

The Muslim Brotherhood between Turkey and Egypt

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Abstract

This study presents the doctrinal and dogmatic differences related of the Muslim Brotherhood between Turkey and Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) flight from Egypt after the ouster of Mohamed Morsi in 2013 went through several stages, predominantly to several countries that were perceived as safe havens for the leaders and members of the outlawed Islamist movement. They took advantage of the experience they had gained from their constant escapes to the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. As early as the mid-20th century, after the repressive policies of former Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, they found a warm welcome in these countries. The first country in the region to become acquainted with the ideology of Egyptian Islamists was Kuwait. This happened through Egyptian students – MB members who studied at local universities. There, the radical organization has a significant social, political and media presence.

Keywords: The Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey, Egypt.

1. Introduction

The Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) flight from Egypt after the ouster of Mohamed Morsi in 2013 went through several stages, predominantly to several countries that were perceived as safe havens for the leaders and members of the outlawed Islamist movement. They took advantage of the experience they had gained from their constant escapes to the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. As early as the mid-20th century, after the repressive policies of former Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, they found a warm welcome in these countries. The first country in the region to become acquainted with the ideology of Egyptian Islamists was Kuwait. This happened through Egyptian students – MB members who studied at local universities. There, the radical organization has a significant social, political and media presence. It has managed to bring youth unions under its control and publish a weekly newspaper, as well as to carry out extensive charitable activities. Currently, the MB has its own political party – the Islamic Constitutional Movement, which has its own deputies in parliament (Schwartz & Galily, 2021).

2. Saudi Arabia is also a preferred destination for many MB members persecuted by their governments

Saudi Arabia is also a preferred destination for many MB members persecuted by their governments. In addition to Egypt, many Syrian Islamists have found refuge in the wealthy Arab country. This was especially the case in the 1980s. Some activists of the movement even became

close to the royal family. At one point, MB literature was widely distributed in bookstores and academic institutions of the Saudi state, such as the works of Said Qutb.

Qatar also provides hospitality to Egyptian Islamists. One of the most prominent is the MB ideologist, Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi. The latter created a religious institute there, and later a Sharia faculty at Qatar University. However, he did not develop political activity there, but was more involved in cultural and educational activities.

In Bahrain, local Sunni Islamists are part of the pro-government forces that confront the Shiite opposition. Due to the strong influence of Iran and the local Shiite majority, the government is in a delicate position with respect to the MB. However, in 2014, the authorities in Manama declared the organization a terrorist organization.

The authorities in the United Arab Emirates are waging the most uncompromising war against Egyptian radicals among all the Gulf states. It is believed that in 2013, circles around the Islamists attempted a coup against the ruling family. It is obvious that the representatives of the local dynasty did not expect such actions from the MB. However, the Islamists have their historical place in the creation of the state, as in 1971 they participated in the formation of the first federal government. Emirati political figures associated with the MB, such as Minister Saeed Abdullah Suleiman, have a significant presence in the educational, teaching and judicial sectors of the country. Even in the past, the Emirati state provided educational scholarships for Islamists such as Musa Abu Marzouq, who later became the head of the Executive Bureau of the Palestinian “Islamic Resistance Movement” Hamas (Al Ikhwan al Muslimin....ujud qadim fi al Khalij, The Muslim Brotherhood....an old presence in the Gulf countries, 18 June 2017, Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2017/6/18/%D8%A7%AC>, 29.05.2025).

Qatar has become the main refuge for extremists fleeing Egypt. The official Qatari branch of the MB was dissolved in 1999. However, Qatar has continued to provide the group with financial, media and diplomatic support, including through the satellite network Al Jazeera, which has been accused of consistently favoring representatives of the Islamist movement on the air. Not coincidentally, it was engaged in broadcasting live demonstrations by Morsi supporters from Rabaa al-Adawiya and al-Nahda squares, as well as MB marches (Ghunaim, 22 February 2019, Ma waraa daam al-fadaya al-jazirah lil ikhwan, What is behind the support of the satellite channel Al Jazeera for the MB, Al Fajr, <https://www.elfajr.org/3475191>, 30.05.2025). Qatar is home not only to the aforementioned Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi, but also to prominent leaders of the Palestinian branch of the Islamists, Hamas, namely former leader Khaled Mashaal and the late leader Ismail Haniyeh, who moved to Qatar in 2020.

3. Doha has a long history of supporting the MB and its affiliates

Doha has a long history of supporting the MB and its affiliates. During the year that the Islamists ruled Egypt, Qatar provided the government of President Mohamed Morsi with loans worth nearly \$7.5 billion. In parallel, Qatar supported Morsi's regime with both grants and direct energy supplies. Separately, the Qatari government secretly transferred funds to leaders of Egypt's MB. A document dated March 28, 2013, consisting of a long list of individuals from the Islamist movement, detailed sums of money given to them by former Qatari Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassim. An Egyptian court later accused Morsi and his aides of handing over state secrets to Qatar. (Al Ikhwan al Muslimin fi Qatar, Muslim Brotherhood in Qatar, Markaz Arabi li Dirasat al-Tatarof, <https://theArabcenter.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AE%D9%88B1/>, 29.05.2025).

According to information from Saudi Al-Arabiya TV and Western media, Qatar has relied on the MB since the Arab Spring to establish itself as a regional power with influence and weight. It is logical that the gas and oil-rich emirate would support the formation, unlike its neighbors in the Persian Gulf (Qatar wa al-Ikhwan, Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood, August 3,

2019, Al-Arabiya, <https://www.alarabiya.net/pdfServlet/pdf/dc75e805-dfaf-4c6f-abd3-b9dcd27196b8>, 30.05.2025). Due to Qatar's apparent support for radicals and their attacks on the Egyptian state, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain decided in March 2014 to withdraw their ambassadors from Doha. They cited Qatar's failure to comply with agreements reached in 2013 at the Gulf Arab summit (Limada sahabat dual al-khaleej al-talayata sufaraiha min Qatar, Why the three Gulf states withdrew their ambassadors from Qatar, (5 March 2014), Al Arabiya, <https://www.alarabiya.net/saudi-today/2014/03/05/%D8%>, 30.05.2025). This demarche proved to be a powerful anti-MB tool, as Doha signed the Riyadh Agreement in November 2014, according to which the Qatari authorities suspended the activities of the Al Jazeera Mubashar Misr television channel. The latter provided direct media support to Islamic radicals in Egypt. An unofficial demand immediately followed for the MB leaders to leave the country. (Qatar tabood 7 min al-qiyyadat al-ikhwan wa al-mutatifin maaha, Qatar expels 7 Muslim Brotherhood leaders and their sympathizers, 13 September 2014, BBC Arabi, https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/09/140913_qatar_brotherhood_egypt, 30.05.2025). In practice, a kind of distribution of extremists fleeing Egypt between Turkey and Qatar took place. The former went to the second and third echelons of the MB, while the latter went to Qatar. In this regard, on November 14, 2014, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on board a plane on which he was returning from an official visit to Doha, stated: "Prominent figures of the Muslim Brotherhood will be welcome in Turkey if they wish to come" (Erdogan yurahib fi turkiya bi al-qiyyadat al-ikhwan al-muslimin alyati sayugadir Qatar, Erdogan welcomes Muslim Brotherhood leaders who will leave Qatar, September 16, 2016, France24, <https://www.france24.com/ar/20140916-%d8%86>, 30.05.2025).

4. At one point, Ankara became the main destination for MB members fleeing both Egypt and Sudan. Some of them passed through

At one point, Ankara became the main destination for MB members fleeing both Egypt and Sudan. Some of them passed through Doha as a transit point, such as activist Mohammed al-Hallouji (Fargali, M., 8 February 2017, Bi asma wa al-waqayya...Sudan akbar al-dual al-daima lil ikhwan al-haribiin, With names and facts...Sudan the largest country supporting the fleeing brothers, Al-Bawaaba, <https://www.albawabhnews.com/2363250>, 30.05.2025). The year 2014 is a key year in the history of the MB. Then they received an unexpected blow in the back from Qatar and thus Turkey turned out to be the only reliable destination for them. At the same time, it was in 2014 that highly radicalized youth appeared – members of the MB, who formed the "special cells" – a generator of a new type of violence. The structures in question were tasked with opposing the law enforcement agencies, who suppressed the violent pro-Morsi demonstrations or thwarted "civil disobedience". Practically, the youth in question became a special guard for events previously organized by the MB, destroying the foundations of the new government. Movements such as "Walaa", "Idam", "Molotov" and "Ajnad Misr" appeared (Hashem, M., Wyss, A., 8 April 2014, Molotov, Wilaa, Idam, Ajnad Misr...Abraz harakat al onf al jadid, Molotov, Wilaa, Idam, Ajnad Misr... The most famous new movements of violence, Ash Shuruk, <https://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=08042014&id=48f24c97-doec-465a-a9ba-56do8bfbafbe>, 30.05.2025). The structures in question immediately became the target of persecution by the authorities, which forced them to leave Egypt and Sudan, heading for Turkey, despite the fact that travel is not without problems. Initially, the Egyptian authorities encouraged such individuals to leave the country, but subsequently imposed travel restrictions, requiring prior approval from the security services since December 2014 (Abdul Basit, A., 11 December 2014) Taarif ala al-dual alyati tusafir ilayha biduna al-taashira...wa akhra tahtaj tasrih amni, Learn about the countries you can travel to without a visa... and others that require security clearance, Al-Watan, <https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/616940>, 30.05.2025).

Overall, since 2015, due to the increasing number of MB members fleeing, Sudan has transformed from a temporary stopover for leaders and rank-and-file activists preparing to leave for Qatar and Turkey after the dispersal of pro-Morsi sit-ins, into one of the most sought-after refuges. The majority of Islamists who have settled in Sudan have been youth leaders or third-level and lower-level leaders. Sudanese authorities have facilitated the presence of the MB there and allowed them freedom of movement. A document, described as “leaked information” and circulated in October 2015 by MB-affiliated social media outlets, shows that those fleeing the Islamist party’s structures are being given support during a meeting attended by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. The presumption in the actions of the authorities in Khartoum is that the MB could one day return to power (Tausiyat min riyasat al-sudan bi daam ikhwan masr al-fariin ilayha, Recommendations from the Sudanese Presidency to Support Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Members Fleeing to Sudan, 4 February 2016, Nunpost, <https://www.noonpost.com/10097/>, 30.05.2025). As circumstances became unfavorable for the MB, as well as after the deteriorating relations with the authorities in Sudan, the Islamist fugitives themselves began to engage in a number of non-traditional activities, such as entering the speculative financial market for currency exchange. The goal was to create jobs and livelihoods for the activists and their families.

5. Another, albeit more distant, destination of the target group is Malaysia. The group of Egyptian MBs there increased sharply in 2015

Another, albeit more distant, destination of the target group is Malaysia. The group of Egyptian MBs there increased sharply in 2015. The Asian country in question was first mentioned as an object of special attention by the MB when it became clear that in November 2013 the Egyptian authorities had prevented the son of Mohamed Morsi from traveling to Kuala Lumpur. It is assumed that the MB leadership had planned an escape of its members to this distant Asian country after the overthrow of the Islamist president in Cairo. This was to be done through small groups. However, a year later the situation changed and Malaysia, which was dynamically developing in economic terms, became one of the important investment centers of the radical formation. (Ban: Najl Morsi lan yusafir kualalampur: li istijmam...wa malaysia maakl al-safiliyat al-aktar al-taatiran fi al-tanzim al-duali lil ikhwan, Ban: Morsi's son will not travel to Kuala Lumpur for “vacation”... and Malaysia is a bastion of the most influential figures in the international organization “Muslim Brotherhood”, 5 February 2013, Al-Balad, <https://www.elbalad.news/667402>, 30.05.2025)

In general, it can be summarized that initially the plans were only for the leadership to leave Egypt in order to preserve it. The hope was that after successful subversive measures, the MB would return to power. The latter was to be taken up by the youth, who quickly organized themselves into overt terrorist groups. It soon became clear that the way to return to power was chimerical. Then activists from the lower levels of the MB's management also began to withdraw. They were followed by the youth, who found themselves in the most difficult socio-economic situation in the countries in which they resided. Moreover, friction began between the individual levels in the hierarchy of the Islamist movement. The younger and more declassed members of the MB felt the differentiation with the leadership and their families, who were heading to Qatar and Turkey. They began to look with anger at those who had practically abandoned them after the collapse of the Islamist regime. Moreover, even in Turkey, a social hierarchy is beginning to form between the successful and unsuccessful MB members on the labor market. Former leaders and activists of the first and partly second level become the object of generous donations and successful jobs with huge salaries, while those who go further and to poorer countries go directly to the labor market and begin to build their lives again.

Turkey attracts the most Egyptian MB members compared to other countries. The number of activists in the country is not clear, but the most common figure is 14,000, which together with their families becomes over 40,000 people. As time goes by and relations with Egypt warm, the restrictions of the Turkish authorities on the activities of the MB community increase. Some of them return to their homeland, while others head to other destinations, mainly Europe. However, they have managed to fit well not only into the country's economic life, but have also made great efforts to become the center of the Arab community in the country. This is especially true for the largest city – Istanbul. In 2016, members of the Egyptian MB established the “World University for Renewal”, offering curricula in Turkish, Arabic and English. Its founder is Al-Azhar graduate Dr. Jamal Abdul Sattar, one of the most active members of the MB leadership. He is known as one of the skillful speakers at Rubaiya Square and a frequent guest on the Al Jazeera satellite channel (Jamal Abdul Sattar, Al Markaz al-Arabi li dirasat al-tataraf, <https://thearabcenter.org/%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B1>, 30.05.2025). The students accuse the institution of misusing the collected fees and donations. The Turkish state has not accredited the institution in question. At the same time, the university recruits young people for information technology training, who are then used as hackers to carry out cyberattacks against Egypt and other Arab countries (Jamiyya al-Ikhwan fi Istanbul...tadlil hadafu tajnid al-talaba, Istanbul Brotherhood University: Disinformation Aimed at Recruiting Students, (November 9, 2020), Ronahi, <https://ronahi.tv/ar/%D8%B3>, 30.05.2025).

Istanbul is the seat of the largest number of organizations, platforms, educational, media and ideological institutions that are directly or indirectly connected to the international network of the MB. In the largest Turkish city, mourning events were held in memory of the former ideologist of the MB Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the official announcement of one of the factions in the leadership of the MB – the “Movement for Change,” the election of a new leadership of the European Islamic Council, which serves as an umbrella organization for most organizations of the European branches of the MB in Europe, and numerous other events of the organization of Egyptian Islamists. One of the leading institutions operating in Istanbul is the Imam Malik International Academy of Sciences. This is an educational organization that was established and registered in 2018. Its activities are focused on the field of humanities, and in particular, Islamic studies and the Arabic language. Its stated mission is to educate young people who have completed secondary education. The institution is led by the Libyan preacher from the city of Zawiyah, Abdul Basit Yaru. He is a member of the MB and a supporter of the deposed Libyan Mufti al-Sadiq al-Ghariani.

The Omran Project is another initiative related to the MB in Istanbul. It was established on April 21, 2019, in the Municipal Council Hall of this cosmopolitan Turkish city. The activity of Omran is of great importance for the structures of the MB international network. According to the founding documents, the project is “a pioneering media platform for the creation and management of youth innovative activities that contribute to the creation of a mature, renaissance society and work to transform the nation into an international leader and a global competitive factor.” The project concept also aims to “create long-term plans that direct the efforts of competent youth towards the optimal use of planning tools and strategic projects” (Mashrua Omran, The Omran Project, <https://omran.org/ar>, 30.05.2025). The de facto head of the project is the Kuwaiti preacher Tariq al-Suwaidan, one of the leaders of the radicals in the Persian Gulf countries. The former advisor to the media training center of the Al Jazeera television channel in Qatar, Ibrahim Hawari, is its executive director (Mashrua Omran, The Omran Project, Al Markaz al-Arabi li dirasat at-Tatarof, <https://thearabcenter.org/%D9%886>, 30.05.2025).

In this light, we must also add the Al-Sharq Forum, which is an Islamist structure and whose motto is “Communication, Dialogue and Democracy.” It was founded in 2012 in Tunisia under the leadership of the former director-general of Al Jazeera, the Palestinian journalist Wadah Hanfar. Moroccan members and sympathizers of the Islamist movement also participate in the

initiative (Homrou, H., 13 January 2013, Wadah Hanfar yutlaq al montada al sharq min tunis maa musharaka maghrebia, Wadah Hanfar starts the “Al-Sharq Forum” from Tunisia with Moroccan participation, Hespress, <https://www.hespress.com/%d9%8873197.html>, 30.05.2025). After the removal of the Nahda party, which is the local branch of the MB, from power, the headquarters of Al-Sharq moved to Istanbul. In late 2018, the leadership opened a branch in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur. The forum’s institutions currently include platforms for dialogue and research. These include the Al-Sharq Center for Strategic Studies, the Al-Sharq Academic Platform, and the Al-Sharq Youth Network. The forum’s activities are sponsored by Turkey and Qatar and enjoy a wide presence of MB cadres (Muntada al-Sharq, Al-Sharq Forum, <https://www.sharqforum.org/ar/>, 30.05.2025).

Another important civil society organization controlled by the MB in Istanbul is the Academy of International Relations (AIO). It is an official Turkish institution headed by Egyptian citizen Issam Abdel Shafi. Publicly, it specializes in education, training and qualification in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Special emphasis is placed on the activities carried out in the scientific fields of political science, international relations, strategic studies, law, economics, management, media and sociology. Unofficially, the AIO’s activities are aimed at qualifying personnel from the upper management echelon of the MB. This is about preparing them for positions in the executive and legislative branches if the Egyptian Islamists return to power in the Arab country.

The academy was founded in 2017 and is headquartered in the Yenibosna district of Istanbul, Turkey, in the Vizyon Park complex. It houses numerous Arab research centers, international and Arab trading companies, and satellite channels (including those that reflect the MB’s positions, such as Al Mukmalein, Al Cairo wa al Nas, and Sada al Balad). The academy’s administrative headquarters consists of two main lecture halls, the first of which has a capacity of about 30 people, and the second – 14 people. The four offices are intended for use by administrative staff and lecturers. There are also two logistics rooms, which allow the AMO to implement numerous programs and hold events in the wonderfully equipped premises (Academy of Al Alaqat Al Dualiya, Academy of International Relations, <https://iraacademy.uk/>, 31.05.2025).

The academy’s director, Issam Abdel Shafi, who holds a PhD in philosophy, is one of the most dangerous members of the Egyptian MB in Turkey. He plays a key role in recruiting and training the new generation of MB leaders who are trained in the media and intelligence fields. Shafi also maintains active ties with political decision-makers in Turkey, particularly with representatives of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). The Egyptian Islamist is well-known and in constant contact with the Qatari media establishment (Issam Abdel Shafi, Al Arabi al Jadid, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/author/19893/%8A>, 31.05.2025).

Among the AMO cadres is the former university professor and former advisor to Mohamed Morsi, Seyfeddin Abdul Fattah. He is seen as the spiritual father of the so-called “Movement for Change”, which played a significant role in overcoming the governance crisis in the MB after the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi (Seyfeddin Abdul Fattah, Mausua al-fiqh al-siyasi al-islami, <https://web.archive.org/web/20220217184534/>, 31.05.2025).

6. The members of the Egyptian MB are the Union of Egyptian Associations in Turkey (SEAT)

The next structure controlled by members of the Egyptian MB is the Union of Egyptian Associations in Turkey (SEAT). It was established in 2018 under the leadership of prominent MB activist Midhat al-Haddad. Currently, SEAT is one of the organizations involved in managing the funds of Egyptian Brotherhood members abroad, implementing the group’s investment projects, and collecting donations and monthly subsidies for individual members. The structure in question

is a member of the Union of Islamic Non-Governmental Organizations, which is under the supervision of the MB international organization and plays a major role in attracting the younger generation from Egypt and the entire Arab world. Midhat al-Haddad himself is one of the founders of the MB's economic wing and a member of the Shura, the Consultative Council. He was in charge of the administrative office of the Alexandria Governorate before fleeing Egypt. His deputy in SEAT is Said al-Azbi, and his treasurer is Mukhtar al-Ashri (Al Ittihad al Jama'iyat al Masriya fi Turkiya, Union of Egyptian Associations in Turkey, <https://egau.org/>, 31.05.2025).

The last significant entity under the control of the IB in Turkey is the Union of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Islamic World (UNOIS). The structure was established in Istanbul in 2005 to serve as a bridge for communication with IB organizations throughout the Arab region, under the guise of "civil society associations and initiatives." UNOIS includes several institutions and foundations in Turkey and in Islamic countries. According to the organization's own data, the members of the Union number approximately 340 organizations in 65 countries (Ittihad al-monazamat al-ahliyya fi al-'alam al-islami, Union of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Islamic World, <https://web.archive.org/web/20240913110732/https://idsb.org/ar>, 31.05.2025). The Union maintains broad partnerships with the Council of Muslims in Europe, the Union of Islamic Organizations in France and other international institutions related to the MB in Europe. Its task is also to collect donations, zakat and charitable funds. In 2025, Turkish citizen Ali Kurt was elected as chairman, but the real leadership is carried out by two activists belonging to the MB international network, namely Ghazwan al-Masri and Jamal Karimadin, who are Syrians but have Turkish passports (Istanbul...club al-ikhwan al-nabid, Istanbul...the beating heart of the Brothers, (December 22, 2022), MENA, <https://www.mena-researchcenter.org/ar/%d8b6/>, 31.05.2025).

In November 2013, waving four fingers (the sign of the MB - ed. author) Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan declared that "they (the Turks - ed. author) will never be silent to please the coup plotters in Egypt...the unjust coup plotters will inevitably go away...the people will remain and Turkey will not abandon them" (Rais al-wazara at turki recep tayyeb erdogan yujedid wasf al-nizam al-masri bi al-nizam 'al-inqilabi', Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan again describes Egyptian regime as 'coup plotter', (26 November 2013), BBC, https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2013/11/131126_turkey_egypt_erdogan_critique, 31.05.2025). Not only the stability of President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi's power, but also a number of international circumstances stimulated Cairo and Ankara to gradually warm relations. Turkish President Erdogan became convinced that the MB did not represent an alternative to the new authorities in Egypt. The first reason was the clash between Turkey and Egypt in Libya. There, the two countries stood on two different and warring sides. Turkey supported the internationally recognized government in Tripoli, and Egypt - the one that controls the eastern part, headed by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. The situation stabilized on the principle of relative parity. The second reason is the rivalry for maritime territories in the eastern Mediterranean. In 2019, Egypt, together with Palestine, Jordan, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Israel and France, created the "Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum". It is aimed at Turkey's ambitions to extract gas in this part of the world, after Ankara agreed to merge the exclusive maritime zones of Turkey and Libya, represented by the government in Tripoli. This act provoked opposition from countries that felt harmed by this demarche, which contradicts international law (EastMed Gas: Paving the Way for New Geopolitical Era, (24 June 2019), DW, <https://web.archive.org/web/20191207220343/>, 1.06.2025).

This has led to the formation of serious preconditions for seeking compromises between Cairo and Ankara, at the expense of restrictions on MBs residing in Turkey. In July 2021, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry stated: "The decision to ban refugees and members of the Muslim Brotherhood, which the Egyptian government considers a terrorist organization, from appearing in the media and social networks is a policy compatible with international law. If

maintained permanently, it will lead to the normalization of relations and the continuation of communication between Cairo and Ankara at various levels in order to establish a framework for joint relations” (Masr wa Turqiya: Wazir al-Kharijiya al-Masri yusheid bi manaa turqiya musriyin min zuhur al-ilami, Egypt and Turkey: Egyptian Foreign Minister welcomes Turkey’s ban on media appearances by Egyptians, (July 4, 2021), BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-57714239>, 1.06.2025). The restrictions are expressed not only in the media sphere, but also in the suspension of granting citizenship or, in individual cases, the withdrawal of such. In this light, the refusal of the Turkish authorities in 2023 to allow the residence and citizenship of the radical Egyptian preacher and MB member Wajdi Ghunaim is not a big surprise (Abdul Hamid, A., (21 August 2023), Baad azmatuhu fi Turkiya...al ikhwan yatadahalun li istak wajdi ghunaim, After his crisis in Turkey, the Brotherhood intervenes to silence Wajdi Ghunaim, Al Arabiya, <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2023/08/21/%D85>, 1.06.2025). Confirming Ankara’s obstructionist policy towards the MB is the deprivation of the acting Supreme Leader Mahmoud Hussein (leader of the Istanbul group of the splinter MB – ed. author) of the Turkish citizenship that had already been granted. This act is categorical evidence of the change in Turkey’s assessment of the political status quo in Egypt and, respectively, the possibilities of the radical Egyptian formation to return to power.

All this comes days after Erdogan’s visit to Egypt on February 15, 2024, at the invitation of his counterpart Abdul Fattah al-Sisi (Hasan, A., (February 14, 2024), Al alaqat al musriya at turqiya: ziyarat erdogan bi qahira yutawi sanawat min al qatia, Egypt-Turkey relations: Erdogan’s Cairo visit ends years of estrangement, BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/cjl3wg39k1do>, 1.06.2025). The return visit of the Egyptian head of state to Turkey after only seven months outlines very well the trend in Egyptian-Turkish relations. The analysis of the Turkish university professor Abdullah Kuran and his conclusion that “Turkey will not allow the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood to reside on its territory and that the era in which they led and directed their members in Egypt from Turkish territory will end” is very accurate (Suz, D., (23 February 2024), Turkish Academic: The Era of the Muslim Brotherhood, in Which Its Decisions Are Made from Turkish Territory, Will Soon End, Al Arabiya, <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/egypt/2024/02/23/%D8%A3%A7>, 1.06.2025). The restrictions are likely to continue, as the two countries commit to exchanging intelligence on “sensitive topics” related to national security. However, Ankara is unlikely to ever blacklist the MB as a terrorist organization, as Egypt did on December 25, 2013.

7. Conclusion

Following the development of the MB’s relations with the Turkish state, Ankara will probably continue to have the status of a kind of intermediate stop for the fleeing and agonizing Egyptian Islamists. As if using Turkey’s geopolitical position, the MB can easily move its multitude of personnel, commercial companies and non-governmental structures to some Asian or African country. It is not excluded that this will also happen in the direction of some closer European destination (for example, the Balkans and especially Bosnia). If we have to look for a third, equal partner in the complex Egyptian-Turkish relations with regard to the development of the situation around the Egyptian Islamist movement after its defeat in 2013, this is undoubtedly the United Kingdom. It has historical ties with the Egyptian radicals, since the time of the creation of their movement by Hassan al-Banna. The visit of former MI6 director Robert More on November 9, 2020 to Cairo will remain symptomatic (Rais Abdul Fattah Al Sisi Yastakbil Rais Al Mukhabarat Al Britannia, President Abdul Fattah Al Sisi receives the head of British intelligence, (November 9, 2020), ARE Presidency website, <https://www.presidency.eg/ar/%D9%89-9-11-2020/>, 1.06.2025). Interestingly, literally from Cairo, the British top intelligence officer flew to Ankara, where he met with the then director of the presidential office and current head of Turkish intelligence MIT, Ibrahim Kalin (Turkish Presidential Spokesperson Meets with MI 6 Spy Chief in

Ankara, (November 12 2020), Duvar English, <https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-presidential-spokesperson-meets-with-mi6-spy-chief-in-ankara-news-55006>, 1.06.2025). The timing of the double visit is very symptomatic – the deepening crisis in the MB and the split between the so-called Istanbul Group and the London Front in the leadership of the Egyptian Islamist movement. It is evident that the very appointment of More in October 2020 as director of the famous British institution is aimed with a serious emphasis on the Middle East region and, respectively, the role of the MB in it. It is noteworthy that More is the first British senior intelligence officer who was born in Tripoli, the capital of Libya, and has one term as the British ambassador to Turkey, speaking fluent Turkish. Thus, on the eve of the centenary of its establishment, the organization of Egyptian Islamists is “split” between its native Egypt, Turkey and the United Kingdom. It is not clear what the directions of the transfers of MB members will be on a regional and global scale, but the Istanbul-London route remains leading.

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