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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Bypassing the regime's crackdown on public protests: Egyptians' individual mobilization into a pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy in the aftermath of al-Aqsa Flood Operation

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Abstract: Drawing on the aftermath of al-Aqsa Flood Operation against the Zionist blockade on Gaza in 2023, this study examines how Egyptian supporters of the Palestinian cause overcame the regime's repression of public protests through individual mobilization into cyber-advocacy campaigns on social media. Building on scholarship addressing youth political mobilization, the Palestinian cause has been the epicenter of social activism and political engagement in public sphere in contestation of the legitimacy of successive Egyptian regimes. Although the Sisi regime has embarked on arrest campaigns against pro-Palestinian protestors, social media's legacy in the Arab uprisings as a reliable and secure platform of political mobilization prompted Egyptians to individually engage into cyberadvocacy campaigns on Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok in support for Palestine. Examining social media outlets since 7 October 2023, Egyptians' pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy has enabled them to show support toward Gazans, expose Arab leaders' complicity with the Zionist regime, and defy the Zionist narrative about the right to Palestine as a homeland for Jews. Utilizing Social Movement Studies (SMTs)' notion of individual mobilization and relying on the critical discourse analysis of al-Sisi speeches, the content analysis of pro-Palestinian campaigns, and the author's interviews with 58 Egyptian activists, the study highlighted a three-layered pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy which consisted of raising public awareness of the Zionist human rights' violation committed against Palestinians, debunking the Zionist myths of fighting terrorism in Gaza, and boycotting pro-Zionist brands.

Keywords: Individual Mobilization – Palestine – SMTs - Collective Emotions – Repression – Hamas

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1. Introduction

Since the start of the Israeli genocide against Palestinians in Gaza in October 2023, the Egyptian regime has embarked on arbitrary arrest campaigns against protestors who took part into public demonstrations in support of Gazans. Building on the anti-protest law enacted in 2013 to prohibit citizens' gathering and association in public spheres, the Egyptian Initiative of Personal Rights (2023) and the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedom (2024) reports published in 2023-2024 denounced the Egyptian regime's arrest of 123 citizens for protesting in solidarity with Palestinians, holding public signs, writing anti-regime slogans on the walls, and criticizing the regime's closure of the Rafah crossing. In cracking down on all forms of public criticism against the regime's policy toward Gaza, the government has recourse to paid thugs to raid public demonstrations, attack protestors, arrest them, and illegally detain them at security camps where around 53 citizens remained in pre-trial detention without investigation (Amnesty International, 2024; France24, 2023).

One of the cases which went viral on social media was Mazen Derraz and Ziad Bassiouny's arrest on May 2024 over charges of joining terrorist groups and publishing false news for writing a critical social media content calling the Egyptian Ministry of Education and Higher Education to boycott products supporting the Zionist occupation, facilitate Palestinian students' enrollment to study in Egypt, and denounce the Zionist ground operations in Gaza (Middle East Eye, 2024). Another case was reported about six citizens arrested at home for publicly holding banners calling for the break of the siege on Gaza, the release of detainees, and the opening of the Rafah crossing. Another group of protestors who wrote slogans in solidarity with Palestine and in condemnation of al-Sisi's inertia were arrested by the security forces. On 23 April 2024, women activists, who in solidarity with Palestinian women, organized a sit-in in front of the UN Women office in Maadi, were forcibly dispersed, beaten, and dragged to the police station where cases of sexual harassment and illegal detention have been reported (Middle East Eye, 2024).

While the regime has silenced all forms of expression of public resentment toward the Israeli genocide against Palestinians, it mobilized public protests as a defensive tool to fend off undesired requests from western allies regarding Gaza. In response to Trump's plan of Gazans' displacement to Egypt as an alternative homeland and rebuilding luxurious resorts in Gaza, the regime organized a rallying pro-Palestinian public protest on 31 March 2025 after the Eid prayers where protestors expressed support for the Sisi regime's plan of rebuilding Gaza while keeping inhabitants in their homeland (Middle East Eye, 2025). On another occasion, the Sisi regime, for fear of interruption of the EU financial packages to Egypt and the resulting sociopolitical instability, orchestrated pro-Palestinian demonstrations during the French President's, Emmanuel Macron, visit to Egypt. In coordination with tribal leaders in Sinai, the union of Egyptian tribes and families, and the pro-regime's political parties, the regime organized protests on the border with Gaza in a show of public opinion's support for Palestinians and endorsement of al-Sisi's position toward Palestinians' displacement. All this is in line with the public opinion findings across the region presented in Parid Turlione's contribution to this special issue. Although ordinary citizens are overwhelmingly keen to protest in favor of Palestinians, this can only be done under the control of their authoritarian regimes.

Due to such constraints, it is not surprising that, in breaking with the regime's omnipresent domination on the public sphere, Egyptians' resort to cyberadvocacy as an individual and autonomous pathway of political participation into public affairs, presenting an illustrative case that builds on the Arab uprisings' legacy. During the 25 January 2011 uprising, activists circumvented the state's systematic repression and security limitations through social media outlets as an alternative platform to sustain the revolutionary spark (El Nawawy and Khamis, 2013). The fluid structure and inclusive nature of social media outlets enabled activists to harness their organizational capacities and leadership skills, mobilize further support, coordinate tasks, and assign points of assembly for protestors to follow. Capitalizing on virtual platforms of meetings, activists embarked on an individual pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy in expression of support for Gaza and resentment toward the regime's complicity in the blockade. While the regime's repression has fragmented sociopolitical activism following the dissolution of their structures of mobilization, activists' engagement in support of the Palestinian cause manifested an individual decision, an autonomous step, and personal action which were carried out on

social media independently from any organizational affiliation or collective coordination with groups or networks sharing similar views and goals. It was a random initiative for expressing personal emotions, thoughts, and values which erupted in response to an imperative urge to take a firm position toward developments in Gaza. Yet, the aggregation of different cases of individual engagement into a pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy has unintentionally developed into the random connection of different online users into an unplanned collective mobilization in a virtual public sphere to express views and share content about a common concern. This unintentional virtual gathering of multiple individual cyberadvocacy initiatives is the outcome of similar emotions and common political experiences.

Sharing a common enemy and carrying the collective memory of a similar experience to that of Palestinians during the Zionist occupation of Sinai (1967-1973) in addition to Zionists' persistent claims over Arab territories beyond Palestine, pro-Palestinian Egyptians have actively embarked on an unprecedented education process about Zionism, the Palestinian Nakba, and the historical origins of the establishment of Israel as a western colonial project in the Middle East. In spite of the absence of coordination and communication among users, who would be referred to as activists, individual mobilization into a pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy has been crystalized into a three-pronged outlook that consists of raising public awareness about the Zionist atrocities in Gaza, debunking the Zionist myth about Palestine as a homeland for Jews, and boycotting businesses supportive of the Zionist occupation of Palestinian territories.

While the Palestinian cause has been publicly present during the First and Second Palestinian Intifadas in 1987 and 2000 respectively, it was overshadowed by the US war on Iraq in 2003 and the Arab uprisings in 2010/2011 (alMasri, 2021; Arab Center, 2022). It was only with al-Aqsa Flood Operation on 7 October 2023 that the Palestinian cause has been publicly revived among the pro-Palestinian youth in Egypt, following the failure of the uprising to achieve its goals of democratization, social equity, and human dignity, under the regime's heavy-handed repression on all forms of political participation in the public sphere. Considering the particularity of al-Aqsa Flood Operation in capturing massive public attention and reviving the Palestinian cause among young Egyptians, this study argues that the Sisi regime's arbitrary repression on all forms of public expression has prompted Egyptians to individually mobilize into a pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy to evade the regime's retaliation. In doing so, this study answers the following question: How did pro-Palestinian Egyptians respond to the Zionist genocide in Gaza following al-Aqsa Flood Operation within a politically restricted context? To answer this question, the study draws on Social Movements Theories (SMTs)'s individual mobilization following transformative events and ensued collective emotions within a repressive context. In this respect, the study argues that, despite the regime's repressive nature and passivity toward Palestinians' sufferings, Egyptians have individually and independently engaged into a three-pronged cyberadvocacy to protest the intensity and amplitude of the Zionist genocide in Gaza as a transformative event. The Israeli disproportionate response with systematic ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Gaza combined with the reinstatement of an authoritarian regime following the deposition of the Muslim Brotherhood to fuel feelings of anger, political impotency, and despair among Egyptian masses. Since 2013, political participation and individual rights have been unprecedentedly restrained and suspended by a series of arbitrary laws prohibiting protests, outlawing opposition groups, and condoning the state's exceptional measures of launching sweeping extrajudicial detentions, arrests, and imprisonment measures (Alterman & Byman, 2023). The combination of the Zionist genocide in Gaza with the collective feelings of anger and despair within a repressive context triggered a sweeping individual engagement into a pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy across social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok, for raising public awareness about the Palestinian plight, debunking Zionist myths about fighting terrorism in Gaza, and calling for the boycott of pro-Zionist international and national brands. Combining three qualitative research methods, 58 open-ended semi-structured interviews, the critical discourse analysis of al-Sisi speeches, and the content analysis of the pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy on social media from October 2023 to November 2024, this study highlights how Egyptian activists evaded the state's repression through an individual mobilization into a three-pronged pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy.

This study is divided into four parts as follows. The first section examines scholarly writings addressing the intersection of the Palestinian cause with sociopolitical mobilization and regime stability in Egypt while

the second and third parts elaborate on the study's theoretical framework and research methodology respectively. The fourth part focuses on Egyptians' individual mobilization into a three-layered pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy for raising awareness, debunking Zionist myth, and calling for the boycott of pro-Zionist international and national brands.

2. Pro-Palestinian solidarity within repressive contexts: Cyberadvocacy as an alternative to public protests?

Scholarly writings emphasize how public support for the Palestinian cause within restrictive contexts, especially Egypt as the largest Arab country, has been one of the major indicators of regimes' legitimacy (Moussa, 2024; Montada, 2016; el-Ghobashy, 2012, Abou El Fadl, 2012). Considering authoritarian diffusion across the region, regimes' failure has been always associated to the inability of sustaining promised welfare packages, the despotic grip on power, human rights' abuse, and political inertia toward Palestinians. The government's reluctance toward supporting Palestinians has been a common issue of concern which has prompted autocratic regimes to repress all forms of public protests denouncing normalization with Israel since the 1980s. Not only did regimes fail to satisfy citizens' socioeconomic demands and align with the US directives in the region but also restricted public expression of support toward Palestinians. At the same time, another strand of scholarship indicated that, in light of authoritarian resilience, the widespread use of social media as virtual platforms of communication which showed mobilization success during the Arab uprisings, would bypass the state's censorship of public spheres and domination over traditional means of communication (Hass et al., 2012; Khamis and Vaughan, 2012; Ghomin, 2013; Faris, 2013).

Scholarly writings emphasize the intersection of the Palestinian cause with the legitimacy of Arab regimes by asserting that public protests have shared a persistent public claim condemning leaders' disinterest in supporting Palestinians' rights (Moussa, 2024). In this vein, social movements which crystallized throughout public mobilization to protest during the Second intifada in 2000 have associated closely the Palestinian cause to public discontent, which alerted the ruling regimes to limit all forms of protests related to Palestine that could turn against them. Public protests against the state's rolling back of welfare policies have never ceased from being connected to the state's failure in supporting Palestinians' rights, a strong link dating back to Nasser's pan-Arabism which equated the fight against imperialism to the support of farmers and workers within unions and syndicates. Following this rationale, protests taking place during the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the first and second intifadas in 1987 and 2000 respectively and the successive Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2012, and 2014 have discredited the government for its withdrawal from its pan-Arab obligation toward citizens and fellow Arabs (Marfleet and ElMahdi, 2012). Protestors condemned Arab leaders' tacit implication into these wars, notably against Gaza and Iraq, by allowing the passage of weapons bombing Palestinian and Iraqi cities.

In this respect, public coalitions which burgeoned during protests against the Israeli aggression against Palestinians and Lebanon and the US war on Iraq in 2003 constituted the embryo of the Egyptian Movement of Change, known as *Kefaya*, and the National Association for Change which opposed Mubarak's candidacy for a new presidential term in 2005 and his plans of nominating his son, Gamal Mubarak, his successor (Magued, 2019). The persistence of both the state's failure in attending to citizens' needs and indifference toward public discontent over the regime's normalization with Israel paved the way toward the eruption of the 25 January 2011 uprisings calling for bread, freedom, human dignity in addition to the rejection of the Egyptian subordination to the US and Israeli policies in the region (Moussa, 2024).

Yet, the failure of the Arab uprisings in delivering promises of freedom, dignity, and equality, has stirred ample scholarly discussion about protests' adaptation to restrictive political contexts (El-Nawawy and Khamis, 2013; Haas et al., 2013). While protests have changed in forms of manifestation and nature, the absence of concrete mobilization infrastructures following authoritarian consolidation across the region has incited scholars to shed light on alternative media for mobilization. Being a strong legacy of the Arab uprisings considering its success in sustaining the revolutionary spark and mobilizing for massive protests against the regime,

scholars referred to social media outlets as a possible structural adaptation of public protests to the state's domination over public sphere (Smidi, 2017; Blas, 2019).

3. Transformative events, individual emotions, and micro-level mobilization within restrictive contexts

This study investigates the metamorphosis of a three-layered cyberadvocacy based on the individual and autonomous mobilization of random citizens in support for Palestinians. In doing so, this section refers to SMTs' transformative events, individual emotions, and micro-level mobilization to unpack the dynamics of pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy. In reaction to the trauma induced by the Zionist crimes committed against Palestinians, ordinary Egyptian citizens have individually engaged in cyberadvocacy, turning personal negative emotions resulting from the online streaming of daily Israeli crimes against civilians, especially women and children, into solidarity toward Palestinians. The study sheds light on how the October 2023 Israeli war on Gaza, being a transformative event associated with negative emotions induced by the Israeli systematic ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, fueled feelings of solidarity with the Palestinian cause. This scope of analysis addresses individuals' micro-level engagement in support for Palestinians by using SMTs' transformative events where negative encounters shaped citizens' individual pathways of action in the defense of the Palestinian cause and the orientation of negative emotions toward the call for collective action, such as boycott, defamation, and awareness campaigns. In reaction to the lack of scholarship addressing the role of individual agency in the advocacy for the Palestinian cause, this section unpacks SMTs' scholarly writings on individual engagement into action following transformative events and ensued negative emotions.

Individual engagement is the personal choice of participation into activism in support for a particular cause (Volpi and Jasper, 2018). Constituting the foundation of collective action, individual engagement is about activists' personal and autonomous adaptation to the sociopolitical context. McCauley and Moskaleiko (2008) indicated that individual motivation triggers the group's affiliation, delineates positions vis-à-vis opponents, and identifies accounts of personal sufferings and relationship to others. In the same vein, della Porta (2018) emphasized the context's impact on individual choices and strategies of action while Volpi and Jasper (2018) examined how individual agency shapes collective action by the means of identity and emotions as the main factors, which define individuals' action and frame their interactions with enemies.

To highlight how the state's policies toward collective action impact individual engagement, scholars addressed transformative events as a double-edged factor that would either increase the cost of mobilization or backfire into a mass mobilization (Hess and Martin, 2006; McAdam et al., 2001; Tilly, 1978). Unprecedented and widespread state repression can ignite a public outrage depending on the meanings individuals assign to incidents and the authorities' abilities to disperse or allow further mobilization (della Porta, 1995; della Porta and Diani 1999). The state's multileveled repression induces activists to have recourse to accommodationist techniques of weak protest or underground actions, which would result in either activists' micro-mobilization or political withdrawal.

Studies shed light on emotions' variegated impact on collective action considering the unprecedented repression that Egypt has witnessed starting from 2013. While the state's widescale dispersal of the Muslim Brotherhood's sit-ins in Rabaa and al-Nahda squares in Cairo did not intimidate individual engagement into a collective resistance against state repression, personal traumas associated to security and imprisonment have limited individual engagement into collective action (al-Masry and Kettleley, 2020; Brooke and Nugent, 2020; Matthies-Boon, 2017). In this respect, transformative events that produce emotions of moral shock among activists would either become an impetus for protest escalation or prevent mobilization (Francisco, 2004; Jasper et al., 2001; Pearlman, 2013). Emotions' variegated impact on collective action depends on the nature of these emotions which act as a catalyst for transformative events' effect on individual engagement. They emphasized political activists' role in turning emotions into beliefs and suggestions for (in)-action (Simon and Klandermans, 2001; Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013). Emotions would either encourage actions and increase mobilization in light of its expression in a resonant and inflammatory rhetoric or impede

collective action due to the resulting moral and psychological shock and dismissive mood (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004). Although transformative events would be applicable to different contexts, the state's widespread repression and the absence of an institutional-legal check and balance system increase the intimidating effect of transformative events and negative emotions on mobilization. According to della Porta and Reiter (1998), for repression to backfire, the state's violence must be publicly perceived as unjust in a context where public reactions to them cannot be overlooked by authorities. Without these two conditions, the state's repression would remain unchecked and would not induce the required negative emotions to prompt collective action. In this respect, Martin and Hess (2006), Brian (2009), and Francisco (2004) highlighted factors that contribute to individual withdrawal, such as media censorship, the set-up of authoritative measures for assessing repressive events following the state's directives, the state's recourse to manipulative tactics, such as the stigmatization of the oppressed and bribing witnesses to control public reactions and prevent a backlash.

Informed by the triangulation of data retrieved from the author's qualitative research methods, traumatic events related to the genocide in Gaza and Western and Arab leaders' indifference about the death tolls among civilians induced negative emotions within an authoritarian context where individuals do not have the possibility of publicly expressing their opinion. As a result, individuals, under the urge of taking a moral action, would independently engage into a form of activism that does not overtly challenge the state nor rally massive public support around shared claims (Warner, 1993). Although individual engagement involves interaction with others, it consists of developing and fostering social networks through daily and ordinary practices in addition to gradual and persistent maneuvers (Askins, 2014; Martin, 2007). Individuals' engagement into a pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy within authoritarian settings leaves few traces, lacks leadership, relies on calculated results for actions, and adopts piecemealing and pragmatic steps toward projected goals without defying the state or promoting an anti-state ideology. The crystallization of individual activism has been independently shaped by social media users that constituted a milieu and logic of operationalization, networks, lexicon, degree of engagement, and diffusion of the cause. In adaptation to repression, users became activists by developing a pro-Palestinian cyber-advocacy in the defense of the Palestinian cause and adopting a discursive strategy vis-à-vis injustice. Cyberadvocacy shows an individual pathway of activism that highlights a choice informed by personal encounters and the resulting negative emotions.

4. Research Method

This study examines individual engagement into a pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy following the Israeli genocide in Gaza from October 2023 until November 2024. In doing so, it triangulates three qualitative research methods: 58 open-ended and semi-structured interviews, the content analysis of the pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy on social media, and the critical discourse analysis of al-Sisi's speeches, declarations, and statements in relation to protests.

The author conducted extensive in-depth, semi-structured, and open-ended online interviews through WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger with 58 young pro-Palestinian Egyptian activists to identify the motives, perceptions, and emotions behind their individual engagement. Using personal contacts to reach culturally and socioeconomically different participants between 18 and 40 years old, each interview took approximately one hour of written and oral communication and provided detailed accounts of respondents' perception of the cause, their identity, emotions, and personal experience.

With the purpose of identifying pro-Palestinian advocates' strategies of action and the rationale behind their individual engagement, interviews' design and data analysis followed a narrative approach (Wengraf, 2004). Interviews were tailored around informants' strategies in circumventing the state's repression and inducing collective socio-political action among social media users. Answers to these questions consisted of extended narratives of personal accounts, experiences, opinions, and emotions about the Palestinian issue, its causes, means of resolution, personal goals behind individual engagement, tactics, strategies of action, and means of interaction with other activists. They entailed storytelling and testimonies about the negative emotions induced by the Zionist genocide in Gaza and the techniques of managing these emotions.

In addition, the study was based on the content analysis of the pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy from October 2023 until November 2024. The analysis consisted of the close and daily follow-up of comments, posts, hashtags, and campaigns on Facebook pages, Twitter, and TikTok accounts in addition to the YouTube channels advocating for Palestinians' rights. Following up the pro-Palestinian pages and accounts on social media, commenting on posts, and interacting with members, I learnt about activists' campaigns, slogans, images, and mottos, and identified key aspects of their cyberadvocacy by asking exploratory questions whenever needed. This follow-up familiarized the author with the cyberadvocacy's themes and slogans and enabled inferences from systematic and daily observations especially during interviews' transcription.

Also, this study uses Critical Discourse Analysis of al-Sisi's speeches, declarations, and statements about Gaza. It consisted of a rigorous interpretation of collected data for unraveling al-Sisi's motives behind the repression of protests. Doing so clarified the contested meanings behind al-Sisi's perception of protests throughout 19 official speeches and documents within a specific historical contingency. Focusing on meaning creation, the author followed up the existing interactivity between the regime and sociopolitical groups through the identification of worldviews, perceptions, and emotions (Fairclough, 2010). It was about the thick depiction of actors and groups' behavior, motives, intentions, and policies from their narratives and discursive practices within a specific period and a particular context.

In this respect, this study highlights al-Sisi's security-oriented mentality as a unique phenomenon in light of its conception as the product of the leader's intentions, characteristics, perceptions, and emotions within a specific context shaped by socioeconomic, political and institutional factors. The discourse analysis constituted the frame of reference in revealing deep-seated meanings of security within a repressive context marked by a critical juncture in Egypt's modern political history. It traces the repression of protests as an extended process of public cultivation and subordination toward a ruling regime, conflating its rule with the state's existence. Doing so, it shows how al-Sisi appropriated religious and nationalist idioms and public emotions of anger, frustration, and uncertainty in his speeches and discursive practices which justified an unprecedented level of repression against opponents and restricted freedoms and rights.

The combination of three qualitative research methods allowed the cross-validation of data and verification. The content analysis approach focused on the examination of words, symbols, images, slogans, and their frequency in social media and participants' speeches, posts, comments, videos, documentaries, and campaigns while the critical discourse analysis revealed the regime's mental map and unpacked the socio-historical precedents underpinning repression as a medium of rule and control.

By actively listening to participants, analyzing interviews and social media content, identifying broad ideas, concepts, behaviors, and phrases, I developed the study framework around the regime's conflation of pro-Palestinian protests and anti-regime upheavals, activists' defense of the Palestinian cause and support for Hamas's resistance, and the lack of public awareness about Palestinians' rights were the main patterns the data showed. These patterns enabled the identification of the study's two main themes: the regime's security mentality and the restriction of all forms of political participation and individual mobilization into a three-layered pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy in defiance of the regime's repression and inertia toward Palestinians' rights.

5. The micro-level mobilization of individual emotions and transformative events among Egyptian youth

This section examines how the public expression of support toward the Palestinian cause has adapted to repression under al-Sisi rule since October 2023 through the development of a three-pronged cyberadvocacy. Doing so, the pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy focused on exposing the Zionist brutalities committed against civilians in Gaza and the West Bank, debunking the Zionist myths of fighting terrorism and Jewish right to Palestine as a homeland, and calling people to boycott the pro-Zionist brands.

a. The Egyptian regime's security mindset and negative perception of pro-Palestinian protests

The al-Sisi regime has been haunted by the eminent and potential threat of public unrest, which is perceived as attempts to disrupt its rule and instigate national disorder. A close and meticulous examination of 19 speeches of al-Sisi reveal the regime's determination of aborting any attempt of public participation, expression, or mobilization through the weaponization of laws and executive decrees to restrict citizens' access to public sphere. The Egyptian establishment perceived the 25 January 2011 uprising as a potentially recurrent incident that would question the regime's legitimacy and threaten its survival which explains al-Sisi's heavy-handed repression on the pro-Gaza protests for the fear of them turning into a destabilizing upheaval against his rule. al-Sisi has consistently mentioned that 'what happened during the 25 January uprising would never happen again since its reproduction means the death of the state' (al-Sisi, 2020). The regime's security mentality has conflated its rule survival with the state's existence, especially vis-à-vis protestors' discontent with the state's alignment with the US at the expense of Palestinians' rights. In his speeches, al-Sisi (2016, 2018; CNN Arabia 2021) confirmed the state's retrieval of its authority and monopoly over the public sphere following what he called 'the 25 January 2011 destructive events.' Haunted by the possible recurrence of public protests that would threaten the regime, al-Sisi has arbitrarily arrested opposition groups, shuttered political parties, and dissolved social movements on the grounds of being illegal entities engaged in terrorist activities. Following the labelling of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization in September 2013, the state enacted law 107 forbidding public protests, which resulted in the imprisonment of thousands of protestors for trumped-up charges of affiliation to terrorist groups and attempting to overthrow the regime. Also, a provisional constitutional declaration in 2013 empowered the president with extrajudicial authorities while giving police officers the right to use force to quell protests and adopt severe sentences against protestors (State Information System, 2024)

In his speeches, al-Sisi perceived citizens as responsible for the degeneration of the country's economic and political conditions due to their engagement in the 25 January 2011 uprisings. As a result, he asked citizens to accept the post-2013 order where the state upheld citizens' political and individual rights and restricted their freedoms which it perceived as unnecessary throughout the mission of national development carried out under al-Sisi rule (al-Sisi 2013a). The regime considered multipartyism, plurality, and public protests as the principal triggers of instability, providing leeway for foreign enemies' infiltrations (al-Sisi 2018, 2021a, and b). He underlined the urgency of the army's control of public order and leadership toward progress and development by legally fortifying its position in the 2014 constitution. He permitted military courts to try civilians, virtually eliminated people's right to assembly, expression, belief, political participation, and protest, he ensured the military's immunity from civil accountability and oversight, and he entrenched the army's role in politics and media surveillance. In 2017, al-Sisi ratified a legal amendment allowing the president to nominate the heads of four judicial bodies (Ahram online 2017). Finally, al-Sisi controls civil society's programs, funds, and areas of action, having placed them under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Solidarity (al-Sisi, 2015 and 2021a).

In line with this mentality, the Palestinian issue, due to its embeddedness into Egyptians' national feelings and religious identity, has always been securitized, especially with the ascension of Hamas, an offspring of the Muslim Brotherhood, to power in 2006. Accordingly, foreign policy decisions related to the Palestinian issue have been issued under the discretion of the security establishment, which includes the Supreme Council of Armed Forces, the Military Security Services, and the President. Being the second beneficiary of the US aid after Israel, Egypt managed the Peace Process in line with the exigencies of its relations with the US while taming the public opinion's opposition to the regime's ineffective policies in relieving Palestinians' plight. The establishment perceived, and still perceives, Gaza and Hamas as a security risk for the destabilization of the regime in light of Hamas's ideological ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, which prompted the regime to associate Egypt's national interest to the strict control of borders and the prevention of any attempt of public expression in support of Palestinians unless organized by the regime.

b. Egyptians' individual mobilization into a three-pronged pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy

Respondents underscored that they sustained a random and individual cyberadvocacy because of Egypt's restrictive context. Replacing public protests in support for Palestinians, Egyptians developed a three-layered pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy in support for Hamas resistance which consists of raising public awareness about Palestinians' plight, debunking of the Zionist myth of fighting terrorism in Gaza, and calling for the boycott of national and international brands dealing with Israel.

Respondents associated the motive behind the individual engagement in pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy to the national, humanitarian, and religious duty of supporting a vulnerable neighboring people incurring systematic ethnic cleansing by a common enemy (Interviews, 2024). This shared feeling of distress, common responsibility, and imperative duty of supporting Palestinians compelled them to look for means of expression despite of the government's security restrictions. Respondents felt that they were personally addressed by and called to act upon Abu Ubaidah's speeches to support Palestinians by any means. In other words, addressing the public resonated among all sectors of the Egyptian society where people have independently embarked on creating and sharing a pro-Palestinian digital content on social media (Interviews, 2024). As Belahj discusses in his article in this special issue, it is precisely these feelings and actions that Abu Ubaidah wanted to generate with his speeches to the Arab public opinion.

Although the public sphere is not open to demonstrate support for Palestinians and contest the state's inertia in pressurizing Israel to open the Rafah crossing, activists found in cyberadvocacy a virtual refuge and an interactive platform that is more efficient than protests. According to respondents (Interviews, 2024):

'Taking my support for the Palestinian cause to social media has been a spontaneous and an individual action that was carried out of solidarity with Arab and Muslim neighbors to vent out feelings of anger and helplessness toward a besieged Gaza without organizational coordination or collective communication.'

Cyberadvocacy was supported by the social media dynamics that enabled not only the rapid and wide outreach to a potentially unlimited audience but also enabled activists to interconnect randomly because of common issue of interest: writing, sharing posts and videos on Palestine. Respondents highlighted cyberadvocacy's advantages by invoking Hamas's recourse to social media outlets in producing its content and sharing it with viewers. Cyberadvocacy seemed a convenient means of expression that would match Hamas's style of communication and enable them to share and comment on the resistance's reels. According to activists (Interviews 2023 and 2024):

'Thanks to social media, Hamas was able to communicate reliable news about what is happening in Gaza, share videos about the ongoing slaughter and resistance, and sustain regular interactions with audience.'

Respondents asserted that social media is more efficient in reaching a potentially unlimited audience due to its open-access nature and availability for smartphone users. This is unlike protests, which have limited visibility, impact, and reach (Interviews, 2024). Videos of the Palestinian resistance's public communication attracted a high number of viewers and shares, which facilitated the crystallization of the Palestinian cause as a common concern worth fighting for. Respondents mentioned that Abu Ubaidah's speeches greeting Yemeni fighters for standing up against Israeli supporters by targeting Western ships transporting ammunition through Yemeni ports toward the Red Sea increased enthusiasm among social media users and encouraged them greater engagement in pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy (Interviews, 2023 & 2024). This assertion was further confirmed by examining the numbers of viewers and followers' comments on Abu Ubaidah's videos in support for Hamas and Yemeni fighters and praising the latter's bravery while denouncing Arab leaders' inaction toward and complicity in the Israeli blockade (Facebook, 2023 & Instagram, 2024). In this respect, activists developed awareness campaigns exposing Israeli crimes against Palestinians, creating media content debunking Israeli myths of self-defense and fight against terrorism, and calling for the boycott of brands supporting Zionists.

Awareness campaigns about Palestinians' plight

Examining the pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy's digital content, the study identified extensive data ranging from videos, posts, and pictures on online programs meant to raise public awareness of the plight of Palestinians. Awareness campaigns focused on the narrative of the history of the Palestinian plight - *Nakba* (in Arabic) - emphasizing that it had not started on October 2023 but a much earlier. The goal was to keep the audience aware about the ongoing genocide in Gaza where the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) purposefully target journalists and correspondents to limit the coverage of the atrocities committed in Gaza (Interviews, 2023 & 2024).

Respondents referred to the strong impact of famous content creators in raising public awareness about the Palestinian issue. They mentioned that new generations of students enrolled in international schools with a different curriculum than the ones in national establishments had weakened public knowledge about Palestine among the youth. This gap had to be dealt with by attractive and effective awareness campaigns as was the case with online content on YouTube such as *al-Daheeh* (in English, The Nerd), *al Mukhbir al-Iktisadi* (In English, the Economic Informant), and *Alsh-Khanah*, which dedicated episodes of their program to Palestine. Starting with *al-Daheeh*, it produced a lengthy episode entitled *al-Tantura* providing an extensive account of the Zionist occupation of Palestine since the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and until 2023. In this episode, the presenter meticulously addressed Zionist claims of Jewish rights on Palestinian' lands as a homeland based on academic sources exposing the fallacy of the Zionist arguments while providing extensive accounts on the Israeli massacres inflicted to Palestinians since 1947 (YouTube, 2023).

Another reputable online program, The Economic Informant, broadcast episodes to address the economy of the Zionist war on Gaza and examine the US and EU steadfast support for Israel, the impact of the US Presidential elections on the genocide, and the limits of the Chinese and Russian support for Palestinians (YouTube, 2023 & 2024). For its part, *Alsh-Khanah* addressed the Palestinian cause from a historical standpoint to highlight the necessity of supporting the resistance even if the probability of its success is limited (YouTube, 2023 & 2024).

Apart from well-known online programs, activists searched for other relevant content unpacking the reality of the Zionist occupation of Palestine to share among viewers. Activists shared videos of Zionist rabbis inciting violence against Palestinians and Arabs across Facebook (2023) and Twitter (2023 & 2024) in fulfillment of the biblical prophecy of Jews' return to Palestine as the Promised Land. More videos depicted the Israeli mobilization of school children in support of the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) war on Gaza as a religious duty. Videos illustrated children's training on the use of weapons and the writing of hateful messages on rockets which would be fired on Palestinians in Gaza (Facebook, 2023 & 2024). Additional reels showed Israeli public opinion's sweeping support for the IOF genocide against Palestinians, while strongly encouraging the construction of settlements in Gaza as a starting point toward a further extension of the territories of the Promised Land, which would eventually encompass Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and parts of Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Informants asserted the importance of raising awareness about the West's 'evil face' and Israel being a Western agent planted in the region to obstruct Arab countries' communitarian union (Interviews, 2023). They shared videos and posts portraying Israel as a colonial Western project aiming to carry out structural violence in the region, maintain Israel's supremacy over Arabs, and ensure the survival of pro-Zionist autocratic regimes. Campaigns referred to a Western conspiracy to control the region's resources through the eviction of pro-Palestinian dictators under the pretext of democratization, such as former Libyan President Muammar al-Ghaddafi and former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, for being staunch supporters of the Palestinian cause. Videos have been widely shared on Facebook about the US fabrication of false reports on the Iraqi nuclear project to steal Iraq's oil and divide the country along confessional and sectarian lines through the launch of a full-fledged war under the pretext of democratization.

Condemning Western leaders' unconditional support for Israel, activists shared videos showing Western leaders, such as the President of the EU commission Ursula Von der Leyen, acknowledging Israel's right to defend itself through the launch of a disproportionate war on Gaza. Other videos showed the police violent repression of pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Germany against Zionist atrocities (Facebook 2023 & 2024). According to respondents:

'Videos were alarming for viewers who no longer perceive the West as a role model for civilization and human rights. Viewers' comments on these videos revealed the facticity of the Western value-based rhetorics which have been instrumentalized in support of a Zionist occupation on the basis of white supremacy and western domination in the Middle East' (Interviews, 2023).

Online campaigns stigmatized Arab leaders' support of Israel while emphasizing public loyalty and dedication to the Palestinian cause (Interviews, 2023 & 2024). Videos of Ubaidah, al-Sinwar, and Hamas's fighters have been going viral across Facebook (2023) and TikTok (2023 & 2024) where they scold Arab leaders for their inaction and for providing alternative roads for transporting merchandise, goods, and weapons to Israel following the Yemeni fighters' blockade on Israeli ships. Activists disclosed Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, and Egypt's official provision of alternative roadways for shipping goods, weapons, and ammunitions to Israel following the Houthis' blockade over Bab al-Mandab strait which prevented the crossing of merchandise to the Red Sea toward Israel (Facebook, 2024). In this vein, campaigns condemned King Abdullah II of Jordan for dispersing pro-Palestinian protests and collaborating with the Zionist regime by providing it land and air space for the passage of commercial products to Israel. According to an activist:

Videos of the Egyptian regime allowing the passage of Israeli warfare equipment and vessels in the Suez Canal have instigated rage among users whose comments on the video expressed disappointment and helplessness toward Arab leaders' indifference toward the genocide (Interviews, 2024).

Activists criticized the Egyptian regime's taxation of Gazans who had to pay an average of 5 to 10 thousand dollars per person to enter Egypt through the Rafah crossing. Viral posts and reports exposed the involvement of Ibrahim al-Organi, a businessman close to the regime, in the collection of the Rafah crossing's taxes in a clear exploitation of a dire humanitarian situation for personal benefit. Informal reports indicated that the state's decision of turning a blind eye to al-Organi's business on the Rafah crossing is due to the regime's willingness to control the number of Palestinians entering Gaza to fend off plans of relocating Gazans to Sinai (Middle East Eye, 2024). With the rising intensity of the war in Gaza, activists vainly urged al-Sisi to open borders with Gaza, allow the passage of supplies, and facilitate the entry of Gazans to get treatment and seek refuge.

Activists praised the Palestinian resistance by cheering Hamas's fighters and sharing videos showing how they target Israeli armored vehicles, tanks, and soldiers. The hashtag 'from point zero' has been coined as the resistance's slogan in reference to fighters' audacity and courage in physically approaching Israeli sophisticated equipment to blow them up. According to activists, the fascination with Hamas has been tightly related to its leaders, especially Yehia al-Sinwar as a resistance fighter with knowledge of Israeli society, mastering Hebrew, and able to navigate the Zionist mindset. In addition, his twenty years of imprisonment prompted him to advance a tactical shift for resistance against occupation (Interviews, 2023). Following his assassination, al-Sinwar's autobiography was widely shared throughout online platforms. It represents a rich account of how Palestinian generations have been raised away from their native towns in refugees' shelters in Gaza which has sparked resistance. According to respondents:

Growing up under occupation, enduring forced displacement and repression, living in refugees' camps, resistance was conceived as the sole alternative toward liberation for Hamas's leaders (Interviews, 2024).

Revolting against Palestinians' daily sufferings, harassment, humiliation, and deprivation of basic needs, activists perceived al-Sinwar as a revolutionary leader with a clear mind and a sincere spirit dedicated to the

defense and recuperation of Palestinians' homeland from Zionists. They widely circulated his autobiography on social media through posts praising him alongside the spokesman of Hamas Ismail Haniyeh, assassinated in Tehran in July 2024, to emphasize Hamas's resilient mindset of resistance under his leadership (Interviews, 2023).

Debunking Zionist myths

Activists engaged in online campaigns to debunk the myths of Israel fighting terrorism in Gaza and Jewish rights to Palestine as a homeland. They created informative posts, shared pictures, and videos explaining how Zionism is the reason behind Palestinians' expulsion from their homeland and relocation to refugee camps in Gaza where population density is the highest in the world. Campaigners reminded that the plight began in 1948 with the creation of Israel as a Zionist project with the underpinning rationale of relocating Palestinians from their homeland by any means and their replacement with Zionists (Facebook, 2023 and 2024). Campaigners displayed a series of posts and photos showing the Arabic names of Palestinian villages and towns which are currently under Zionist occupation, circulated maps of Palestinian lands stretching over an area of 27 thousand km² from the Mediterranean sea to the Jordan River, and shared videos narrating the history of Palestinian families who have been wiped off the map and villages which have been razed by Zionist militias for the settlement of Zionist migrants (Facebook, 2023 and 2024). Old photos have been shared from the archives depicting the settlement of Jewish migrants, including Israeli leaders, from Eastern European countries with a Palestinian permit of residence and identification cards.

Activists have also highlighted to what extent Palestinians are enduring suffering for obtaining their freedom and obtaining their right to self-determination. In this aim, they shared online the works of prominent Palestinian, Lebanese, and Egyptian writers, such as Ghassan al-Kanafani, Radwa Ashour, Khoury Nasrallah, and Abdul Wahab al-Miseri for social media users to consult and learn about the Palestinian Nakba. These works showed to what extent Palestinians are ready to sacrifice themselves to resist occupation, as demonstrated by videos of the IOF indiscriminate killing and targeting of civilians who have been permanently displaced and mutilated, evacuated from hospitals, burnt in tents, raped and executed before their relatives (Facebook, 2023 and 2024).

In line with activists' engagement in denying claims of Zionists' right to Palestine, activists developed campaigns asserting the falsehood of the Zionist claim of Israel's right to self-defense against terrorism. In doing so, they focused on discrediting the Zionist slogan of the Israeli army being the most moral army in the world. Debunking these claims, activists launched a campaign depicting the Israeli human rights' abuses inflicted on Palestinian civilians, mostly children and women, in the name of self-defense. A respondent (Interview 2023) mentioned:

The video of Hind Rajab, the Palestinian child who has been killed with six members of her family and two paramedics by the IOF soldiers who prevented her rescue from a car riddled with bullets following her call for help, has gone viral on social media and instigated distress among social media users.

Activists compiled and shared videos of Israeli soldiers showing off during the explosion of residence buildings in Gaza, bragging about the pillage of Palestinians' homes following their destruction, the detention of patients under treatment outside of hospitals as hostages, and the pictures of the remains of dead bodies wrapped and buried in piles (Interviews, 2023 & 2024). Another campaign unveiled Israeli soldiers amassing young Palestinian men stripped of their clothes with their hands tied behind their backs and bruises all over their bodies (Telegram, 2024). This campaign focused on the Israeli soldiers' rape of Palestinian hostages during their detention and the use of Palestinian children as human shield during the invasion of towns and cities in Gaza by tying them to the front of military vehicles (Facebook, 2023 & 2024).

Campaigns have also exposed Zionist lies about Hamas's terrorism. Following official claims of the IOF discovery of Hamas's tunnels under hospitals and schools to justify the bombing of civilian infrastructure, patients, and children's incubators, cybercampaigns revealed the Israeli falsification of electronic content to justify their attacks (Facebook, 2023 & 2024).

According to an activist:

Against claims about finding Hamas's terrorist plan hanging on the walls of a hospital underground, campaigns showed a zoom in on the photo of the plan which turned out to be a calendar (Interviews, 2024).

Activists emphasized Hamas' elaborate and effective resistance tactics against the Zionist propaganda of 'Israel's war against terrorism' through videos showing fighters' simple outfits, struggling barefoot and standing against the Israeli sophisticated war gear. Broadcasting videos showing fighters' daily lives and trainings in dark tunnels attracted more viewers and supporters for Hamas and the Palestinian cause. With a record number of views and comments, Hamas's videos attracted viewers who praised fighters and prayed for their victory and freedom in lengthy comments showing support, affection, and admiration. According to a respondent:

The goal behind sharing these videos is to a proof that Hamas is the righteous side and not a terrorist group. Besides, rebranding Hamas as a legitimate resistance across the world defies the claim of Zionists' right to Palestine as a homeland for Jews (Interviews, 2024).

In line with this argument, a viewer commented on Hamas' fighters humble outfit saying,

'This is how a native would fight for his land' (YouTube, 2023 and 2024). Respondents asserted that sharing these videos conveyed the right message to viewers who showed an immense appreciation of the persistence of Hamas' fighters with their poor equipment, limited weapons, weak physical appearance, in contrast to the Western technology, tanks, and air force Israel employs. Activists showed empathy toward fighters who spent their youth and life struggling and fighting against occupation. In this vein, a respondent said:

"al-Sinwar spent 22 years in Israeli prisons just because he is fighting for his people's freedom. Due to this, he has been deprived of constituting a family because of the duty of defending young people who cannot freely walk around in their homeland and enjoy the sea without fearing death at the hands of Israeli soldiers."

Highlighting the greatness of Hamas's duty, an activist (Interview, 2024) stated:

"All Palestinians in Gaza are fighting in the name of the Arab and Muslim world against the Israeli aggression no matter how much it costs."

According to a group of respondents:

Viewers expressed their deep solidarity with Abu Ubaidah who has repeatedly highlighted Palestinians' inability to lead a normal living because of massive killings, man-made famine, raids for residence destruction, and non-stop displacements (Interviews, 2023).

A comment on Abu Ubaidah's video supported the same argument (Facebook, 2023):

"While resisting Israel as a Western-sponsored colonial project has been widely conceived as terrorism, the genocide in Gaza eliminated the negative image of Hamas as an outlawed group which was diffused by Israel."

In debunking Zionist claims of Hamas' terrorism, activists relied on videos of Abu Ubaidah as an appealing figure of resistance who raises the public morale and engages the masses. According to respondents:

Abu Ubaidah succeeded to cleverly frame Palestine as a political issue of resistance against Zionist colonialism. His speeches referred to resistance as a battle for the victory against the Zionist occupation which Hamas is capable of handling on its own without help (Interviews 2023 & 2024).

Another respondent indicated,

His mastery in juggling religious appeals, provocative metaphors, and engaging anecdotes caught the attention of millions of viewers.

The rise of Abu Ubaidah as a popular figure of resistance with his Palestinian keffiyeh hiding his face succeeded in developing a record outreach to the public worldwide through a simple and attractive speech dwelling on freedom, resistance against occupation, and the right to live (YouTube 2023 & 2024). As Belhaj makes clear in his analysis of Abu Ubaidah's speeches in this special issue, the opening '*Oh Free People of the World*' has established a solid connection with audiences all over the world. His speeches are broadcast in public cafés and other popular hang-out places across the Muslim world. In them, he depicts the Zionist occupation as a Nazi-Fascist disfiguring of Palestine's identity, and he portrays the fight against Zionism as a global struggle against evil by referring to the religious analogy of David and Goliath where Palestinians represent the indigenous resistance of committed soldiers against external occupiers who rely on 'dumb' technology (YouTube, 2023).

Boycott campaigns

Finally, activists advocated for the boycott of national and international brands supporting Israel. Following Johnson & Johnson, Zara, and American Eagle's CEOs' declarations and famous brands' marketing campaigns mocking Palestinian victims, activists launched extensive campaigns calling for the boycott of Zara, Johnson & Johnson, Cadbury, Nestlé, American Eagle, and Starbucks (Facebook, 2023). In videos displaying the different pro-Zionist products stained with blood, they reminded viewers and users not to support the genocide against Palestinians by consuming such products. Considering their donations to IOF, further campaigns called for boycotting Carrefour, L'Oréal, Yves Saint Laurent, McDonald's, and Amazon. Activists shared videos of IOF soldiers getting free meals and drinks from McDonald's and Pepsi in addition to others showing Israeli female conscripts with free cosmetic products from L'Oréal to encourage viewers not to purchase these brands. Campaigns condemned the purchase of Arab and national brands dealing with Israel and/or supporting the IOF, such as Noon digital platform for online shopping owned by the Emirati businessman Mohamed al-Abbaar who provided extensive financial support for the IOF (Facebook, 2023). Also, the infamous Egyptian food chain of Faragello has been widely exposed on social media for its implication in trade relations with Israel within the framework of the US-Egyptian QIZ treaty, which exempts Egyptian products from US custom duties only if they comprise an Israeli component of 17% of their value.

Activists developed campaigns which included regular updates about brands' financial losses and the shuttering of their businesses across some Arab and Muslim countries thanks to the boycott. News about the closure of the supermarket chain Carrefour, Starbucks and McDonald's financial losses in Jordan, Malaysia, and Egypt respectively due to boycott campaigns were widely circulated on social media (Facebook, 2024; Twitter, 2024; Instagram, 2024). Activists circulated posts about alternative national and international products to the pro-Zionist brands and provided extensive information about national brands of bottled water, chocolate, clothing, and cosmetics to buy in Egypt.

6. Conclusion

In reaction to the regime's authoritarian consolidation in Egypt following the eviction of the Muslim Brotherhood's elected president in 2013, citizens have employed a wide range of safe measures for public expression and actions of dissent. SMTs' accounts on individual mobilization mediated by common feelings in response

to a transformative event highlight the possibility of sustaining citizens' political participation and public expression away from state's repression through the development of creative tools of individual mobilization for a shared concern in the aftermath of transformative events.

This study introduced the pro-Palestinian Egyptian cyberadvocacy since October 2023 as an innovative form of public expression that defied security restrictions in supporting Palestinians' resistance against the Zionist genocide in Gaza and occupation of Palestine. Being a transformative event, the Israeli genocide following al-Aqsa Flood Operation induced common feelings of despair, anger, empathy, and helplessness which were accentuated by the failure of the Egyptian uprising in delivering its promises of freedom and the regime's arbitrary and unprecedented restrictive measures on all forms of public expression in Egyptian modern history. To bypass the regime's mass arrest campaigns against protestors, pro-Palestinian Egyptians relied on social media outlets, a legacy of the Egyptian uprising, that succeeded in mobilizing public support despite state's restrictions, as an individual step and an autonomous decision to express support toward Gazans and denounce Israel as a common enemy.

The cross-validation and triangulation of data retrieved from the content analysis of the pro-Palestinian cyberadvocacy, the Critical Discourse Analysis of al-Sisi's speeches, and the author's interviews with Egyptian activists revealed how pro-Palestinian Egyptian citizens have evaded state's censorship of all forms of public expression through the development of a three-layered cyberadvocacy in support for Gazans. Despite the structural limitations imposed on the Egyptian political context, pro-Palestinian citizens embarked on intense and daily online campaigns for raising public awareness about the Palestinian cause, debunking Zionist myths of fighting terrorism in Gaza and Zionists' right to Palestine as a homeland and calling for the boycott of brands supportive of the Zionist occupation. Without the ongoing the risk of detention, citizens have independently acted as activists and autonomously diffused feelings of despair, anger and support toward Palestinians into a cyberadvocacy encompassing unrelated citizens featuring similar goals.

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