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<https://www.middleeastobserver.org/2017/01/05/a-recent-survey-says-al-sisi-popularity-declined-by-50-in-his-2nd-year-in-office/>

A recent survey says Al-Sisi's popularity declined by 50% in his 2nd. Year in office

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A recent survey by a non-governmental organization close to the current regime has unveiled that the Al-Sisi's popularity declined by 50% during his second year in office.

The Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research (Baseera), a non-governmental center, has conducted a survey which showed that Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's popularity declined to the half in his second year of rule.

Al-Sisi reached power through a military coup in 2013 against Egypt's first democratically elected President Mohamed Morsi.

Al-Sisi, the former minister of defense, resigned from the military on March 26, 2014 to run for the presidency.

Baseera center stated that the survey was conducted on a sample of 1515 citizens at the age category of 18 years and above, covering all the Egyptian governorates by using home telephones and mobiles.

In addition, all the interviews were implemented between 12 to 15 December 2016. The response percentage to the survey reached almost 42% and the error in results was less than 3%.

The survey asked about the worst thing that happened in 2016: “24% said the increase in prices, 25% said it was terrorist attacks, 34% said it was the bombing of the Coptic church in al-Abbasiya, 8% said they don’t know, 2% said nothing, and the rest didn’t answer the question.”

The survey also included a question”What are the decisions that you want al-Sisi to issue in the new year?”

The answers were:”decreasing the prices by 35%, ending unemployment and creating job opportunities for the youth by 11%, counter-terrorism, speed up the criminal verdicts, justice, the rule of law by 4%, improving the security conditions, safety and stability by 3%, while 13% said they don’t know, and the rest declined giving a reply.”

In fact, observers consider Baseera Center, as one of the public polls agencies that are close to the current regime. Baseera is also headed by Maged Othman, the former Minister of Telecommunication and the Chairman of the Egyptian Cabinet of Ministries’ Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) during Mubarak’s era.

Recently, public opinion surveys have spread on al-Sisi’s performance in ruling the country. The most prominent one was organized by pro-Sisi media figures but the majority of the polls unveiled a remarkable decline in his popularity.

Last August,Ahmed Moussa, a pro-Sisi T.V. host, asked his Twitter followers to say whether they would re-elect the general-turned-president for another term in office.”

However, to Moussa’s surprise, the poll result was “80% of respondents – about 1,500 people – voted ‘No’“

Later, the TV host deactivated his Twitter account, claiming on Facebook page that it had been hacked.

Moreover, he also insisted that 90% had responded in favor of reelecting al-Sisi for another term in office.

The pro-Sisi T.V presenter shut down his Twitter account after an improvised poll results on Abdel Fattah al-Sisi explicitly embarrassed the T.V presenter and the regime as well.

The Egyptian social media activists commented on the closure of Ahmed Moussa's Twitter account, saying that he ran away in shame after the poll backfired.

In fact, the popularity of al-Sisi, who was once viewed as the savior of the country by part of the Egyptians, started to fade away in 2016.

Last August, a recent field study for the Egyptian Center for Media and Public Opinion Takamol Masr found that 74% of the Egyptians refuse the continuation of the al-Sisi regime while 11% only wanted the regime to continue and 15% don't care about what is happening on the Egyptian scene.

The rejection of the al-Sisi regime is high within the age categories that are less than 40 reaching 81%, and it is relatively close for both males and females, according to the "Takamol Masr" study.

In the same context, the Economist has highlighted al-Sisi as the one who is responsible for the ruining of Egypt in its editorial titled: The Ruining of Egypt...Repression and the incompetence of al-Sisi are stoking the second uprising."

The magazine said at the end of its editorial that the demographic, economic and social pressures in Egypt are relentlessly increasing and that al-Sisi is incapable of providing the sustainable stability to Egypt, the political regime also needs to be reopened.

The magazine also considered al-Sisi's withdrawal from the political life is the hope gate for the Egypt. The Economist continued saying, "Egypt's political system needs to be reopened. A good place to start would be for al-Sisi to announce that he will not stand again for election in 2018."

Since the military coup in 2013 led by al-Sisi against Egypt's first democratically elected president Mohamed Morsi, al-Sisi has tightened his control over the Egypt's media.

As a result, the military regime launched a massive crackdown against any opposition which has included the closing of TV channels, newspapers and the arrests of journalists.

In addition to the unprecedented economic deterioration that hit the country under his reign.

Tourism and foreign investments, the two sources for foreign currency, have declined as a result of political instability and lack of security.

As a result, the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) devalued the Egyptian currency in March. But the Egyptian pound devaluation didn't solve the crisis.

The devaluation of the Egyptian pound and the shortage of foreign currency have flourished the black market on the currency expense and led to inflation.

Inflation has reached its highest rate throughout 8 years -exceeding 19%.

In this context, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has chosen to take the Egyptian people through the hard path by seeking to secure a loan from the International Monetary Fund(IMF).

Egypt' s al-Sisi has worked to fulfill the IMF economic reform program to secure the loan.

Last November, the International Monetary Fund's executive board has approved Egypt's request to secure \$12 billion loan facility after Egypt met its requirements.

On August 30 Egypt started its first steps towards the loan when Egypt's parliament approved a long-awaited law introducing a value-added tax (VAT) of 13 %, rising to 14% in the next fiscal year.

On November 3, the Central Bank of Egypt floated the Egyptian pound and gave up trying to peg the currency to the US dollar allowing it to devalue by almost half.

On November 4, Egypt took another unprecedented decision, which has always been abandoned by former leaders in fear of public unrest, to cut subsidies for fuel leading to jump in prices, in addition to the introduction of the value-added tax to raise revenues.

All these economic policies have added up to the Egyptian people's struggle in satisfying their daily needs as the prices of basic goods hiked in an unprecedented way.

In addition to the drug shortage which has reached a crisis stage after the government floated the pound. The Egyptian government put strict regulation on drug prices, so pharmaceutical companies haven't been able to raise prices.

On the other hand, the companies must pay about twice as much now to import the medicines or their ingredients. Their only alternative, some say, is to reduce imports and set restrictions on distribution, which they have done.