny that the revolution encouraged people to talk. If you have right, you have to articulate it. To secure your right, you have to participate. We got this impression from the beginning of the revolution when vigilante groups were formed in every area to defend properties. The revolution helped people to organise themselves. Before the revolution the idea that people object or express their opinions was limited to certain categories.

**Further resources:** [www.unwomen.org/2012/05/i-wish-un-women-captures-egypts-first-human-chain-against-sexual-harassment/](http://www.unwomen.org/2012/05/i-wish-un-women-captures-egypts-first-human-chain-against-sexual-harassment/)  
<http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2012-06-12/arab-spring-womens-rights/55555378/1>

## 2.9 Shar'ia Wa'i ('An Aware/Alert Street')

Information based on an interview with Mohamed Hadari, one of the founders.

Contact person(s): Mohamed Hadari

Telephone: 01118211153

Email: [hadary99@yahoo.com](mailto:hadary99@yahoo.com)

Webpage: none

Address: no premises for the initiative, the youth meet informally at different public venues such as coffee shops

**Date of inception** (and circumstances around its establishment): It started September 2012. Mohamed Hadari, one of the founders was working with civil society organisations since 2006, he had friends working in the same field and they thought of the idea of forming an initiative that would be youth led and working on gender issues in Egypt.

**Formation of the group:** They all knew each other as friends and it is how the core group got formed.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** n/a

**Leadership of the collective actor:** a horizontal structure composed of a number of young people such as 23 year old Mohamed Hadari.

**Membership profile:**

We are still at the beginning of the road. Most of us are young. We don't have jobs. We don't have money. We can't spend money on the initiative [Shar'ia Wa'i] in order to reach out to others. We have different skills. Some of us are working on plays, puppets, shadow puppet and animation. We have different educational background; agriculture, computer and fine arts. We live in different places namely Helwan, down town and Nasr city. We also belong to different social classes. We are friends because of working together.

**Legal status:** Informal network of friends – non-institutionalised.

**Organisational set up:** The core founders are five who are taking the significant decisions. As for the founders who modify the action plan, they are ten.

**Activities:**

The idea of the initiative is to introduce arts to development. We make shows in the metro, streets and universities. We go to the poorest areas. Our first show was in an area called 'Istable Anter' with the initiatives of 'Fouada' and Heya. We talked about child and women status in constitution. Then, we helped people there to make lobbying during Eid 'feast' under the title 'Have you seen any harassment?' These lobbying campaigns focused on observing harassment cases during Eid. If the young woman who was exposed to harassment wants to go to the police station to make official records, we help her. We also try to ensure females secure exit from the places where harassment spread. Then we protested to remove the Minister of Education of his office because of the violations that took place in schools.

**What distinguishes their work?** Art in development. Focus on the poorest areas. Unconventional spaces i.e. talking to people in the subway, unconventional ways: using puppets, songs and theatre performances, animation, etc.

**How do you know you have made a difference?**

It is the reaction of people. We work in partnerships with different organisations. The people in the areas where we visit ask the organisations; will there be any similar events? So, organisations invite us again. Another indicator is the response of people in the subway. They pay attention to what we are saying. They raise many questions which is another indicator of success.

**Why have you chosen to work on public forms of sexual harassment?**

I talk about harassment [in public places] because it is wide spread phenomenon in Egypt. I have observed this phenomenon in Eid. I have seen some initiatives hit harassers during Eid or file cases against them. However, I am convinced that if this person works and receives good education, he won't act this way. I have seen this phenomenon wide spread in the poorest and slum areas which means that the

persons who are doing so are unemployed. May be because they don't have jobs, they are harassers. Harasser should receive psychological support. He needs to have his awareness raised about rights. If he was sent to jail, he will become a criminal. He will be more violent against women.

I have photos documenting policemen harassing women on the street. I have also seen another type of violation; a woman harassing another woman: I think it is violation when a woman talks with another woman about what she wears. I consider this violence against woman.

**Role of men in the initiative:** Mohamed comments on why he as a man became involved in championing women's rights: 'At the end, we are all human beings. I was gender biased in the beginning. I was raised up in an Upper Egyptian family with its traditions namely that there is a big difference between a boy and a girl. Then, I received trainings. I read a lot. I discovered that there is no difference between a boy and a girl. At the end, we are all human beings, aren't we?'

And on engaging male youth: 'When we go to the university, we find our friends want to join similar initiatives [as ours]. NGOs and CSOs should go to the street and work with people. The problem is that some organisations are just offices. They just talk and deliver trainings. Civil society organisations don't go to the street to be with people. Actually, people don't understand the meaning of CSOs or NGOs. We learnt that the NGOs aren't known at streets. When we talk with youth, it is easy to convey our thoughts because we are of the same age.'

#### **What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which you work?**

I think that in Egypt we are not used to work as a team or a group. So when there are gatherings or cooperative meetings between organisations and/or initiatives, every initiative and/or organisation tries to control it. It tries to be the strongest. As Shar'ia Wa'i, we found that working with the 'Fouada' initiative is characterised by flexibility. Every initiative knows what to do. Every member in both initiatives is best employed in his/ her position.

**Local links:** One of the main strategies of working established by Shar'ia Wa'i is to forge partnerships with bigger organisations in various governorates.

We worked with Sotna, Fouada Watch and Heya initiatives. For example we worked with Fouada Watch on raising awareness on the constitution. We worked together in different places in Cairo to raise people's awareness. Then we travelled with them to governorates. We are discussing the issue of what to do next. We have a partnership with another initiative called 'Gridat Sotna' in Helwan. It held a session on Constitution.

We were also invited by 'Egyptian Coalition and child's rights', 'Fouada', 'ACT', 'Yes for development', 'Garidat Sotna' in Helwan, and the 'Support centre for information technology' to take part in joint activities.

**Member in any international network/group) and its role in their work:** None.

## **2.10 Shoft Taharosh (Harassment seen)**

Information based on interview with Janet Abd el Aleem and Fathi Farid.

Contact person(s): Janet Abd el Aleem



Telephone: 01282993820 - 01150118822

Email: [actegypt@yahoo.com](mailto:actegypt@yahoo.com)

Webpage: unavailable

Address: 22 Shari'a Yousry Fahmy, Misr el Gedeeda, Cairo

**Date of inception** (and circumstances around its establishment): October 2012 at the time of Eid el Adha<sup>12</sup> (26 October). Downtown Cairo had become notorious over the course of many years (since 2006) for the frequency and intensity of sexual harassment cases, in particular around the cinemas area where large numbers of youth congregate. Shoft Taharosh was specifically formed to address sexual harassment during the Eid (feast days).

**Reason for formation:** To intervene in crowded contexts to save women from sexual harassment and raise awareness within the broader community about the need to put an end to such practices.

**How did the group form?** Janet recounted that on 4 October, 2012 different youth initiatives and political parties had joined in the march to demand women's rights (see Fouada Watch in this report), after which the six actors mentioned below agreed to continue to work together by participating in regular meetings. To raise awareness, they went to lower income informal settlements Ezbat Khairallah, Masakin al-Zilzal, and Istabl Antar to talk to women about how to fight harassment.

Then the Eid [feast] came again and we said, 'Let's get working again.' There was some disagreement over whose name we should work under and someone proposed that we work under a new name specifically about harassment so we chose the name Shoft Taharosh [meaning Seen harassment?]. Have you seen harassment? Report it. Seen harassment? Tell us that became the slogan. We began seeing our strength. We had young men with the Shar'ia Wa'i initiative working, so the street was with us. Fouada Watch was working in the street. Heya was working on awareness. Etkesfoh was working, everyone to their own abilities. We talked about how we would divide the work.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** At Eid el Adha, Shoft Taharosh was formed out of six participating actors:

1. Fouada Watch (informal initiative, see coverage in this database); and
2. ACT (a company);
3. Heya (an NGO);
4. Shar'ia Wa'i (an informal collective initiative working on citizenship issues – see coverage in this database);
5. Etkesfoh (an informal collective initiative working on sexual harassment);
6. Shabab al-Mahrouseh, a revolutionary informal group.

**Leadership of the collective actor:** The leadership of Shoft Taharosh comprises a representative from each of the six collective actors mentioned above. They are mostly young, under the age of 30, are politically active and can be said to be members of the opposition [against the regime].

**Membership:** There is a core 15–35 members who comprise the intervention operations on the ground. The field members of Shoft Taharosh are of two types: there are those who work on awareness-raising campaigns and those who intervene to save women from those

---

<sup>12</sup> Meaning 'festival of sacrifice'.

harassing them. The group that intervenes to save women from harassment is exposed to a high level of violence: it is an all men team with the exception of one woman.

**Legal status:** Informal.

**Organisational set up:** A steering committee comprised of a representative from each of the six actors.

**Activities:** The first activity initiated by Shoft Taharosh was during the Eid el Adha holiday in downtown Cairo (October 2012). Janet recalled:

Some of us went to coordinate with the workers in the cinemas so we could stand on the doors and watch the ticket line up close [where harassment often takes place]. Some of us have some connections in downtown places so we were able to create safe passages for girls who were assaulted...

Our young people provided a safe passage [for the woman saved from harassment]. There must a girl in the intervention group to get a hold of the girl [being harassed] because when she is being harassed, she doesn't trust any boy, even if he tries to tell her he's with her. So the girl who intervenes to save her envelops her immediately to get her out through the safe passage.

The intervention operation involves a high level of synchronisation. Janet explains:

The rescue intervention is undertaken by those in distinct uniforms, a t-shirt printed with an anti-sexual harassment message. When a member of the rescue teams infiltrates the crowd to save a woman, he carries a bag containing sheets, flip-flops, first-aid equipment, in case the female is naked or sustained any injury. Yet the person who does the emergency rescue is a female, who also has a similar bag. The male from the rescue team needs to be next to her, protecting her and facilitating her entry. Then there are other men who make a cordon around the whole operation, if it's a big incident.

They try to also identify the harasser (though in incidents of group harassment this is very difficult). They also try to persuade the woman who has been assaulted to file a police report. 'Lots of girls would refuse until they understood that it's their right and the right of other girls for her to claim her rights. Some girls would say, No, I can't, my dad would do this or that [if he finds out], or my mom will be afraid and won't let me go downtown anymore.... A girl who is violently assaulted is totally convinced of her right to notify the police, but she knows that her father will give her a dressing down. So she says she can't report it because last time she told him that some boys harassed her, he said surely you did something wrong. So when a father says this, a girl might let her rights go. Every girl needs family support. She needs a family that she feels is standing behind her, one that will claim her right, not violate her or wrongly accuse her of being the one responsible instead of the victim....', said Janet. In such cases they follow up with psychological support and if the woman agrees, with legal support.

When Shoft Taharosh are not engaged in intervention operations to save women from harassment, they undertake awareness activities, taking advantage of the large crowds that gather in downtown on occasion of the feast. Janet explains that they would talk to young men and women about women's right to their bodies and a girl's right not to be violated just because she's a girl.' To the women, they would say 'No one should lock you up in the house on the Eid, for example, because you're afraid of harassment happening'. To the men they would ask them why they do it, explaining its effect on girls psychologically. They would compare sexual harassment to theft: Just like they might steal a sandwich because they're hungry, they steal a touch' – insisting on the illegality of it.

### **How do they know they have made a difference?**

1. Volunteers: 'when we decided to accept volunteers, we received 200 contacts, 200 CVs... But when you go on a television program and say, I want volunteers, and 200 people answer across the republic – no, that's success. Certainly, the 200 people tell you something.'
2. The women who work with Fouada and Shoft Taharosh, when they're in the women's carriage on the metro [subway] people would recognise them and approach them about sexual harassment: 'Today, for example, Fatima was telling me that people are greeting her and telling her good luck, what you're doing is important – that's a sign of success', explained Janet.
3. Extensive and positive media coverage of the initiative's activities and impact.

**What distinguishes their work from other collective actors?** The ability to be explicit about the different profiles and motives of the nature of sexual assault in Egypt. Janet:

The age group differs during the Eid. We had people aged 8 to 25. Kids see someone older than them doing this, so they do it. Teenagers who are economically and psychologically wrecked do it. They don't see that they're stealing a piece, a touch, a violation. The age group in the square is totally different. There the harassers may be over 30 and married, maybe with kids. On the Eid, people who harass are of a certain educational bracket, no more than a diploma. The harasser we caught the day before yesterday had a BA in Commerce and attended higher education lectures. He was a care supervisor at a home for the disabled run by an Islamist association in Marg. He arranged to go out with his friends, seeing that everyone in the square is an infidel and atheist, against Islamic law, and they deserve to be assaulted. So he went down seeking a heavenly reward. Harassment during the Eid is because of economic, social, and psychological conditions, while here it was for a religious reward, seen as a path to heaven. That happens in the square, the Eid is different from the square.

**Role of men in the movement:** Fathi argues that the revolution did not create the interest or the awareness necessarily, but the spaces for political activism that opened afterwards in addition to the rising rate of harassment encouraged people to join in: before the revolution 25 January 2011, there were men working against harassment. It wasn't – at least, they talked about they rejected it. They didn't know where to direct their efforts. After the revolution, when they found initiatives emerging and after the blatant harassment of girls in the square, the virginity tests, the violation of women in the streets, and girls being stripped, people felt compelled to take action and work. That really made young men look for people who were doing work on the ground, to join them.'

Fathi is keen to emphasise that the impact of sexual assault in society is both on women and men and it is what encourages the latter to join anti-harassment movements: 'The harassment and collective assault that happens in the street is in itself a way to break girls, so they don't go out. It also breaks the guys, since they now face this issue of whether to [risk] going out with women' – in the sense that female companions may also be subjected to violence.

Fathi stresses that a man's personal experience of seeing a woman assaulted is a strong motivator for activism: 'believe me, there's not one person [man] we've dealt with who isn't a different person before and after a personal experience. I mean, you take a person and ask him, why do you harass, it's wrong, this woman's like your sister. He'll tell you, because she was wearing this or that. He'll give you reasons all day. But take the same guy, a guy who's

feeling good and is walking with a girl until someone harasses her. Then talk to him again after that.'

Men play a key role in the movement in particular in the rescue operations. They themselves have been, according to Fathi, subject to sexual assaults when trying to save women. In such contexts, perpetrators of sexual assault against men are not doing it for sexual pleasure, and they are not gay. The perpetrators are intentionally trying to prevent the rescuers from saving the woman who is being assaulted by sexually harassing the men, often by groping them on their behinds. Fathi elaborated that men who are assaulted react by getting very mad, lose control and fight with the assaulter, instead of going after the woman who is being assaulted.

Janet has a different perspective on what motivates men to join anti-sexual harassment movements. She suggests that it is out of a man's respect for a woman's basic human rights, whether there is a personal connection or not 'some of the men who joined them as volunteers 'have sisters and some don't, but they believe that a girl has rights and that she's a human being and shouldn't be violated'.

**What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which they work?** The gravity of the situation mobilises people to unify fronts, argues Janet adding that 'It's really bad. The increase in assaults on the streets – the goal of that is to push us back the home, anyone who helps on this issue, on this phenomenon, we should definitely work with'. However she notes that in practice, on the ground, the situation is more complicated:

Success is hindered when we forget the problem we're supposed to be working on and focus on whether the logo of your institution will go before mine, or the logo of that initiative will be before mine. I think some of these problems are silly. If there aren't people around who are able to contain and deal with that quickly, the collective action won't work. On the Shoft Taharosh initiative, we realised that the problem was huge. One of the most important reasons for its success is that everyone forgot about themselves. Fouada Watch was involved, the Heya Foundation, the [Shar'ia Wa'i] initiative, the Teh Marboutah movement – everyone came together and worked, forgetting about their own initiatives and talking only about Shoft Taharosh.

**Local links** (in relation to state and non-state actors) i.e. government machineries, other social movements, coalitions, political parties, civil society organisations) and nature of collaboration:

In revolutionary events where activists are gathering against the regime in large numbers, Shoft Taharosh co-ordinated with the much bigger group Qowah ded al-Taharosh [Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment] to synchronise their efforts.

## 2.11 Tehmarboota<sup>13</sup>

Information based on an interview with Iman Darwish, co-founder.

Contact person(s): Iman Darwish  
Telephone: 01068249971  
Email: [emydarwish@yahoo.com](mailto:emydarwish@yahoo.com)  
Webpage: [www.facebook.com/tehtarboota](http://www.facebook.com/tehtarboota)  
Address: 28 Adi St. Cairo

**How does the actor describe itself?** Initiative.

---

<sup>13</sup> In the Arabic language 'tehtarboota' is a letter which, grammatically, when placed at the end of a word makes it feminine.

**Date of inception:** November 2012.

**Reason for formation:** Following the ousting of President Mubarak, Essam Sharaf was appointed prime minister; he appointed new governorates and none of the new appointees were women, a decision which he justified on the basis that women cannot handle such roles, which have a security element to them. Iman explained that the initiative emerged in reaction to exclusionary policies against women: 'we felt that we are put in an inferior position and that we are marginalised. This was a compromising situation because we participated in the revolution and we fought against security forces and were never weak or needed protection. So, we felt that it is important to have an initiative that tells people the importance of women in the society.'

**How did the group form?** The group comprises women activists who have a history of working on women's issues since before the revolution. They meet in one of the meetings of the Alliance for Arab Women (AAW), the NGO where Iman works and during their preparation of work for AAW they thought of having a new initiative that should be independent of AAW.

**Name of founding organisations and their representatives:** The Alliance for Arab women AAW, an NGO headed by Hoda Badran and Fatma Khfaga.

**Leadership of the collective actor:** Iman, the founder of the initiative is an activist who participated in many women's groups and initiatives that appeared after the revolution. The problem that Iman complained about is the struggle to maintain the autonomy of the initiative from the organisation which hosts it (AAW) and to genuinely have the youth generation leading it, trying new approaches and new ways of working. The second person who founded this initiative is Basem Yousry, an artist and a director and he is the one who gave the initiative its name, and also the one who did a jingle, a one-minute song on the initiative.

**Membership:** 'We do not have a lot of members yet because we still a new initiative. We have male participants most of them are young men, often in their first year in the college. The numbers of male participants who range from 18 to 20 are higher than other groups. They usually young men who were participating in the revolution and were beside us during the revolution and saw that we women participated with them on an equal foot and that we deserve to have our rights. Some of them consider us as their sisters that we should have our place in society', explained Iman.

**Legal status:** They are not registered and they have their meetings in AAW.

**Organisational set up:** The core group are a group of 4 or 5 volunteers with other members serving as volunteers.

**Activities:** They first launched the initiative on Facebook then they began work on the ground. First they had a three-day workshop for their volunteers to collect a number of volunteers to move with. They did posters and stickers with their name (funded by AAW), and a song to make people know them. Then they began to participate in sit-ins by their name. In the sit-in that was on December 2012 to reject the constitution, the initiative had its own tent in the square and this was the first time to be on the ground with its name. Then they began to work with other initiatives such as Fouada Watch on the campaign *dostorkom batel* (your constitution is void). They have also participated in several initiatives to address sexual harassment, by joining forces with other groups, such as Fouada Watch and Shoft Taharosh.

**How do they know they have made a difference?** 'We felt that we made a difference when I found a little boy, a son of my friends, was singing our song. For me this meant that we can leave an imprint in the minds of the new generation; that when a boy grows up and this is one of his childhood songs, I think this will make a difference in his perception of women and will change the collective awareness of a complete generation if we continue on this way'.

**What distinguishes their work from other collective actors?** Iman argues that what distinguishes them is their approach of working on a long-term goal of changing the collective awareness of people on women and that they aim to make people recognise the importance of the role women play in society without forcing it upon them but letting them discover this for themselves. One core idea is of leaving words in a sentence without *Teh*, so people when reading the sentence will feel that the sentence has something wrong and they automatically will put the *Teh* by themselves; by this way they understand that women should be in all positions in society as they are in every sentence they add *Teh* to. Examples of these words: clever lawyer, good doctor, etc. [*Teh* at the end of the word in Arabic makes it feminine].

As Iman clarifies, 'this will let people accept the presence of women in all positions in the society.' Basically, the idea of the initiative is to shed light on the importance of the existence of women in the decision-making places and their rights to be a governor, president and to be in all positions, and to stress that the marginalisation that the government force on women is not acceptable.

They differ than others in their approach that they see that the solution of most of the problems that women face can be solved if 'strong women who can defend women's rights can access to decision-making positions, even sexual harassment and violence can be ended through strict laws if women are in these places because women activists have worked a lot on the street on awareness but nothing really effective has happened'.

**Role of men in the movement** Basically, men are participating in all the activities of the initiative but till now they have been the ones who designed the logo for the initiative, and who do the graffiti for the campaign (*dostorkom bateh*) and the graffiti on the marginalisation of women, and the designs of the stickers and posters of the initiative.

**What enables or impedes collective action on the issues on which they work?** Iman suggested that the greatest challenges they face in their work with other initiatives are the personal disputes 'if one of the partners put a banner that is bigger than another of the partner initiative, it becomes a problem, and there is competition over control and visibility. Working on ground is different than just saying that I accept working with others, a lot of problems then emerge'.

**Local links:** Iman suggested that many of the members are active in other movements in their personal capacities but they hope to be able to forge partnerships with other actors in the future.

**Member in any international network/group and its role in their work:** No

### 3 Analysis of key findings from database

The nature of men's agency, collective action and gender-based violence across the selected 11 case studies was examined through an analytical framework adapted from previous work on leadership, collective action undertaken in Egypt and Jordan in 2010. Building on the hypothesis of the Developmental Leadership programme on agency and structure in collective action, a number of variables have been developed with the late Adrian Leftwich examining, for example:

- which factors (agential and structural), shape the formation of collective actors; and
- which factors influence the relative success or failure of these coalitions. These factors were adapted for the study of the youth initiatives on gender-based violence in post-Mubarak Egypt and variables associated with men's association also added. The analytical framework and its findings are described below.

#### 3.1 Factors (agential and structural) shaping the formation of collective actors

1. A 'trigger' event (this may have been a threat, a challenge, an opportunity or an event).

The overwhelming majority of the formation of new initiatives was in a direct response to an impending threat associated with a particular political moment. For example:

- In the Arab Women Uprising, its creation was a direct response to the pressing need to document women's experiences of a critical juncture in their history, that of revolutionary revolt.
- In the Case of Bassma, it was a direct response to the sexual assault of its founder in Tahrir and a sense of urgency of the need to do something.
- In the case of Shoft Taharosh, it was a direct sense of threat to the need to protect women in crowded spaces in downtown Cairo during feast days.
- In the case of Fouada Watch, it was directly associated with the inauguration of a new president of Egypt.

2. The capacity to respond

Did (and why and how did) the leaders/elites see and seize the opportunity/moment to respond to the 'trigger'? What enabled them to do so? In most of the cases, their ability to respond to these critical threats was made possible through:

- Pre-existing networks of friends, comrades and colleagues;
- The ability to mobilise large numbers through social media and Facebook;
- A repertoire of socially and politically active individuals who tend to respond to collective initiatives with different faces, in other words, they are committed to causes more so than individuals and therefore 'circulate' according to issue.

3. Men's involvement in these initiatives

Men's involvement, for the most part, was driven by their personal empathy with the problem of sexual harassment. In many cases, many of the men who joined or formed initiatives had felt shock, pain and especially anger at their colleagues, companions, sisters, friends and female relatives being exposed to sexual harassment. In other cases, they had personally felt the weight of what it means for female family friends to have their mobility constrained as a consequence of increased harassment. As one man wrote in Nefssi (see Section 2.8), he

wished he did not have to escort his sister every time she has to leave the house. In other instances men were mobilised to act because they believed that a fundamental right that had flourished during the uprising against Mubarak, that of women protesting side by side with men was being seriously violated, and they felt a personal and political commitment to fight that. It is perhaps this personal element that drove men to mobilise around sexual harassment as opposed to, for example, a campaign on women's right to political office in government where men's involvement has been virtually non-existent.

- In five out of the 11 initiatives, men played a pioneering role as founders. Interestingly, all five initiatives that have men as founders also have non-feminist names, such as Nefssi (I want to/I wish), Shoft Taharosh (Harassment seen), Kat' eidak (Cut off your hands), Bassma (Imprint), Shar'ia Wa'i (an Alert/Aware Street). It seems that when men are involved as founders, they choose names that reflect the cause rather than the gender identity of the founders.
- All eleven initiatives had a high level of men's participation (one of the premises of their selection in the first place). However, their activism has been particularly concentrated in a number of activities, first and foremost, the patrol and rescue operations, second, graffiti work, art and media production.
- It seems that there is a positive correlation between a gender inclusive movement and men's participation. In other words, the more the initiative represents and identifies itself as one working on citizenship, social justice, sexual harassment on the streets, it is likely to appeal to a greater cohort of men than an initiative that explicitly identifies itself in feminist terms and as a woman's group.

#### *4. Empirical characteristics of the 'founders'*

The socioeconomic, occupational and educational background of the agents involved in initiating the organisation or coalition?

This was one of the most difficult dimensions of the research to answer because with most initiatives, interviewees were reluctant to share data on leaders or members. With the exception of a small minority, most initiatives were keen to emphasise that there is no leadership, that the structure is horizontal. However:

- By and large all the founders of these movements are elites, they enjoy class and socioeconomic privilege. The only exception is Shar'ia Wa'i whose founders are closer in their backgrounds to the bulk of the population.
- In terms of gender, out of the 11 initiatives only two do not have men as founders. This is a striking element of the leadership of these initiatives that have often been the exclusive realm of women.
- In terms of age, all of the initiatives are predominantly youth-led (age below 30) even when older women and men join.
- All the founders are highly educated (at least undergraduate degree, with cases of doctoral degrees).
- Most of the founders are professionals (mostly white collar, though Shar'ia Wa'i is an exception).
- All the founders are volunteers who have strong values on promoting and supporting a culture of volunteerism.



### *5. Empirical characteristics of the members*

The socioeconomic, occupational and educational background of the agents involved in initiating the organisation or coalition?

Again, there was extreme difficulty in capturing this information because various collective actors had not analysed their membership base, and because members often drop in and out of initiatives in a way that is sometimes difficult to monitor.

It is important to distinguish between two kinds of members in these initiatives:

- Members as followers of an initiative on Facebook. In the case of the Arab Women's Uprising for example, their entire constituency is their online membership because the initiative itself is an e-platform for citizen engagement. Accordingly it is very difficult for them to analyse their membership in view of the fact that some people do not necessarily reveal their true identity.
- In all the initiatives, all the members are volunteers, their numbers vary between 40 and 50, with a majority being in the age range 18–30 and with some initiatives enjoying half or more male membership and others where men's involvement is about a third. It seems that the majority also come from the middle and upper middle class.

### *6. Prior networks*

Were there any prior links or relationships between the various leaders of the coalition through formal or informal networks?

Pre-existing networks proved to be critically important for the formation of these coalitions. The two most important forms of networks that contributed to the formation of these collective initiatives are:

- Networks of friends, colleagues and people personally known to the founders;
- Networks on Facebook which attract like-minded youth to join.

## **3.2 Factors influencing the relative success of these initiatives**

### *1. Nature and scope of the issue*

The aim or goal of the organisation or coalition – how 'big' and general was it. For instance to change social attitudes on a key issue or principle may be thought of as 'big' and long term; but to catch harassers in the square on a particular occasion (the feast/Eid) is smaller and more specific.

- The initiatives that have the most success in achieving their objective were the ones that were very targeted in their interventions. At the time that this research was conducted these were: (1) Shoft Taharosh; (2) OpAntiSH; and (3) Bassma. In all three initiatives they had a very specific mission: to patrol the public squares and streets, stop harassers and rescue women. At the end of the day, they achieved their immediate task, which can be assessed in terms of the women they rescued.
- However, it is notable that they have contributed to a change of social norms and values by showing male youth commitment in playing a role in what is considered a 'woman's problem'. They have effectively de-ghettoised sexual harassment from being a woman's issue/fault to a broader one touching on all citizens (more of this will be captured in the report on case studies of effective interventions).

## *2. Formal institutional context*

Is the formal political institutional structure an open, hierarchical democratic, closed or authoritarian one? Is it federal, unitary? What kind of spaces (open, closed, claimed) exist for different actors to engage in?

The institutional context in which these initiatives are working is characterised by two factors with opposite influence on their activism.

- On the one hand, the change of leadership from Mubarak to Morsi did not lead to a change of regime, which remained highly authoritarian and unresponsive to youth initiatives (including these ones) and calls for change and accountability.
- On the other hand, the Egyptian revolution of 2011 has unleashed energies in expressing their voices and being proactive in claiming their rights as citizens. It is important to note however, that the new revolutionary fervour has not created the interest in activism on sexual harassment, since many women and men have been harbouring much anger and a desire to act on this issue well before January 2011. However, what it did was to provide them with the spaces and platforms through which they become active. These had not existed during Mubarak's era.

## *3. Informal institutional context and strength*

This would include cultural dimensions, customary systems of power and authority, informal institutions, prevailing ideologies and belief systems as well as all informal mechanisms for exercising hidden or visible power.

- The fact that all eleven institutions are informal has worked to their advantage, in the sense of keeping the structures fluid, and allowing them to avoid government intervention.
- However, being informal also means that they cannot take advantage of some of the benefits that come with being formal structures, such as applying for funds.
- The prevailing ideologies, in particular the rise of political Islam has worked to the youth initiatives' disadvantage in terms of intensifying the discourse about women being responsible for the harassment they face. These youth initiatives have worked against the stream when they insist it is never the women's fault, they never deserve to be assaulted.

## *4. The nature and power/influence of the 'opposition'.*

Who is against the aims and goals of these initiatives? What, if anything, are its links with formal and informal features?

- The actors, institutions and networks through which opposition is exercised are extremely opaque. This lack of clarity over who your opponents really are has major implications on the success of these initiatives in addressing the underlying power dynamics and configurations behind what they are fighting on the street.

## *5. Vision and goals.*

Is there a shared vision, ideology, set of goals and/or interests, or is it a compromise or accommodation of views? A feature of coalitions is that their constituent parts may have significant or minor differences. Does the coalition therefore congeal around a compromise position, or is there unanimity?

- There is a common vision and set of goals across all eleven initiatives which has enabled a high degree of collaboration. There is consensus among the groups for example on the vision: making public spaces free from harassment. Second, there is a shared belief in an unqualified rejection of harassment against women, irrespective of what they are wearing, who they are with or what time of the day they are out.
- However, there is an ideological difference within the group which goes beyond strategy or tactics and has to do with political orientation. Bassma and Kat' Eidak pride themselves on being apolitical actors where 'people leave at the door their political affiliations' where they neither criticise the Muslim Brotherhood, nor the ruling regime. They engage with sexual harassment as a socially motivated phenomenon, that is, emanating from the values and mores prevalent in society.
- On the other hand, there are some movements such as Shoft Taharosh and OpAntiSH which make explicit the links between the powers that be (the Muslim Brotherhood regime) and their responsibility for socially but also politically motivated sexual harassment (in other words as a mechanism to intimidate women activists not to participate in public protests). They have openly criticised the Muslim Brotherhood and their ruling party for failing to take measures to put an end to it.
- In effect the ideological standpoint regarding the Muslim Brotherhood in power is sufficiently divisive to prevent the amalgamation of several organisations into one actor, however, it is not so deep as to prevent collaboration and cooperation between the various initiatives most of the time.

#### 6. Networks.

Role of networks, formal and informal, internal/external in gaining access to knowledge, support, influence: what implications for effectiveness of the coalition?

- The role of pre-existing networks is key to the success of these initiatives. They have self-selected the core groups which means that people find it easy to work together
- They have relied on their repertoire of friends, contacts and acquaintances to mobilise support and establish contacts with the media and various political parties and movements.

#### 7. Framing: impact of 'framing' of the issue on outcome

This is one of the most important factors in explaining the success of youth initiatives on gender-based violence in public spaces. Framing of the message appropriately has allowed these initiatives to make great strides in reaching out to ordinary citizens, where women's coalitions during Mubarak's era had failed:

- Messages are framed in street language that uses popular idioms, sayings and expressions.
- Messages are often conveyed not in words but in images, whether through pictures or graffiti.
- Messages appeal to people's sense of dignity, fairness and mores.
- Messages are framed to make people empathise with the victims of assault, portraying them as *your* sister, *your* mother, *your* daughter

### *8. Men's involvement in the activities*

This is yet another of the most important factors explaining their success. The leadership and involvement of men in these initiatives has served a number of crucial factors:

- Men's involvement has served to de-ghettoise sexual harassment from being a woman's problem to being a people's issue.
- Men's presence side by side with women has increased their numbers and their outreach.
- Men have been successful at times in physically preventing women activists protesting against harassment from being harassed themselves.
- Men have served as positive role models, challenging the notion that it is the masculine norm to harass women.
- They have also contributed to the framing of issues in a way that speaks to the wider citizenry, in particular men.

### *9. Strategies pursued*

What strategies are used to promote the goals of the coalition/organisation? Open public campaigning? Backstairs politics? Use of informal links and networks?

This is the third most important factor explaining the success of the initiatives. The street strategies used have enabled them to gain credibility and visibility. These have included:

- security patrols and rescue operations
- the use of graffiti, art, song, and catchy slogans
- the use of human chains
- male peer-to peer dialogues
- media outreach
- use of electronic media to disseminate news and recruit new members.

### *10. Learning and adaptation*

Is the coalition open to learning and adapting ideas, policies, programmes, strategies from prior experiences or other external or internal campaigns and programmes? This is one of the weakest elements of the existing initiatives. There is no evidence to suggest that there is collective thinking between different actors, nor substantial experience sharing. The challenges are:

- The highly volatile political environment in which the initiatives thrive, which makes them constantly responding to new threats and challenges, with very little time made possible for reflection.
- The fear of ideas and strategies being 'stolen'.
- A bias towards accepting ideas coming from a contending group.

However, many of these initiatives' leaders and members have expressed the need for more opportunities for learning and networking with other initiatives.

### *11. Sustainability of the work (going beyond a one-off event, organisational and financial sustainability)*

- One of the weaknesses in the current initiatives is that some are at heart time-bound campaigns on very specific issues. They need to reinvent themselves and set new goals if they are to survive as actors. Moreover, the way in which founders and members keep on moving from one initiative to another depending on where the

energy and the urgency take them means that initiatives can sometimes quietly die. Some of the initiatives (Bassma, Tehmarboutah, Kat' Eida Cut off your hands) are keen on registering with the Ministry of Social Solidarity as foundations in order to assume a legal character. Becoming a foundation or NGO is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it may contribute to the organisational sustainability of a collective actor, on another, it may lead to the erosion of the volunteer culture and create new disconnects between the actor and the street as the organisation assumes a professional character.

- In view of the fact that nine out of eleven initiatives were self-funded and rely on the benevolence of volunteers, some initiatives may discontinue as a consequence of insufficient resources to undertake their work. On the other hand, an injection of large funds may also kill the initiative if it creates competition over resources and if the management of funds becomes too overwhelming and time-consuming.

# Conclusion

In line with previous studies examined by BRIDGE (forthcoming) involving men's agency in collective efforts to tackle gender-based violence, it is very difficult to attribute success or failure in efforts to elicit change to one or two specific variables because of the highly complex contexts in which such phenomena exist. However, the evidence emerging from these eleven case studies shows that where men have been involved in tackling gender-based violence through collective action in the Egyptian context, there are perceptions from among the activists, women and men, that they have made some difference in their ability to influence, which has been corroborated with evidence on the ground. These positive differences are:

1. They have contributed to the framing of the issue of sexual harassment as one that affects society as a whole rather than being a woman's issue;
2. Their peer-to-peer engagements on sexual harassment have allowed them to reach out to men where they were previously excluded by, or non-receptive to, women-led awareness initiatives;
3. Without men's involvement, the number of activists participating in protests, marches, sit-ins and other events on sexual harassment would have been significantly less, which has an impact on their influencing power;
4. Men's participation in security patrols strengthened the efforts by women involved in such initiatives and helped protect them from becoming targets themselves of assault;
5. Men's involvement in the security patrols also contributed to the physical rescue of women who were being sexually assaulted, in particular where the use of force and overcoming large crowds was needed. Their success helped contribute to a shift in social norms about the need to support such initiatives.

It seems that men's involvement in initiatives on gender-based violence is one of the most positive developments in gender justice work that has been witnessed in contemporary Egypt after the revolution. However, challenges do remain, some of the most critical to have faced men's involvement in gender-based violence initiatives were:

1. Differences over gender division of labour. Whereas some initiatives such as Bassma and Kat' Eidak both advocate that women should not be involved in the security patrols in order not to put them at risk of sexual harassment and violence, other initiatives such as Shoft Taharosh and OpAntiSH believe that women are able to defend themselves and are critical for the success of the rescue operations.
2. In some initiatives, interviewees have confided that it is important that men's participation and leadership does not make an excuse for marginalising women's voices and experiences, particularly in a patriarchal context such as Egypt where men's voices carry more legitimacy than women's (for the most part).

Moreover, there seemed to be a clear correlative relationship between the power of eliciting positive social change on tackling sexual harassment and the strength of collective action. The positive social change was not witnessed in any legislative reform or policy change in view of the fact that these areas tended to be closed spaces for citizen influence in the current political environment. However, it was perceived in terms of visibility of the issue, the

increasing number of men and women who want to become active and take part in initiatives and the successes they have encountered in rescue operations.

The perceptions of interviewees, as well as the evidence, suggests that the size of the initiative is a very important determinant of the quality of the intervention itself in the following ways:

1. Initiatives such as OpAntiSH, Shoft Taharosh and Bassma tend to have greater visibility when working in the street because the groups are larger.
2. Initiatives that have large numbers tend to have better outreach in the street by covering greater territory.
3. Large initiatives develop organisationally into several fronts/areas of work such as HarassMap, Bassma, OpAntiSH and Shoft Taharosh because they are able to develop a more elaborate division of labour. This in turn increases their weight and ability to influence through different channels.
4. Collaboration between initiatives working on sexual harassment, political parties and other actors tends to strengthen the legitimacy of the issue as one that is a national priority.

However, collective action has been undermined by:

1. Power struggles between different groups/cliques over visibility and attribution of success to their individual efforts rather than common efforts.
2. Ideological differences on whether sexual harassment is a political phenomenon that requires action against the government or whether it is a social phenomenon for which society is responsible.
3. Absence of leadership across the initiatives that would respect the diversity among the actors, but provided a unified front that takes advantage of the resources inherent in a common movement in terms of numbers, resources, skills and networks.

Certainly the greatest factor that will make a change in the level of women's exposure to sexual harassment in the streets is the presence of a gender-sensitive and effective police force. Vigilante groups such as the ones mentioned in this database cannot substitute for a state-sponsored police force. However, at the very least, these groups are saving lives, as well as actively challenging normative social values that condone sexual harassment against women. In the forthcoming report on successful interventions on gender-based violence involving men, these dynamics will be examined at greater length.

## **Annex    Template for information compilation for database on collective actors working on gender-based violence in Egypt**

Name of collective social actor:

Contact persons:

Telephone:

Email:

Webpage:

Address:

How does the actor describe itself: A social movement? Coalition? Network? Why?

Date of inception (and circumstances around its establishment, i.e. nature of political moment):

Reason for formation:

Name of founding organisations and their representatives:

Leadership of the collective actor (gender, age, educational background, political affiliation, professional background...):

Membership (who, numbers, men/women):

Role of membership:

How did the group form (previous relations, common agenda, through a liaison person):

Legal status:

Organisational set up:

Activities:

What would you say distinguishes your work from other collective actors?

What is the role of men in your initiative?

Sources of funding (in the Egyptian country case study this question was asked at the end of the interview informally in order to minimise discomfort):

Local links (in relation to state and non-state actors) i.e. government machineries, other social movements, coalitions, political parties, civil society organisations) and nature of collaboration:

International links (i.e. member in any international network/group) and its role in their work:



# References

- Ali, K. (2011) 'Precursors to the Egyptian Revolution', *IDS Bulletin* 43.1: 16–25
- Barker, G.; Contreras, M.; Heilman, B.; Singh, A.; Verma, R. and Nascimento, M. (2011) *Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*, International Centre for Research on Women, [www.icrw.org/publications/evolving-men](http://www.icrw.org/publications/evolving-men) (accessed 7 July 2013)
- Barker, G.; Ricardo, C. and Nascimento, M. (2007) 'Engaging Men and Boys in Changing Gender Based Inequity in Health: Evidence from Programme Interventions', *World Health Organisation*, [www.who.int/gender/documents/Engaging\\_men\\_boys.pdf](http://www.who.int/gender/documents/Engaging_men_boys.pdf) (accessed 26 July 2013)
- BRIDGE (forthcoming) 'Review of Research on Collective Action and Engaging Men to Tackle Gender-Based Violence', Brighton: IDS
- Esplen, E (2006) *Engaging Men in Gender Equality: Positive Strategies and Approaches*, BRIDGE Bibliography No 15, IDS, [www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/BB15Masculinities.pdf](http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/BB15Masculinities.pdf) (accessed 7 July 2013)
- Kortam, H. (2013) 'HarassMap: More than Half of Sexual Harassment Takes the Form of Groping', [www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/04/01/harassmap-more-than-half-of-sexual-harassment-takes-the-form-of-groping/](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/04/01/harassmap-more-than-half-of-sexual-harassment-takes-the-form-of-groping/), *Daily News*, 1 April
- Ricardo, C. et al. (2013) *Engaging Boys and Young Men in the Prevention of Sexual Violence: A Systematic and Global Review of Evaluated Interventions*, Promundo, [www.svri.org/menandboys.pdf](http://www.svri.org/menandboys.pdf) (accessed 7 July 2013)
- Tadros, M. (2012a) *The Perilous Slide Towards Islamic Dictatorship*, Opendemocracy, [www.opendemocracy.net/5050/mariz-tadros/perilous-slide-towards-islamist-dictatorship-in-egypt](http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/mariz-tadros/perilous-slide-towards-islamist-dictatorship-in-egypt) (accessed 7 July 2013)
- Tadros, M. (2012b) 'Paper prepared for the Council on Foreign Relations', London (unpublished)
- Tadros, M. (2012c) 'The Pulse of the Arab Revolt', *IDS Bulletin* 43.1: 1–15
- Tadros, M. (2012d) 'Battling with Increased Gender-Based Violence in Egypt's Transition', Report on the Scoping Workshop, Cairo November 2012
- Tadros, M. (2011) 'Scoping of Most Pressing Issues Facing Egyptian Women', report presented to SDC, Egypt, May 2011



Brighton BN1 9RE

T +44 (0)1273 606261

F +44 (0)1273 621202

E [ids@ids.ac.uk](mailto:ids@ids.ac.uk)

[www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)



**UKaid**

from the British people